

Unprecedented Uncertainty Makes Trade Issues Top Priority, say Farmers, Ranchers and Food Exporters

Finding a way forward on NAFTA and intensifying diversification efforts now more important than ever

Ottawa, Ontario – June 21, 2018 – The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) today called on all Parliamentarians to support better access to world markets as continued trade uncertainty threatens Canadian jobs and long-term prosperity. CAFTA President Brian Innes along with farmers and agri-food exporters from across Canada made the remarks at an end-of-session press conference held on Parliament Hill.

“With unprecedented uncertainty around NAFTA, there’s never been a better time to break down trade barriers so we can diversify and grow our agri-food exports,” said CAFTA President Brian Innes.

While this legislative session saw progress with the implementation of the Canada-Europe Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), CAFTA is calling on the federal government to stay focused on advancing the following outstanding trade priorities in the coming weeks and months:

- Work swiftly to ratify and ensure Canada is in the first tranche of countries bringing into force the Comprehensive Progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP);
- Continue to constructively engage at the NAFTA negotiating table to ensure Canadian agri-food exports maintain existing access to the U.S. market and to modernize the deal where possible;
- Launch trade talks with China and deepen the Canada-China trade relationship; and
- Remove remaining non-tariff barriers to allow real, commercially viable access to the EU for Canadian agri-food products.

“Our ability to access global markets is more important than ever and should be job number-one for the federal government,” concluded Innes. “We are calling on the Canadian government and all Parliamentarians to stand up for Canadians who are growing the economy through trade.”

CAFTA members – including farmers, ranchers and food manufacturers – contribute \$96 billion to Canada’s economy annually and support one million jobs in urban and rural areas across the country.

“Ongoing uncertainty in the international trade environment underscores the need for trade agreements beef producers can rely on. The CPTPP is such an agreement, providing the Canadian beef industry with preferential market access to the blockbuster Japanese market and dynamic new markets in the Asia-Pacific region at a time when there is some concern with respect to our traditional markets. We applaud

the efforts of the Government of Canada to date; however, Canada needs to be among the initial six CPTPP member countries to ratify the agreement for this access to be meaningful. It will be a top priority of CCA to work with the government and official opposition members and senators to ensure that the Parliamentary process moves as expeditiously as possible when sitting resumes in the fall.”

- ***Canadian Cattlemen’s Association President David Haywood-Farmer***

“Grain farmers in Canada are export dependent. My livelihood, and that of hard working farm families across Canada, is dependent on having reliable access to export markets. That is why farmers need the Government to build on their support for trade and CETA by ratifying CPTPP, concluding NAFTA negotiations and launching FTA negotiations with China.”

- ***Jeff Nielsen, President, Grain Growers of Canada***

“Grain Farmers of Ontario supports the Canadian government’s ongoing efforts to engage with China on a free trade agreement. However, we also urge the government to keep negotiating with NAFTA parties to come to an agreement that allows for beneficial trade within North America.”

- ***Markus Haerle, Chairman of Grain Farmers of Ontario***

“Competitive access to international markets is the cornerstone of Canada’s pork industry. Japan is one of our key markets with sales of over one billion dollars each year. We strongly urge all MPs to move forward with the ratification of the CPTPP as soon as the House of Commons returns in the fall. Delays in ratifying the CPTPP will prevent us from capturing market shares and maintaining our competitive edge in Asia.”

- ***René Roy, pork producer in Quebec, member of the Canadian Pork Council***

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CAFTA is the voice of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters, representing the 90% of farmers who depend on trade and the ranchers, producers, processors and agri-food exporters who want to grow the economy through better access to international markets. This includes the beef, pork, meat, grains, cereals, pulses, soybeans, canola as well as the sugar, malt, and processed food industries. The sectors CAFTA represents support over a million jobs in urban and rural communities across Canada.

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