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## **Statement by the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance on Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Talks**

OTTAWA (ON) – March 10, 2015 – On news that Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) chief negotiators will meet March 9–15, Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) President Lisa Skierka today issued the following statement on the status of the TPP trade talks:

“Our members from across Canada’s agriculture and agri-food industry are pleased that chief negotiators are once again meeting for the purpose of advancing these negotiations with an eye to concluding an agreement in the near term that achieves our objectives. The TPP has the potential to be a landmark trade agreement in a region that represents 40 per cent of world trade and is critical for Canadian agricultural exporters .

Our members believe that this agreement must be comprehensive and plurilateral in order to realize its full potential. Developing a level playing field is critical for Canada to retain competitive access throughout the region. Without a plurilateral agreement, the TPP could actually create imbalances between exporters if some TPP members achieve more favourable access to specific countries than others.

While considerable progress has been made, a meaningful agreement cannot be achieved without a substantive commitment to the comprehensive elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers. Any exemptions would jeopardize Canadian exporters’ ability to achieve comprehensive access to the world’s largest and fastest growing economic regions in the world.

Canada is a nation that is built on trade, and increasing exports of our agriculture and agri-food products is critical to the prosperity of the 500,000 Canadians our industry directly employs.

Upon implementation, the TPP would represent the realization of a free and open trade environment in a market of 792 million people. If the TPP’s ambitious potential is realized, we will have set the landmark precedent for a trade agenda the rest of the world should aspire to achieve.

However, if Canada is not part of this substantial agreement, the impact would be felt beyond the Canadian agriculture industry and extend to our entire export-driven economy. Therefore, we call on the Government of Canada to stand up for Canadian exporters in these TPP negotiations, as it did in the Canada-Europe Trade Agreement and the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, and move towards a meaningful deal that will boost trade, strengthen economic growth and create jobs throughout the Asia-Pacific region—one of our priority export markets.”

**Quick Facts:**

- Canada’s agriculture sector exported over \$56 billion in 2014. TPP member countries represent over 65% of Canada’s agri-food exports.
  - TPP countries represent a market of 792 million people and a combined GDP of \$28.1 trillion (close to 40% of the world economy).

*CAFTA is a coalition of national and regional organizations that support a more open and fair international trading environment for agriculture and agri-food. CAFTA’s members include producer organizations, processors, marketers and exporters from the major trade dependent sectors in Canada. Together, these sectors produce almost 80 per cent of Canada’s agriculture and agri-food exports, conduct about \$50 billion in business annually and directly employ close to 500,000 Canadians.*

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