



Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance | Alliance canadienne du commerce agroalimentaire

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
The Honourable Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
The Honourable Maxime Bernier, Leader of the People's Party of Canada
Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party
Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois

An Open Letter from CAFTA to the Leaders of Canada's Federal Political Parties

October 8, 2019

Dear Party Leaders:

As the voice of Canadian agri-food exporters, representing the 90 per cent of farmers, producers, food processors and agri-food exporters who rely on global markets for their livelihoods, we are writing to express what's needed for Canada's agri-food exporters as we enter the homestretch of the 43rd election. As a trade dependent nation, we are disappointed by the lack of serious discussion in this election about how to secure Canada's long term economic success by continuing to grow our exports. According to the Government of Canada's own statistics, one in five Canadian jobs depends on exports. All parties should be paying more attention to what's urgently needed to build a more prosperous future for our children.

Last year, Canadian agri-food exports reached a record high of \$59.3 billion. Today, protectionism, mis-aligned regulations and trade disputes continue to disrupt global supply chains, undermining the multilateral trading system and depriving the global economy of the predictability businesses need. Many also believe an intensifying global trade war may plunge the world into another recession. Opportunities for further growth are being threatened by unprecedented uncertainty.

For the agri-food industry, trade and international politics is now as important as the weather.

Against this backdrop, and ahead of October 21st, CAFTA has released our priorities for the 2019 Federal Election. We're highlighting what is needed from the next federal government for the agri-food sector to continue thriving and creating jobs and opportunity in every region of Canada. Some of the platform's key recommendations include:

1. Preserve and Enhance Access in Key Export Markets

- Ratify CUSMA as quickly as possible to ensure the stability of trade in North America
- Promote the proper implementation of the CPTPP to ensure that rules are respected
- Expedite discussions with Europe to remove non-tariff barriers affecting meat, durum wheat and biotech exports so the CETA can deliver commercially viable access for Canadian exporters

2. Create New Export Opportunities

- Bring additional countries into the CPTPP such as South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia

- Fostering positive, long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with China
- Launch FTA talks with ASEAN, UK

3. Support Rules-Based Trade and the Global Trading System

- Support efforts to reform and modernize the WTO so that it remains an effective organization at the forefront of the global trading system
- Ensure that regulatory measures don't impede trade and encourage greater harmonization, adherence to international standards and better processes for the agri-food trade

4. Prioritize Canada's Trade Objectives

- Focus on trade negotiations that hold the greatest promise for Canadian businesses

Ultimately, we want to create sustainable opportunity for Canada. Over the next 20 to 30 years, the global demand for agri-food products will continue to grow rapidly, driven by population growth and rising incomes around the world. It is projected that agricultural demand in 2050 will be 50 per cent higher than it was in 2013 according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. As the world's fifth largest agri-food exporter, this presents an immense global growth opportunity for Canada.

In terms of employment, Canadian agri-food exporters represent 352,000 direct and indirect jobs in agriculture, along with 588,000 direct and indirect jobs in food manufacturing.¹ Driven by exports, the agri-food sector is currently growing faster than the rest of the Canadian economy.²

To successfully take advantage of what's ahead, government and industry will need to work hand in hand. Our members stand ready to meet the opportunities and risks head on, working cooperatively with the next federal government for the benefit of all Canadians.

We ask that all party leaders and their candidates take the time to appreciate the important contribution that agri-food exports make to the Canadian economy. We encourage you engage with us in the days and weeks ahead, meet with industry leaders and perhaps tour a farm or a food manufacturer to gain a first-hand understanding of what's needed for Canadian exports to grow.

Working together, we can ensure Canada continues to be at the forefront of enabling export growth, a steadfast supporter of the global trading system and a leading supplier of high-quality agriculture and agri-food products for the world.

Sincerely,



Dan Darling

CAFTA President

¹ CAFTA commissioned research by CERESSYS.

² AAFC, *An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-food System*, 2017.