

# Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters applaud the government for signing the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement

February 3rd, 2016

**Auckland, New Zealand – February 4, 2016** – The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) applauds the Government of Canada for signing the final text of the historic Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement and urges swift movement from all signatories to ratify the deal.

Just four months after the negotiations concluded in Atlanta, Canada's Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland and the Trade Ministers of 11 Pacific Rim countries signed today the TPP agreement in an official ceremony. Today's signing means the complete text may begin the ratification process through the Canadian Parliament and the Legislatures of the TPP signatories. Today, the clock starts ticking on a 2 year timeline. By February 2018, if six countries representing 85% of the GDP of the TPP region have ratified the agreement, the TPP can be implemented.

"We are very encouraged by Canada's commitment to the agreement and very pleased to see it move one step closer to implementation," said Brian Innes, CAFTA president. "CAFTA was here in Auckland when Canada first joined the negotiations, and we're here now to see it signed. It's very satisfying, even if we've still got work to do to get it implemented."

The TPP preserves access to the U.S. and secures unprecedented access to Japan and the fast growing markets of Vietnam and Malaysia. Being able to export to these countries on a level playing field will strengthen the agri-food sector's ability to compete, grow and create jobs right across the country. We now need to move quickly to ratify and implement this agreement," he added.

CAFTA believes the TPP is integral to the future viability of Canada's export-oriented agriculture and agri-food sector. The TPP is a massive trade deal that will open up new opportunities in a number of fast-growing markets along the Pacific Rim. With the U.S. and Japan at its core, the trading bloc represents 800 million people, encompasses 40 per cent of the world's economy. As 65% of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports go to the TPP region, if Canada was not in the TPP, billions of dollars of existing Canadian agriculture and

agri-food exports would be at risk as competitors gained improved access which Canada would not have.

“Canadian agriculture has lived through this before with Korea, when a billion dollar market was cut in half virtually overnight as the US had access we didn’t. We can’t afford to see this happen again with TPP countries,” added Innes.

The additional access to these markets would mean significant gains for Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters. Under a ratified TPP, tariffs will be removed upon entry into force or phased out on a wide range of Canadian agricultural products, including canola, beef, pork, wheat, pulses, soybean, barley and certain sugar-containing products. CAFTA immediately welcomed the conclusion of the negotiations when talks wrapped up after seven years in October, 2015 and will continue to work closely with its members in supporting the quick ratification of TPP.

CAFTA representatives are in Auckland for the signing ceremony. They have attended numerous negotiating rounds and met regularly with the Canadian negotiators to ensure that the negotiated outcome would provide real benefits for Canada’s agri-food exports. While in Auckland, CAFTA president Brian Innes and CAFTA Member Dave Solverson, President of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association met with Minister Freeland to discuss the TPP, Canada’s place as a trading nation, and the importance of global competitiveness for the Canadian agri-food sector. In the global context of growing agricultural trade, they expressed their encouragement to the minister for the critical work that lies ahead on behalf of Canada’s agriculture and agri-food exporters.

“In addition to improving access to important markets and removing non-tariff barriers, Canada, as a founding partner in the TPP, is poised to negotiate the terms of entry of potential future entrants such as South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines,” said Innes. “We strongly encourage Minister Chrystia Freeland and the Canadian Parliament to move ahead on ratification so Canadian exporters can realize the full benefits of new access when the agreement enters into force.”



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*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 represent over 80 per cent of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports, about \$50 billion in exports annually. The economic activity created by CAFTA members supports hundreds of thousand jobs in agriculture and food manufacturing. A significant portion of these jobs would not exist without competitive access to world markets.*

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