

Agricultural and Agri-Food Producers Call for an Ambitious, Fair, and Comprehensive Agreement through the Trans-Pacific Partnership

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Guam, MAY 19, 2015 – As Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) nations meet this week in Guam to continue negotiations, agri-food producer and processor organisations from Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand remain united in their call for a modern trade agreement that includes meaningful and comprehensive market access opportunities for agriculture and agri-food.

The organisations advocating for an ambitious, fair and comprehensive TPP agreement are the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Australian National Farmers' Federation, and the Federated Farmers of New Zealand.

Together, they represent hundreds of thousands of farmers, producers, processors and exporters who, in turn, employ millions of workers across the TPP region.

“Our agricultural sectors and the jobs they provide depend on a thriving network of export markets,” said Brian Innes, president of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance.

“By creating stable and open market access, the TPP’s potential to stimulate economic growth is incredible. A comprehensive agreement would encourage regional supply chains with production and processing occurring where competitive advantages exist. However, without a plurilateral agreement, the TPP could actually reduce market access for agri-food exporters. It would be very negative if some TPP countries provide preferential market access to select countries and not others.”

Despite the fact that agriculture is traditionally regarded as a sensitive subject in trade talks, negotiators must uphold a high level of ambition in order to realize the TPP’s broader objectives of opening up trade throughout one of the world’s key economic centres.

“Australian farmers are of the view that this agreement must deliver significant outcomes across the sector and thus across the economy. Agriculture has always been a strong supporter of trade and the benefits it brings across the broader community and the TPP must be seen in that light” National Farmers Federation President Mr Brent Finlay said.

The TPP region represents 792 million consumers and 40 per cent of world trade while also maintaining a coveted status as an integral part of global value chains. In fact, trade among TPP partners equalled over \$2 trillion in 2012. While this number is considerable, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, the Australian National Farmers' Federation, the American Farm Bureau and the Federated Farmers of New Zealand will continue to call for the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers that currently exist among the member countries in order to increase the value of this trade market through additional sales of agricultural products.

"New Zealand farmers have always strongly supported the benefits of free trade, which include improved market access and reduce trade barriers for our exports," added Dr William Rolleston, president of Federated Farmers of New Zealand.

"Our members strongly encourage TPP negotiators to reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers in this agreement and eliminate export subsidies and other policies that distort markets. These barriers to exports reduce the ability of countries, including our own, to trade."

As negotiations proceed, all signs point to an imminent agreement with a broader range of benefits than any before it. However, the importance of a beneficial deal for agriculture and agri-food exporters should not be underestimated. This type of deal can only come through agreed-upon terms that liberalise trade throughout the TPP region and deliver competitive, transparent, plurilateral, non-discriminatory access.

"The TPP will only fulfill its promise of improved and increased trade in the Pacific region when it eliminates any barriers to trade, including tariff and non-tariff trade barriers," said Bob Stallman, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. "U.S. agriculture has high expectations for the TPP, and we are calling on all countries involved to commit to a better agreement and freer trade worldwide."

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