

**For immediate release**



## **Canadian agri-food exporters urge implementation of CETA based on science, rules and commitments**

*March 24, 2021 - As the CETA Joint Committee, the formal ministerial-level forum established as part of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) gets set to meet, CAFTA released the following statement:*

“We are urging Canadian and EU leaders to ensure science and agreed upon rules are the focus when seeking to resolve ongoing issues of importance to the Canada-EU trade relationship. Commitments that were made at the time of the signing of the agreement need to be respected today.

“What made CETA a gold-standard, 21st century pact was that it went beyond tariffs and secured ambitious outcomes on a wide range of non-tariff issues. CETA included commitments to address areas such as technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, regulatory cooperation, and export subsidies.

“However, after 3 and a half years of provisional implementation, we remain concerned that agri-food sectors are unable to tap in the opportunities CETA was supposed to create due to the persistence of non-tariff barriers that continue to block market access.

“Resolving these issues without further delay is especially important for highly regulated sectors like agri-food which are already subject to myriad of bureaucratic processes and ever-changing regulations. For CETA to work, both sides need to demonstrate a willingness to resolve barriers to agri-food trade.

“Without science at the centre of discussions, existing barriers appear to simply be back door protectionism which runs completely counter to the spirit in which CETA was concluded. For discussions on the recognition of the sustainability practices of canola farmers, Canada’s meat approval system and the EU import tolerances for crop protection inputs, science needs to be at the core of decision-making.

“We also need to ensure longstanding trade rules are respected. For example, Italy’s Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) which is punishing Canadian exports runs completely counter to CETA and is even against EU law, yet nothing has been done to resolve this blatant trade violation.

“We’re asking Ministers to stand up for Canadian farmers against this illegal action and urge the EU to not just abide by CETA but also the commitments it has made at the WTO which compel it to base policy on sound science.

“As Canada’s trade deficit with the EU in agri-food widens for sectors that were expected to grow, we need the Canadian government to take action and get results. This week’s Joint Committee meeting is the forum to show agri-food exporters that the federal government has their back.

“We believe trade can be a powerful force for post-pandemic global economic recovery and CETA presents an opportunity for both Canada and the EU to show the world that deeper trade can create numerous win-win opportunities. That is why we’re urging both sides to ratify and fully implement the pact without delay.”

- 30-

*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 90 per cent of Canada’s agri-food exports and support over a million jobs in urban and rural communities across Canada.*

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