



Trade

Promoting trade and investment with export markets is a priority for the Canadian produce sector. As Canada pursues new trade agreements and renegotiates existing agreements, we are committed to working with the government to uphold the principles of free and fair trade. In order to grow Canadian produce exports and support demand in Canada for a range of products, we are actively working to reduce non-tariff trade barriers including harmonization of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations, and maximum residue limits.

Background

- With most produce trade already tariff-free, barriers to trade within the sector are principally non-tariff and require support from the federal government to address.
- The ability to export to or import from a new market is dependent on assessments of risks and recognition of plant protection systems by the trading countries' plant health regulators.
- Requirements that are not science-based or essential to security act as effective non-tariff trade barriers between countries and must be eliminated.

NAFTA-specific context:

- The fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain is highly integrated across North America.
- Differences in regulatory requirements in Canada, the United States, and Mexico can result in a loss in trade opportunities for the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry.
- Unnecessary regulatory differences between these countries relating to such things as customs, plant health and delayed recognition of food safety systems can lead to delays, increased costs for both business and consumers and even lost product.
- Continued improvement to the level of integration between the three countries is essential to the competitiveness of the Canadian produce industry.

Action Required

Canada's fruit and vegetable industry urges the federal government to:

- Increase cooperation and alignment on plant health, customs and recognition of food safety systems, as increased cooperation will facilitate trade and provide benefits to industry and consumers, while protecting Canada's security, people and environment.
- Provide adequate resources to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), in particular for plant health, to ensure Canadian produce has access to international markets.
- Ensure that, when negotiating trade agreements, the trading partner's sanitary and phytosanitary requirements are science-based and not used as a cover for protectionism.
- Support produce industry needs when existing trade agreements, including NAFTA, are renegotiated.
- Ensure that new and renegotiated free trade agreements create the foundation for mutually recognizing food safety systems.
- Ensure that agreements be based on sound science and address an appropriate risk based approach to trade.
- Firmly oppose the introduction of any tariff that could impact the availability, accessibility and affordability of food in the Canadian marketplace and Canadian produce in our export markets.