



Global Affairs Canada
Trade Policy and Negotiations Division
Global Affairs Canada
111 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

March 16th, 2025

RE: *Consulting Canadians on the potential accession of Costa Rica to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)*

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, it is my pleasure to provide comments to the Government of Canada for its review of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

About CPMA

Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from the farm gate to the dinner plate, spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors and wholesalers; retailers and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent over 900 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

Comments

Promoting international trade and building and maintaining relationships with import and export markets is a key strategic priority for the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable sector.

The fresh produce supply chain generates over \$15 billion annually in GDP and supports over 185,000 jobs communities across Canada¹. While the fresh fruit and vegetable production is a vital part of the fabric of our rural and urban landscape, supporting the growing and selling of a range of Canadian-grown products, we also rely heavily on our global partners to supply Canadians with our safe and healthy products year-round. In fact, due to our colder climate and shorter growing season, coupled with a demand for a wide variety of products, 4 out of 5 dollars spent on fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada is spent on imported product.

¹ Conference Board of Canada, 2023



At the same time, trade flows have fluctuated over the past few years due to escalating geopolitical conflicts, supply chain disruptions, and extreme weather events. It is more and more important that Canada enables free trade agreements that enable importers to pivot and adjust their buying behaviour if these issues impact the flow of fresh fruit and vegetables.

With these factors in mind, CPMA welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of Canada's fresh produce sector regarding the general review of the provisions within the CPTPP agreement.

- Total fresh fruit and vegetable exports to Costa Rica member countries grew from nearly \$1.1 million in 2020 to \$1.6 million in 2024, with potatoes as our key export commodity.
- Total fresh fruit and vegetable imports from Costa Rica increased more substantially, rising from \$263.8 Million in 2020 to nearly \$265.3 million in 2024.

Costa Rica's accession to the CPTPP could create additional opportunities to enhance market access, address trade barriers, and expand export opportunities.

As Canada continues to prioritize trade diversification and strengthen global supply chains, Costa Rica's inclusion in the CPTPP would reinforce a mutually beneficial trade relationship, fostering economic growth and stability in both markets.

As representatives of a highly globally integrated industry, CPMA is strongly supportive of the Canadian government's progressive trade agenda and its commitment to strengthen our trading partnerships around the world in trade agreements that ensure equal treatment in market access. We emphasize that the Government of Canada must recognize food as an essential item in framing our trade agreements, with the fundamental goal to support our domestic markets while strengthening food security and ensuring product diversity for Canadians.

We thank you for taking the time to review our comments and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RL', followed by a horizontal line.

Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association