Canada-Uruguay Trade Negotiations
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Submitted via email: aafc.tand-dacn.aac@agr.gc.ca

August 28 2026

RE: Consultations on market access interests in Uruguay

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of our members across the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association is pleased to offer comments to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada regarding a potential economic partnership agreement with Uruguay.

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 more than 900 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

The fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain is a significant contributor to Canada's economy and food security, generating $18 billion in GDP and supporting more than 188,000 jobs in rural and urban communities from coast to coast to coast[1]. In addition to our sector's economic contributions, we also provide Canadian families with safe and nutritious food that is crucial to supporting their health and wellbeing.

Comments

While 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 commodities, 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.

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.

[1] Signal49 Research (formerly Conference Board of Canada), 2025

Increasing market access and sustainability of the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry requires mutual recognition of food safety systems, and international harmonization of crop protection regulation, products, and residue limits, to remove costly duplication. In the negotiation of new trade agreements, every effort should be made to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to trade and support the competitiveness of Canadian products.

With this important context in mind, CPMA welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of Canada's fresh produce sector regarding a possible agreement between Canada and Uruguay.

Exports

While current fresh produce trade between Canada and Uruguay is limited, a future agreement could help create more predictable conditions for Canadian companies to build relationships, assess commercial opportunities, and establish new pathways for Canadian fresh produce in the Uruguayan market. This includes potential opportunities for products such as potatoes (HS 0701) and apples (HS 0808), where Canadian growers have established production capacity and, with the right market access conditions, could supply volumes capable of supporting sustained trade over time.

Canada's colder climate and shorter growing season can also strengthen its value proposition as a supplier to Uruguay. Where neighbouring countries share similar growing conditions, weather events, pests, or other disruptions may affect regional availability at the same time. In that context, Canadian potatoes (HS 0701) and apples (HS 0808) can offer reliable and differentiated supply options for Uruguayan buyers seeking high-quality fresh produce from a market with a distinct production season and strong food safety standards.

Imports

On the import side, Uruguay is not currently a major source of fresh fruit and vegetable imports to Canada, and the trading relationship in this sector is not well established, particularly in comparison to the fully established relationships between Canada and other markets in the region. As a result, the immediate commercial opportunities for imports of Uruguayan fruits and vegetables may be more limited and would require time, market development, and a clearer understanding of product availability, seasonality, logistics, and regulatory requirements before meaningful trade flows could be built.

That said, a future agreement could help create conditions for new import opportunities where Uruguay has export capacity and Canadian importers see commercial value. Potential areas for exploration could include select fresh fruit categories, including citrus (HS 0805) and other fresh fruit, particularly where supply could complement Canadian demand during periods when domestic production is limited.
For our members, the key priority is ensuring that any future agreement supports predictable, science-based market access, including clear phytosanitary requirements, maximum residue limit alignment, and efficient customs processes.

CPMA encourages the Government of Canada to consider fresh produce market access, including opportunities for Canadian potatoes (HS 0701) and apples (HS 0808), as part of broader efforts to strengthen and diversify trade with Uruguay. In doing so, it will be important to address any tariff, phytosanitary, and regulatory requirements that could affect the ability of Canadian exporters to serve the Uruguayan market effectively.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the Government of Canada to ensure that any agreement supports the growth and stability of the produce sector while addressing the issues outlined above. Thank you for taking the time to review our comments. We would be pleased to respond to any questions or provide additional information as needed.

Sincerely,

Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association