



Canada's Meat Processing Industry Praises Restored Access to South Korea for Canadian Beef

Ottawa, ON. [January 20, 2012] Canada's meat processing industry is grateful for the commitment and perseverance demonstrated by Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and International Trade Minister Ed Fast during Canada's multi-year endeavour to restore access to South Korea for Canadian beef. Minister Ritz and Minister Fast were involved personally in the sustained intergovernmental discussions that have resulted in this positive outcome.

The understandings reached with South Korea address the technical requirements for the resumption of trade in Canadian beef and beef products from animals less than 30 months of age. Commenting on this long-awaited achievement, Canadian Meat Council President Scott Entz stated: "South Korea represents one of the last remaining major countries to resume trade in beef and beef products with Canada. Finally, following an absence of eight years this country will be able, once again, to export its quality beef products to the world's tenth largest importer."

The resumption of trade in beef products brings hope of renewed free trade agreement negotiations between Canada and Korea. The Canadian Meat Council is calling on the Canadian government to resume the talks that have been interrupted since 2008. The European Union, the United States and Chile have all negotiated bilateral free trade agreements with South Korea.

Without a free trade agreement with Korea there will be serious impacts on Canadian competitiveness in the Korean market, valued at \$30 million for Canadian beef and \$300 million for pork. "The longer that Canada lags behind the U.S., the EU and Chile in the implementation of progressive tariff reductions, the greater the negative effect will be on Canadian exports to this important market. Not only will Canada lose very quickly its vital status as a competitive supplier to South Korea, the Canadian disadvantage could endure throughout and even beyond the entire fifteen year tariff reduction implementation period. Now that the beef access technical issues have been resolved, we should move forward swiftly with the free trade agreement negotiations," stated Entz.

Canada's meat processing industry includes some 400 federally registered establishments, providing not only safe, high quality protein for Canadian consumers, but also adding jobs and making a significant contribution to local economic activity in both rural and urban Canada. With some 67,500 employees and annual sales exceeding \$ 21.3 billion, the industry is the largest segment of Canada's food processing sector. Canada exports some \$1.4 billion of beef and over \$2.8 billion of pork to over 150 different countries around the world.

The Canadian Meat Council has been representing Canada's federally inspected meat processing industry since 1919.

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