



Canada's Meat Processing Industry Welcomes Release of the World Trade Organization Decision on United States Country of Origin Labelling

Ottawa, Ont. [November 18, 2011] Canada's meat processing industry is very pleased with the success of the Government of Canada in securing a vital World Trade Organization victory on behalf of a strong and competitive Canadian livestock and meat sector. In a landmark decision released today, the WTO confirmed that the Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) measure imposed by the United States is inconsistent with international trade obligations.

Canadian Meat Council President Scott Entz joined Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and International Trade Minister Ed Fast as well as leaders of the Canadian cattle and pork sectors at Soderglen Ranches in Alberta in heralding this long-awaited good news. "The Canadian and U.S. beef and pork production and processing sectors are critical components of an integrated North American red meat industry that provides a broad selection of high quality, safe and nutritious food products to consumers both at home and in other countries" said Entz. "The imposition of bureaucratic, costly and unfair measures that make no contribution to food safety jeopardizes North American competitiveness in the global marketplace and weakens economic growth, investment and job opportunities on farms and in meat processing facilities across Canada and the United States" added Entz.

On behalf of the meat industry's 400 federally registered establishments, and their 67,500 employees, Entz thanked Ministers Ritz and Fast for their continued dedication to the reduction and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers that challenge Canadian processors in their endeavours to export over \$4 billion of Canadian meat products annually to 150 different countries around the world. Resolving market access issues is a lengthy and resource-intensive process that requires ongoing close collaboration between government and companies.

In addition to its efforts to address technical issues that affect particular products in individual markets, the Canadian meat industry has asked the government to assign the highest near-term priorities to three major negotiations. First, early agreement by Prime Minister Harper and President Obama on a Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) Work Plan would facilitate progress in ensuring food safety while addressing unnecessary bureaucratic constraints to Canada-U.S. trade. Second, a successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) negotiations with the European Union would offer markedly improved and more secure access to the world's largest single market. Third, it is of critical importance to Canada's agri-food sector, including beef and pork producers and processors, that the Governments of Canada and of South Korea renew the stalled negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement. The European Union, the United States and Chile have concluded free trade agreements with South Korea. Unless Canada acts immediately to re-engage with that country, Canadian pork and beef could be excluded entirely from the South Korean market as the result of the prohibitively higher tariffs that will be imposed on Canadian products.

The meat industry is Canada's largest food processing sector with gross annual sales of over \$21.3 billion. The Canadian Meat Council has represented Canada's federally inspected meat processing industry since 1919.

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