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Farmers Hopeful Canada Will Join Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations

The Grain Growers of Canada are pleased Canada sent observers to Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) meetings in Peru last week to explore the possibility of participation in the negotiations through bi-lateral consultations.

“With over 90% of farmers dependent on export markets or prices for their farm gate income, trade liberalization continues to be an important focus of our organization,” said Doug Robertson, President of the Grain Growers of Canada. “Previously, we were deeply disappointed Canada was excluded from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We are glad the government is exploring the possibility of fixing the situation.”

In May Canada found itself excluded from joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership due to the objection of some nations to Canada’s stance on supply management.

“Branching out into new markets in Asia through the TPP represents a great opportunity for Canadian farmers. There is the potential to expand access for canola and wheat, as well as the domestic feed market with greater exports of beef and pork.” said Robertson.

Demand for beef and pork in the Pacific Rim has been on the rapid rise in the past decade. This would provide a much needed boost for the two sectors, which will indirectly benefit Canadian grain farmers.

“While Canada already has trade deals with some of these countries, the Trans-Pacific Partnership has the potential to address other issues, such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical trade barriers,” said Robertson. “These pose a growing problem in restricting market access of Canadian farmers, and can only be addressed in a broader trade deal such as the TPP.”

Like the Canada-EU trade deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is more ambitious in scope than normal bi-lateral agreements, such as Colombia, Peru and Jordan. In the absence of process at the WTO, these larger agreements are necessary to liberalize global trade.

“While Canada has not yet made a formal decision whether it wants to participate, we remain hopeful the government will make the right choice and move forward in seeking to join the negotiations,” said Robertson.

The Grain Growers of Canada represent over 80,000 successful farmers through its membership organizations who grow wheat, oats, barley, canola, corn, peas, lentils and triticale.

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