



Ottawa, ON – February 9, 2023 – Dan Darling, President of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) today issued the statement below regarding the passing of the second reading for Bill C-282 An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management).

“CAFTA members, who represent 90 per cent of Canadian farmers, producers, food manufacturers and agri-food businesses, strongly oppose Bill C-282 An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management).

“This legislation creates a dangerous precedent and diminishes Canada as a free trade partner. It contradicts established trade rules and severely constrains Canada’s ability to negotiate the best free trade agreements for all sectors of the Canadian economy, agriculture and non-agriculture alike. The end result is a less ambitious free trade agenda and less commercially meaningful outcomes for Canada.

“Past agreements show we can defend and protect Canadian interests across the board when negotiating trade agreements. Today, Canada is an international leader in free and fair trade. Bill C-282 puts our record of support for free trade in jeopardy and has the potential to set us back decades.

“While Bill C-282 has passed second reading, we strongly encourage Parliamentarians of all stripes to consider the long-term damage that will be caused by this bill becoming law and ensure this is carefully considered before it moves any further through the Parliamentary process.

“International trade accounts for nearly two thirds of Canada’s national economy and supports more than 1 out of every 6 jobs. It is also how Canada contributes on the international stage to safeguarding global food security.

“Simply put: free and open trade is essential to the economic wellbeing and prosperity of all Canadians. Bill C-282 runs counter to this wellbeing and should be voted down at the next available opportunity.”

For further information, please contact:

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ADDENDUM

Additional significant negative consequences from Bill C-282 becoming law and part of Canada's official trade policy

1. From a trade policy perspective

- Legislating Canada's ability to make a decision (on concessions) contradicts the objective of achieving comprehensive trade outcomes
- Would set a precedent and lead other sectors to also seek exclusions from trade talks which would further frustrate Canada's ability to negotiate new trade agreements and review existing agreements
- Would set a precedent and lead other countries to exclude products or sectors from trade discussions where Canada has offensive interests
- Would lead to an exacerbation of protectionist sentiment around the world at a time when it is already on the rise

2. From a trade negotiating perspective

- Constraining Canadian negotiators from the outset of any new trade negotiation and effectively tying their hands before negotiations even begin
- Limiting the flexibility of Canadian negotiators to reach a balance of concessions to secure the best deal for Canada and in turn for Canadian agri-food exports
- Reducing the leverage of Canadian negotiators by unilaterally revealing information to the other party

3. From a political perspective

- Could increase the leverage of trading partners threatening to refuse to extend, review or modernize existing trade agreements
- Would set a dangerous precedent which would limit our ability to even be invited to a seat at the table of various bilateral and multilateral negotiations which would be devastating for a trade-dependent nation
- Would severely jeopardize Canada's ability to negotiate and conclude any comprehensive trade negotiations where Canada has significant offensive interests even where massive benefits may be accrued

4. From an economic perspective

- Would lead to less ambitious and less commercially meaningful outcomes across all economic sectors because it would encourage every country to avoid making any significant concessions, especially in sensitive areas
- Would prioritize the economic interests of the products or sectors excluded above the economic interests of any other sectors in Canada