



Canada Grains Council applauds the Canadian Government's leadership in finding trade facilitative solutions that support innovation

Ottawa, ON — (November 27, 2018): The Canada Grains Council President, Tyler Bjornson released the following statement applauding the Government of Canada on recent progress to combat non-tariff trade barriers.

"The members of the Canada Grains Council commend the Government of Canada on a series of important trade facilitating milestones that together contribute to a more open trading environment for Canada's grain sector and help to reduce non-tariff trade barriers.

"Non-tariff barriers pose the biggest threat to the grain sector's ability to access key markets abroad. While free trade agreements (FTAs) have been tremendously useful at reducing tariff barriers, historically they have not addressed serious non-tariff barriers such as those created by misaligned policies and regulations around approvals of pesticides and seed varieties. We commend the Government of Canada for continuing to spearhead initiatives that address these barriers.

"In recent weeks, Canada has moved swiftly to ratify the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), securing tariff free access into some of the world's most prosperous and fastest growing markets. In addition, Canada has also forged a deal with the United States and Mexico to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement. These two deals are important, not just for the commitment to reduce and eliminate tariffs but also because these FTAs contain language that deal with the more serious threats of non-tariff barriers.

"The new United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) for example, makes progress towards reducing asynchronous approvals of biotechnology. The agreement also contains stronger language around dealing with low level presence (LLP) of genetically modified grain by compelling countries to deal with any occurrences without unnecessary delay.

"Likewise, the CPTPP contains important language on regulatory harmonization. Specifically, the deal encourages science-based approval processes for biotechnology products. In addition, the text sets out a process to minimize the impact of LLP occurrences.

"The Government of Canada is also demonstrating its willingness to work to address non-tariff barriers outside of FTAs. Canada recently joined 13 trading partners in supporting a joint international statement on Agricultural Applications of Precision Biotechnology. This statement, released at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, aims to prevent regulatory misalignment and trade disruptions. Precision biotechnology will be increasingly important as a tool to aid growers in feeding an expanding world population by allowing them to address environmental challenges, pest and disease pressures, and changing consumer preferences in a sustainable way.



“In the past, free trade agreements have been very good at committing governments to incrementally reduce tariffs, but far less effective at getting at the root of non-tariff barriers which are not only covert but far more damaging to the agricultural sector. The Canada Grains Council is encouraged to see the Government of Canada and trading partners engaged in finding new ways to facilitate solutions that will support growth in innovation.”

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About the Canada Grains Council

The Canada Grains Council is the umbrella industry association for Canada’s grain sector. A pan-Canadian federation of grain value chain members, the Council leads and facilitates the development and implementation of policies and initiatives addressing cross commodity issues and opportunities. The Council was formed in 1969 to coordinate industry efforts to maximize the sale and use of Canadian crops in domestic and world markets. Over 40 years later, it has evolved into Canada’s ‘go to’ forum for multi-stakeholder collaboration, information-sharing and consensus-based decision making on sector issues of national and international importance. Organizations representing Canada’s cereal grains, oilseeds, pulses and special crops sectors as well as key links along the ‘farm to fork’ continuum make up the Council’s membership.

Media Contact:

Karla Barnes
Senior Consultant, Canada Grains Council
(c): 613-462-4964
(e): karla@canadagrainscouncil.ca