

## **Canada-EU trade negotiations could signal significant new opportunities for Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector: CAFTA**

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OTTAWA, May 7 /CNW/ -- OTTAWA, May 7 /CNW/ - The Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) welcomes the news that Canada and the European Union will begin negotiating a new economic partnership agreement aimed at liberalizing trade and expanding market access between Canada and the EU.

CAFTA is a coalition of national and regional organizations, associations and companies that have come together in support of a more open and fair international trading environment for agriculture and agri-food.

"The launch of these historic negotiations has the potential to open the door to significant new opportunities for Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector, which relies heavily on exports," says CAFTA President Darcy Davis. "With a population of 500 million, the EU could become an important market for Canadian agricultural products."

CAFTA has supported the Canadian government's efforts to expand economic ties with the EU and congratulates the government on the May 6 announcement of negotiations for a comprehensive, bilateral trade agreement. CAFTA is pleased that the two parties have agreed to seek an ambitious, wide-ranging agreement that will cover trade in goods, technical trade barriers, customs procedures and many other measures which affect trade.

"The stage has been set for discussions on both tariffs and non-tariff impediments to trade," Davis says. "In today's environment, we are pleased to see that Canada and the EU recognize that expanded trade can be a powerful stimulus of economic activity."

While welcoming these bilateral trade negotiations, CAFTA stresses that multilateral negotiations provide the greatest opportunity for achieving more open trade in agriculture and agri-food. CAFTA encourages the Canadian government to continue seek progress in agricultural negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

CAFTA's members include producer organizations, processors, marketers and exporters from the major trade dependent sectors in Canada. Together, CAFTA's members produce almost 80% of Canada's agriculture and agri-food exports, conduct about \$40 billion in business annually and directly employ close to 500 thousand Canadians.