

Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association

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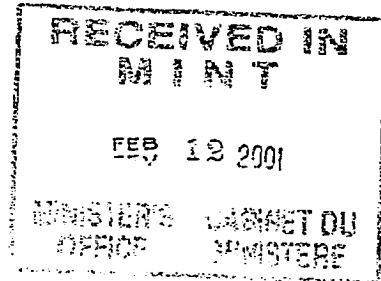
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February 8, 2001

T-00802-01

Honourable Pierre Pettigrew
Minister for International Trade
Trade Policy Planning Division (EAI)/Central America
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0G2



Dear Minister:

I appreciate your consultative approach to trade policy development and strongly believe that policy cannot and should not be made in isolation from those who may be most affected by it. The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association has been actively involved in trade policy as part of our mandate representing the interests of farmers who depend heavily on export markets and on fair trade rules. We are strong advocates of free trade and encourage your department to pursue a free trade arrangement with Central America. As your letter points out, there is significant potential to expand two-way trade with the region to the benefit of all parties and we have no specific issues of concern for our industry.

As strong supporter of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and negotiations to reduce and eliminate trade barriers, the Wheat Growers only apprehension with bilateral trade agreements is their potential to undermine or interfere with the multilateral negotiations. I have no doubt that your department is mindful of our concern, however, I wanted to stress that for the agriculture sector, progress in the WTO negotiations is a priority.

I would like to point out that the Wheat Growers are founding members of the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC). The GGC is an association of farm groups from across Canada formed last fall that will soon be based in Ottawa. It will provide a strong, united voice for Canadian grain growers with common concerns. International trade policy is one of the key policy areas for the GGC and I encourage you to seek out its input, as well as ours, in your consulting process.

Thank you for you invitation to provide input into trade policy development and I look forward to our continuing association.

Sincerely,

Ted Menzies,
President

See us on the Internet: www.wcwga.ca

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