



- Japan agreed to a Canadian request to develop a new standard to expand the use of Canadian softwood concrete-form plywood in Japan (JAS 932).
- Construction of three-storey multi-unit wooden buildings was prohibited in semi-fire-rated zones, until the Ministry of Construction announced an easing of building restrictions in August 1997.
- Japan has agreed to recognize the higher stress-value capabilities of Northern Hemlock and Douglas Fir (Canadian lumber species), allowing for their use in a wider range of applications.
- Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) formally approved the results of a Canadian hay-fumigation test, allowing for baled hay that is fumigated in Canada to enter Japan without the need for further inspection on arrival.
- Japan approved the importation of three varieties of transgenic canola for environmental, food and feed safety in 1996, and has just recently decided to extend the approval to conventionally derived progeny of approved transgenic lines.
- Canada and Japan reached an agreement in principle on revisions to the Canada-Japan Double Taxation Convention. This revision, among other things, will allow for the mutual exemption of local taxes on international transport operations.

INDIA

- Within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and under agreements reached with Canada and several other countries (the European Union, Japan, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand), India will phase out import restrictions on a very wide range of products that are of interest to Canadian exporters. These import restrictions generally take the form of quantitative restrictions and outright bans on the import of goods covered by about 2700 different tariff items. The restrictions will be removed over three stages — covering the period April 1997 to March 2003 — with the first “batch” of items scheduled to be liberalized at the end of March 1998. India has also committed to phasing out all restrictions on the import of goods covered by the ITA during the first stage, i.e. by March 2000.

EUROPEAN UNION

- Canada and the EU signed an Agreement on Customs Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, which will facilitate trade through simplification and harmonization of customs procedures and, will enhance the capacity to deal with violations of customs law.
- Signing of the Canada-EU Agreement on Humane Trapping Standards restored secure access to the European market for Canadian fur products. This will contribute to increased employment opportunities in many remote northern regions, notably aboriginal communities.
- Conclusion of the Canada-EU MRA on conformity assessment for regulated products in December 1997 will reduce costs and facilitate market access in Europe for Canadian producers of telecommunications terminal equipment, IT equipment, electrical equipment, medical devices, pharmaceuticals and recreational boats.
- Canada and the EU have concluded negotiations on an agreement on equivalency of health requirements applicable to trade in animals and animal products, which will improve access to Europe for Canadian exports in this sector.