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CANADA'S POSITION ON AGRICULTURE REMAINS FIRM IN GATT TALKS

Michael Wilson, Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade; Charles Mayer, Minister of Agriculture; and Pierre Blais, Minister of State for Agriculture, stated today that suggestions by the press that Canada has changed its position on Article XI in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) are incorrect.

"Our position has not changed," stated Minister Wilson. "Canada is continuing to press for a strengthened and clarified Article XI to control imports in support of our supply-managed sectors."

Minister Mayer reiterated that "Canada's balanced position, developed in consultation with the provinces and the industry, seeks to improve market opportunities for our export-oriented sectors, while allowing us to continue operating our supply-management systems within a stable and predictable international trade environment."

Minister Blais added, "Canada remains committed to supply management as an essential element of Canada's agricultural policy."

The Ministers stressed that consultations with the industry and the provinces will continue throughout the negotiations, aimed at achieving a substantial and balanced world trade agreement under the GATT.

"While we realize that we are engaged in an uphill battle over Article XI, we are continuing to fight vigorously," Mr. Wilson added. "The industry and the government recognize that Article XI as it now stands is not a viable option for Canada. We are working hard to ensure that in the final stages of the negotiations we will be successful in achieving our negotiating objectives as set out in Canada's balanced position."