

There can be no doubt that trade-distorting practices in agricultural trade have become a global issue of considerable concern. As for international agricultural trade, the trading system -- never very strong in the first place -- is now in crisis. If you want to see what the absence of effective rules would do to international trade in goods, you need look no further than trade in agriculture.

The Cairns Group of fair agricultural traders, of which Canada is a member, represents 25 per cent of world agricultural production. This is an alliance aimed at devising a strategy to deal with the massive American and European subsidies threatening our exports. John Wise, Charlie Mayer and I will be hosting its next meeting prior to the Venice Summit so that we will be in a position to brief the Prime Minister thoroughly on our shared concerns.

Within GATT, we will push for reductions of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, just as Canadian governments have done for 40 years. We will do so because history tells us that Canada prospers as trade impediments are removed.

As people in this province know well, our automotive trade with the U.S. over the last 20 to 30 years clearly demonstrates the benefits of eliminating and reducing tariffs.

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