

Agriculture

Agriculture was a key priority for Alberta in the trade negotiations. Canada and the U.S. have negotiated a very large agricultural agreement. It is a good deal for Alberta farmers giving us improved and secure access to our largest trading partner. The U.S. now accounts for 16% of Alberta exports in agriculture. It is a primary key to the future growth of the agri-food industry.

Canada has obtained duty-free and more secure access to the U.S. market for the agricultural and food products which are of major export interest. For Alberta these products include meat and livestock, grains and oilseeds and potatoes.

The agreement includes the following:

1. Tariffs will be phased out gradually over a period of up to 10 years. Fruits and vegetables will receive special treatment for up to 20 years, under certain conditions.
2. There will be a prohibition of direct export subsidies on bilateral agricultural trade and improved consultation procedures regarding the use of export subsidies to third countries.
3. Canadian exports to the U.S. via west coast ports will not benefit from subsidized Western Grain Transportation Act rail rates.
4. Canada's import permit system for wheat, oats and barley and their products will be removed when support levels become equivalent. Both countries will benefit from more secure access for these products.
5. Our bilateral trade in beef will be exempted from our respective Meat Import Laws.
6. The new trade dispute mechanism will help resolve trade disputes.
7. New rules will help prevent the misuse of technical regulations as trade barriers.
8. Canada's supply management marketing boards will remain in place. The future of supply management is secure as well because more boards may be created in the future, providing they follow the GATT rules.