

agriculture and agri-food exports beyond their current value of \$22 billion. At the same time, the Government is committed to preserving the ability of Canadians to operate orderly marketing systems necessary for stability and profitability. Canada is prepared to discuss any factual concerns regarding the trade effects of orderly marketing systems, but decisions regarding marketing system choices will continue to be made in this country.

The issues surrounding biotechnology and its application to agriculture and market access continue to evolve rapidly. The complexities associated with biotechnology are many, and the Government is committed to respond to the concerns of Canadians and maintain our leadership in the development and commercialization of biotechnology products and services. A credible and transparent process is being established to avoid misinformation and to ensure that these issues are understood.

Recommendation 15 endorses the use of science as the reference for the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The Government is taking steps to clarify the applicability of international rules to trade of biotechnology products, including genetically modified organisms. Canada is proposing the formation of a WTO working party on biotechnology. While many WTO Members consider that biotechnology products are effectively handled by current WTO rules, others are of the view that the existing rules merit clarification and elaboration to better apply to biotechnology products and services.

Several WTO provisions are especially relevant to biotechnology, including the Agreements on Technical Barriers to Trade, on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, and on Trade-Related Intellectual Property. The Government believes the time is ripe for a WTO working group to explore how existing provisions apply to biotechnology. The Government will continue to act on a precautionary basis and to participate in all relevant international fora in order to learn of developments, influence the debate, and assure the best possible outcome for Canada.