



Canada-Thailand Trade Negotiations
Global Affairs Canada
111 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1J1
Submitted via email: Thailand-ConsultationsTCA@international.gc.ca

January 26, 2026

RE: [Consulting Canadians on a potential Canada-Thailand Free Trade Agreement](#)

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of our members across the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association is pleased to offer comments to Global Affairs Canada regarding a potential free trade agreement with Thailand.

About CPMA

Based in Ottawa, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is a not-for-profit organization representing companies active in the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada, from the farm gate to the dinner plate spanning the entire produce industry. The Association's members include major growers, shippers, packers, and marketers; importers and exporters; transportation and logistics firms; brokers, distributors and wholesalers; retailers, and foodservice distributors; and fresh cut operators and processors. Founded in 1925, CPMA is proud to represent over 900 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

General Comments

The fresh produce industry is a major economic driver across North America. In Canada, the fresh produce supply chain generates \$18.6 billion in GDP and supports more than 187,000 jobs in rural and urban communities across Canada¹.

While the fresh fruit and vegetable production is a vital part of the fabric of our rural and urban landscape, supporting the growing and selling of a range of Canadian-grown products, we also rely heavily on our global partners to supply Canadians with our safe and healthy products year-round. In fact, due to our colder climate and shorter growing season, coupled with a demand for a wide variety of products, 4 out of 5 dollars spent on fresh fruit and vegetables in Canada is spent on imported product.

At the same time, trade flows have fluctuated over the past few years due to escalating geopolitical conflicts, supply chain disruptions, and extreme weather events. It is therefore increasingly important for Canada to negotiate a diversified suite of free trade agreements that enable importers to pivot and adjust their buying behaviour if these issues impact the flow of fresh fruit and vegetables. In this trade context, it

¹ Conference Board of Canada, 2025

is timely to reassess opportunities in Southeast Asia, particularly with Thailand, which is Canada's second largest trading partner within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)².

Increasing market access and sustainability of the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry requires mutual recognition of food safety systems, and international harmonization of crop protection regulation, products, and residue limits, to remove costly duplication. Every effort should be made to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to trade and support the competitiveness of Canadian products. This requires collaboration both within Canadian governmental agencies, and between the Canadian government and other governments with which we trade. It is critical that this process takes place during trade negotiations to prevent technical barriers arising following the signing of trade agreements.

Phytosanitary requirements that are not science-based or essential to security act as effective non-tariff trade barriers between countries and must be eliminated. Negotiations for a free trade agreement with Thailand must therefore ensure that any phytosanitary requirements for fruit and vegetable imports be based on sound science and an appropriate risk-based approach, particularly for those Canadian products with the greatest export growth potential, such as potatoes and cherries.

At the same time, CPMA reiterates that any free trade agreement pursued with Indonesia should create the foundation for future discussions regarding the mutual recognition of food safety systems, while also ensuring that Thailand's existing food safety system does not negatively impact our domestic industry.

Target Products & Market Access

Although Canada and Thailand have long-standing diplomatic and commercial ties, trade in the fresh produce sector has remained limited, constrained in part by our geographical distance, limitations in available cold chain infrastructure that is required for our highly perishable products, and by relatively high tariffs.

Previous import activity has focused on fruits including avocados (HS 0805.40) and pineapples (HS 0805.30), with substantially smaller volumes of vegetables including lettuce and chicory (HS 0705), carrots, turnips and similar edible roots (0706). Tropical and warm-climate fruits and other commodities not able to be grown, or not grown widely, in Canada are likely to offer the biggest opportunities for imports moving forward.

On the export side, there are potential opportunities for Canadian apples, cherries, blueberries, and potatoes, each with distinct considerations:

- Blueberries (HS 0810.40.4017): There is no local production, creating an opportunity to fill seasonal gaps from other source countries. However, exports would generally rely on higher-cost air freight to maintain quality.
- Sweet cherries (HS 0809.29.4034): While sweet cherries pose a key export opportunity, Thailand's higher tariffs limit our current potential.
- Apples (HS 0808.10): Apples from British Columbia are already permitted under strict phytosanitary conditions. There is opportunity for the negotiation of protocols to allow access for apples from other provinces.
- Potatoes (HS 0701.90, HS 0701.10): There may be opportunities to expand exports of Canadian seed and fresh potatoes, provided that workable phytosanitary protocols can be negotiated, and that tariffs and import quotas can be reduced or eliminated.

² *Canada-Thailand Relations*, [Government of Canada](#), 2025

Thailand's role as a key agricultural hub and a central member of ASEAN presents a strategic opportunity to help Canadian fresh produce exporters access a rapidly growing regional market while positioning Canada more effectively within Southeast Asia's agri-food value chain. Collaboration towards reducing tariffs and streamlining regulatory requirements, both within a free trade agreement with Thailand and in the broader Canada-ASEAN trade agreement, would allow importers and exporters to meet consumer demand for high-quality fresh produce.

Along with Canada's membership in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the geographic proximity to the Asia-Pacific region, increasing trade opportunities with Thailand places Canada a step closer towards its effort to diversify agri-food exports and strengthen economic ties in Southeast Asia.

We look forward to working with the Government of Canada to ensure that any agreement supports the growth and stability of the produce sector while addressing the issues outlined above. Thank you for taking the time to review our comments. We would be pleased to respond to any questions or provide additional information as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RL' followed by a horizontal line.

Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association