



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

January 26th, 2026

RE: [Consulting Canadians on a potential Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with India](#)

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 economic partnership agreement with India.

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.

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 more and more important that Canada enables free trade agreements that enable importers to pivot and adjust their buying behaviour if these issues impact the flow of fresh fruit and vegetables.

¹ Conference Board of Canada, 2025

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.

With this important context in mind, CPMA welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of Canada's fresh produce sector regarding a possible agreement between Canada and India.

Imports

India's role as a source market for fresh fruits vegetables supplied to Canada has been limited and uneven to-date. In 2024, trade data show that import values from India across key vegetable categories were small, indicating that India has functioned primarily as a marginal or supplementary supplier rather than a significant source.

For example, Canadian imports from India in 2024 amounted to approximately \$297,000 for onions, shallots, garlic, and leeks (HS 0703); \$119,000 for carrots, turnips, and other edible roots (HS 0706.10); and significantly less for other vegetable commodities².

However, evolving demographic trends show the potential for a growing demand for Indian produce in the Canadian market. Between January and June 2025 alone, India was Canada's largest source of new permanent residents, with 59,260 individuals admitted³. This growing Indian-origin population is contributing to changes in demand with implications for the import market, particularly for fresh fruits and vegetables that are not widely produced domestically or are limited by climate and seasonality.

Looking forward, products of particular interest for import include fresh grapes (HS 0806.10), mangoes (HS 0804.50.4037 and HS 0804.50.4038), red onions (HS 0703.10.3001), red carrots (HS 0706.10.3017), and other tropical or warm-climate fruits that cannot be reliably grown in Canada.

Exports

In parallel, Canada has opportunities to expand exports of fresh produce to India, particularly for commodities where Canadian growers have established sufficient production capacity and where the needed cold chain and supply chain infrastructure is in place. With a population exceeding 1.4 billion, Indian households account for a large share of global consumption of basic food items, including fruits and vegetables. Products such as fresh apples (HS 0808.10) are widely consumed, yet domestic supply is constrained by seasonality, regional production limits, and cold-chain capacity. As a result, India relies on imports to supplement domestic availability, particularly for higher-quality apples⁴.

CPMA is supportive of the Government of Canada's efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation with India and its broader objective of diversifying trade beyond traditional partners. We emphasize that the Government of Canada must recognize food as an essential item in framing our trade agreements, with

² Trade Data Online, Statistics Canada, 2026

³ [Immigration Canada](#)

⁴ [USDA Report – Fresh Deciduous Fruit Annual, 2024](#)

the fundamental goal to support our domestic markets while strengthening food security and ensuring product diversity for Canadians.

We look forward to working collaboratively 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 'R. Lemaire', followed by a horizontal line.

Ron Lemaire
President
Canadian Produce Marketing Association