



Global Affairs Canada
Trade Policy and Negotiations Division (TCA)
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

April 12, 2021

Submitted Via Email

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: *Consulting Canadians on future trade negotiations with the United Kingdom*

On behalf of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), it is my pleasure to provide our comments to the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) consultation on *bilateral free trade agreement negotiations with the United Kingdom* (U.K.), as well as on the United Kingdom's request to join the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership* (CPTPP).

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 today proud to represent over 800 domestic and international members who are responsible for 90% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada.

Comments

Promoting international trade and investment with export markets is a priority for the Canadian fresh produce sector, and Canada plays a vital role in supporting the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables amongst the United Kingdom's (U.K.) population. In fact, the U.K. is among the top ten Canadian export markets for both fruit and vegetables. CPMA therefore welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the fresh produce industry to the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) consultation on *bilateral free trade agreement negotiations with the United Kingdom* (U.K.), as well as on the United Kingdom's request to join the *Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership* (CPTPP).

Particularly as we mark the UN International Year of Fruits and Vegetables in 2021, CPMA would like to begin by emphasizing the vital role that crop protection tools play in protecting our food and crops from invading weeds, insects, and disease. It is important to note that farmers and others along the supply chain have led the way in adopting environmentally sustainable practices. Constant monitoring of crops supports decision making, including pesticide use. These products are not liberally applied; instead, application is guided by sophisticated data sets to maximize output and support sustainability of the land that farmers steward.

With that in mind, CPMA would like to emphasize that the harmonization of pesticide regulation, products, and Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) must occur, along with the mutual recognition of environmentally sustainable practices, to increase market access and sustainability of the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry as well as support a variety of safe produce choices for consumers in Canadian and British markets. It is critical that this process takes place during trade negotiations to prevent technical barriers arising following the signing of trade agreements.

Furthermore, phytosanitary requirements that are not science-based or essential to security act as effective non-tariff trade barriers and must also be addressed during the negotiation of any trade agreement with the U.K. to ensure the movement of fresh produce. Negotiations for a bilateral free trade agreement with the U.K., as well as their request to join the CPTPP, must therefore ensure the mutual recognition of trading partners' plant protection and food safety systems. This is particularly important for the export of cherries, apples, and cranberries, which accounted for a significant portion of fruit and vegetable exports to the U.K in 2020. At the same time, CPMA reiterates that any free trade agreement pursued with the U.K. should create the foundation for future discussions regarding the mutual recognition of food safety systems, while also ensuring that the U.K.'s existing food safety system does not negatively impact our domestic industry.

Where possible, Canadian negotiators should engage with the produce industry as they determine proposed models and implementation plans for the areas noted in this submission. Furthermore, a monitoring and accountability mechanism should be established, with objectives assessed in an annual public report. Industry is keen to partner with government to ensure the success of future trade agreements.

We appreciate you taking the time to review our comments.

Sincerely,

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

Ron Lemaire
President