



The Canadian Pork Industry Strongly Disagrees with the Australian Productivity Commission's Findings

Ottawa, December 14, 1998 - The Canadian pork industry rejects the conclusions of a Productivity Commission study that pork imports are causing injury to the Australian pork industry. "We recognize Australian pork producers are suffering from low prices", said Edouard Asnong, President of the Canadian Pork Council (CPC), "but they certainly are not suffering any more than producers in North America where hog prices are at historic lows. Furthermore, Australian pork imports this year are declining, in response to lower Australia market returns".

The Canadian Pork Council and the Canadian Meat Council (CMC) have encouraged the Canadian Government to make strong representations to the Australian authorities, pointing out that a safeguard action, on the basis of the Productivity Commission's report, would not be sustainable under WTO-covered agreements.

"The imposition of any tariff at this time would exclude Canadian pork from the Australian market, when its access is already limited by other import requirements. Such a measure would not even help the Australian pork industry, as reports from Australia indicate" said Robert Weaver, the General Manager of the Canadian Meat Council. He indicated the Productivity Commission itself recognized in its report that "import restrictions will raise the price of inputs to the smallgoods manufacturing sector, with possible adverse effects on that industry, and increase consumer prices."

Both organizations agree that should the Government of Australia proceed to implement safeguard restrictions which target imports, they will make every effort to encourage the Canadian government to challenge these measures before the World Trade Organization. "It would be much more acceptable, however, to avoid such measures in the first place", said Mr. Asnong, "as it would avoid serious disruption to agricultural trade between our two countries, not only in pork, but potentially in other agricultural commodities given Australia's very large agri-food trade surplus with Canada".

The Canadian Pork Council is the national federation of provincial hog producers and marketing organisations. The Canadian Meat Council is Canada's national trade association of federally inspected meat packers/processors and trade.

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