

For immediate release

Canadian pulse industry applauds federal government efforts to discuss free trade with Morocco

April 17, 2009 (Winnipeg, MB) – The Canadian pulse industry strongly supports the efforts of the Canadian government towards a possible trade agreement with Morocco.

This week, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz led a trade mission to Morocco and met with pulse and grain importers. Pulse Canada accompanied the Minister on this mission and took the opportunity to meet with pulse importers one-on-one. Morocco is an important green lentil market, importing approximately 31,700 tonnes of Canadian product in 2007 for a total of \$16.2 million. Morocco was Canada’s seventh largest lentil market in 2007 and a top five market for green lentils. It is also a good market for split green peas.

Morocco is a key priority for the Canadian pulse industry, which would stand to gain significantly from a Canada-Morocco trade agreement. Under the U.S.-Morocco agreement, tariffs for U.S. peas and beans will be eliminated over a 10-year period and tariffs for U.S. lentils and chickpeas will be eliminated over an 18-year period. Without a similar agreement, Canadian pulses will continue to face a 50 per cent tariff. At recent prices of around \$800 per tonne for lentils, a 50 per cent tariff disadvantage translates into a disadvantage of \$400 per tonne for Canadian lentils relative to lentils from the U.S.

“This week, buyers stressed to us the need to get agreements in place that would reduce tariffs for Canadian pulses,” says Pulse Canada’s vice chair David Nobbs, who accompanied Minister Ritz on the mission to Morocco. “This market appreciates Canadian quality and service and wants to ensure continued competitive access to Canadian products.”

The Canadian pulse industry encourages the federal government to ratify free trade agreements with Peru and Colombia and continue trade negotiations with the Dominican Republic, a key market for Canadian beans, to ensure continued access for Canadian pulses in those markets.

Pulse Canada is the national association representing growers, traders and processors of Canadian pulse crops. The Canadian pulse industry has grown to become a global leader, as the world’s largest supplier of pulses with exports to over 150 countries.

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