

For immediate release:

Western Provinces Challenge Quebec's Prohibition of Dairy Alternatives

Toronto (January 7, 2014) -- As noted in the Government of Saskatchewan's news release, of December 30, 2013 (<http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=65231416-8c6f-44fa-a549-4a8a703d8d24>), the western provinces led by Saskatchewan are challenging Quebec's regulatory prohibitions that make illegal the manufacture and sale of vegetable-oil-based dairy alternative products. These alternatives are principally canola and soy-based.

This challenge is made under the pan-Canadian Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) to which the province of Quebec is a signatory. An AIT dispute resolution panel will hear this matter on January 8, 2014 at 9:00 am EST at the Chateau Frontenac Hotel in Quebec City.

"We are pleased that Saskatchewan, along with the other western provinces, is showing leadership in tackling barriers to trade in Canada." Vegetable Oil Industry of Canada (VOIC) President Sean McPhee said. "Our members look forward to the time when vegetable oil based alternatives to dairy products can be manufactured and sold in all parts of Canada."

This matter has been before AIT dispute resolution Panels twice before in Ontario. On both occasions the Panels found in favour of the western provinces, striking down Ontario's prohibitions. Ontario has since rescinded the impugned dairy protectionist regulations.

"Quebec is now the last holdout in Canada by maintaining dairy protectionist regulations that have been found by other AIT Panels to be inconsistent with the Agreement on Internal Trade," said McPhee.

If successful in this challenge of Quebec's regulations, the western provinces and VOIC will have created a domestic market of 35 million consumers, that did not exist before, for these healthful canola and soy based products.

"These vegetable oil based products, whether as a spread for bread or used as a fat component in cooking and baking or as ingredients for the food processing industry, are low in saturated fat, trans fat free, a good source of omega 3 fatty acids, and are recommended by a recently approved Health Canada health claim", said McPhee. (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/claims-reclam/assess-evalu/sat-mono-poly-fat-gras-eng.php>)

With the elimination of these internal trade barriers imposed by the province of Quebec, Canada's vegetable oil seed developers, growers, processors and consumer product makers will be able to leverage the economies of sale of a pan-Canadian market to enhance the Canadian agri-food sector's export opportunities.

"It is key for Canada's agri-food sector to position itself to take advantage of new export opportunities given the recently agreed-in-principle Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union, and the current negotiations under the Trans Pacific

Partnership with Pacific Rim countries. These agreements open the European and Asian markets for Canadians. And that is very good for all Canadians,” said McPhee.

VOIC (VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY OF CANADA) INC. - VOIC (INDUSTRIE DE L'HUILE VÉGÉTALE DU CANADA) INC. is a national not-for-profit industry group representing 70,000 oilseed growers across Canada, seed developers, oilseed processors and suppliers of fats and oils to the food industry, and makers of oilseed-based food products such as margarine, shortenings, cooking oil, salad dressing, mayonnaise and dessert toppings.

SOURCE: Vegetable Oil Industry of Canada
www.voic.ca

For further information:
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