

Minister
of Agriculture and
Agri-Food
and Minister for the
Canadian Wheat Board



Ministre
de l'Agriculture et de
l'Agroalimentaire
et ministre de la
Commission canadienne du blé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0C5

Quote: 109642

DEC 14 2007

Ms. Mary Anderson
President
Canadian Association of Importers and
Exporters Inc.
438 University Avenue
Suite 1618, Box 60
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Thank you for providing me with an overview of the Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters Inc. initiatives relating to import safety. I was pleased to have the opportunity to join you in September at the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership annual general meeting in Regina.

I commend your association on its leadership within the industry to help ensure that food products being imported to Canada will meet Canadian food safety and quality regulations. Your organization plays an important role in improving the capacity of the import community to understand and meet Canadian requirements, and the documents that you have included with your correspondence speak to that. I congratulate your organization on its efforts, in particular in furthering the adoption of good importing practices.

In 2005, Canada imported \$14.7 billion of processed food, seafood and beverages that made up about 21 per cent of processed food and beverages consumed by Canadians. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is committed to continuing to work with the Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters and other industry stakeholders to ensure that imported food products are safe and consumer confidence in our food supply is maintained.

In the recent Speech from the Throne, a strong commitment was made by the Government regarding the safety of consumer products and foods. Plans are being made to introduce measures on food and product safety, specifically with respect to imported products. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency will be looking to work with your organization and its members, among others, in the future toward developing and implementing these measures.

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As you are aware, the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) is set to expire in March 2008. In preparation for Growing Forward, a series of public consultations were held across Canada to receive input from industry, governments and other stakeholders.

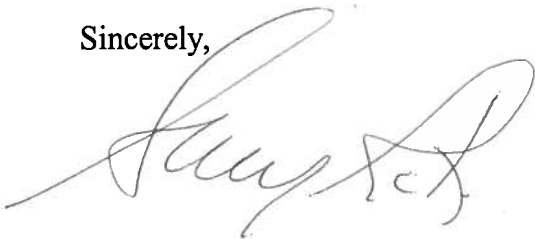
Growing Forward will build on the successes of the APF and, at the same time, strive for simpler and more accessible delivery of programs and services. My provincial counterparts and I are very much aware of the need for continuity as we make the transition from the current suite of programs to the new programming under Growing Forward. I encourage you to visit www.agr.gc.ca/growingforward for the latest information on the consultation process and reports.

On November 17, 2007, my provincial and territorial counterparts and I announced that we have agreed to seek the authorities needed for a transition period of up to one additional year starting April 1, 2008, during which time current APF programs would continue until new programs under Growing Forward are established. Ministers will be holding further discussions on funding issues.

Governments will work closely with farmers and sector organizations on program design. Ministers committed to provide farmers and others in the sector notice well in advance of any program changes. For further details on this announcement, please see the news release at the following website: www.agr.gc.ca/cb/index_e.php?s1=n&s2=2007&page=n71117.

Again, thank you for writing. Your work, including the initiatives identified in your letter, provide valuable tools for helping the sector address food safety issues. I look forward to seeing the results of the tools as they evolve and are further embraced by your members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Ritz', written in a cursive style.

Gerry Ritz, PC, MP