



MEDIA RELEASE

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New CETA deal opens new market opportunities for province's seafood products

(St. John's, NL) – Newfoundland and Labrador seafood producers are lauding the newly announced free trade agreement with the European Union, saying it has the potential to be a game changer for the industry.

“The EU represents the most lucrative seafood market in the world, with high seafood consumption per capita. For too many of our products, we are kept from being competitive because of the high tariffs the EU placed on our seafood products,” said Derek Butler, Executive Director of the Association of Seafood Producers in the province.

The deal, announced Friday in Brussels by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso, will eliminate all EU tariffs on fish and seafood, which presently average 11% with peaks of 25%.

“It's a remarkable achievement, the elimination of all EU tariffs on fish and seafood in a single leap. We asked for that in testimony to the House of Commons Trade Committee in October 2011, but I don't think we ever thought it could be achieved. It is a historic deal,” said Butler.

CETA will also make it easier for producers to trade with the EU. The agreement will ensure more predictable border procedures, notably through electronic processes that will help reduce time and costs at the border, and will include other considerations to help address non-tariff barriers.

“The EU is our backyard,” said Butler. “Two-thirds of the rest of Canada's seafood is sold in the US, but we sell just 34% to the US. We're closer to many parts of Europe, geographically and historically, than many markets in the US.”

Butler says the goal now is to take advantage of the opportunities that CETA provides for.

“Clearly we have work to do, but the good news is, the ground has shifted. We can take our current sales, and now, we have room for growth. This is good news for us and good news for European consumers. It opens up new market opportunities.”

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