TPP deal has good news, bad news

BY KAREN BRIERE
REGINA BUREAU

Early assessments of the Trans-Pacific Partnership text show dairy imports into Canada could be higher than expected. However, stakeholders say they need more time to examine the details.

The text was made public Nov. 5, a month after the trade agreement covering 40 percent of the world’s gross domestic product and 800 million people was signed in Atlanta. At more than 6,000 pages, there is a lot to assess.

As expected, Canadian exporters of beef, pork and canola will enjoy significantly reduced or eliminated tariffs for their products going into the 11 signatory countries.

“What jumps out to me is that Vietnam and Japan will be reducing what are very high tariffs on meat, beef, pork,” said Trevor Tombe, assistant professor of economics at the University of Calgary.

“Japan currently has a 38.5 percent tariff on beef, and that’s going to fall to nine percent. It will effectively make Canadian beef 20 percent cheaper in the Japanese market.”

In Vietnam, the 34 percent tariff will drop to zero.

Similarly, Canadian exporters will have greater access for grain and oilseeds. For example, feed grain will gain duty-free access into Japan, and quotas will increase to all TPP countries, Tombe said.

The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance said its members are reviewing specifics and “what tariff rate quotas, rules of origin, reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers mean for their respective sectors.”
Supper season: It’s fall supper season across the Prairies. For photos from one in Hawarden, Sask., see page 21. — William DeKay photo

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WP photographer William Dekay attended the Hawarden Fall Supper. Locals say the annual feast has been held for as long as they can remember.

MACAULAY POLL
Maritime farmers are confident, but can prairie farmers expect Lawrence MacAulay to adequately represent their interests in Ottawa? Take our poll and let us know.

CLAAS FACTORY PHOTOS
On his way to Agritechnica, WP managing editor Michael Raine visited the Claas factory near Harsewinkel, Germany, for both a tour and some field demos.

CEREALS WRAP
Ed White talks with Daniel Basse about the recently concluded CNA conference.

VIDEOS

AG RESEARCH CUTS
Karl Gerrand, G3 CEO, says government cuts to ag research are a threat to farmers.

WEATHER WARNING
The world’s farmers should prepare for wilder weather.

COYOTE COMPLAINT
Cattle producers complain about a lack of compensation for coyote predation.

CROP QUALITY
Team Canada has a good story to tell the world about this year’s crops.

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The University of Guelph has developed a device that promises to make testing easier for two different dairy diseases. The GryphSens is a device that allows dairy producers to test for non-esterified fatty acid (NEFA) and beta-hydroxybutyrate (BHBA) in their animals without having to send samples to a laboratory.

“If the farmers have the opportunity to do the test by themselves rather than shipping the samples to the lab, it adds not only convenience but more of a early warning system,” said Suresh Neethirajan, the project’s principal researcher. The device uses a droplet of cow blood, which is put onto a cartridge and inserted into the digital reading system. The screen on the system will let the producer know if the cow has NEFA or BHBA.

“The idea is to bring down the two disease detection to probably $2 per test for both NEFA and BHBA. Right now, the test costs $10 to $20,” Neethirajan said. David Hobson and Andrea Weeks, from the Catalyst Centre at the University of Guelph are working on the commercialization for GryphSens. They have filed a U.S. provisional patent and are in talks with various companies to have one of them manufacture the device and put it on the market.

“Really the game here is early detection. So that’s why we think inline monitoring. So every time a cow is coming in to get milked, if you can see that it’s trending upwards…. It provides a trigger point for people to then get involved,” Hobson said. Depending on which company takes over commercialization, consumers could see the GryphSens on the market in about two years.

Dr. John Ayres, veterinarian at Norsask Veterinary Group in Rosetown, Sask., sees the GryphSens as promising. “Sounds interesting. There are products like that on the market right now to one degree or another. Some of them will test blood, some of them will test milk, some of them will test urine,” Ayres said. Ayres said a device of this kind would be more effective if it could test a whole herd of cattle instead of an individual cow.

“Usually the best results I’ve seen from whatever technology they’re using is to use it as a herd level test to indicate whether you’ve got a herd level nutritional issue kind of thing,” Ayres said.

SURESH NEETHIRAJAN
DEVICE DESIGNER

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So the farmers can once in a while test it on the farm, and if there are further concerns then they can call for the veterinarians,” Neethirajan said. Neethirajan hopes the new device will offer a lower cost testing option for producers.

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