



**Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)
PARTNERS FROM THE DAIRY, CHEESE AND AGRICULTURAL SECTORS
MARCH IN SOLIDARITY TO DENOUNCE THE CONCESSIONS**

Quebec City, November 28, 2013 / CNW – Coinciding with its Special General Meeting, the Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec (FPLQ) held a solidarity march by Quebec dairy sector partners. The marchers were protesting the additional 17,700 metric tons of imported cheese that Canada is willing to grant the European Union (EU), as a condition of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

Approximately 200 delegates to the Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec meeting, including grassroots dairy farmers, leaders of the cooperative movement (Agropur, Nutrinor, La Coop fédérée), the presidents of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), the Fédération des producteurs d'agneaux et moutons, the Syndicat des producteurs de chèvres, and the Association des fromagers artisans du Québec, as well as several presidents of UPA regional and specialized federations, cheese-makers from every region of Quebec, representatives of dairy farmers' associations from other Canadian provinces, and representatives of partner companies and associations of dairy farmers and cheese-makers participated in this event.

The partners marched from Hôtel Loews Le Concorde, where the Special General Meeting of dairy farmers was being held, to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) offices on Rue Dalhousie. The CBSA is responsible for border and import controls. The FPLQ Chairman addressed a message to the Harper Government: **“The Government of Canada has broken the commitments it had made repeatedly, even a few days before the CETA was concluded, not to grant Europe concessions in the cheese sector. We feel betrayed. We demand that the Government of Canada act quickly to honour its commitment to compensate for losses.”** He also reminded the Government that these 17,700 tonnes of imported cheese represent more than 30% of the specialty cheese market, 180 million litres of milk not produced or processed in Canada, and \$150 million less in sales for dairy farmers. This also means \$300 million less in sales of domestic cheese for our cheese-makers, in perpetuity.

Marcel Groleau, President of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) declared that **“the entire agricultural community is in solidarity with the dairy and cheese sector. We remain absolutely convinced that Canada could have made this agreement without sacrificing the dairy and cheese sector, as it succeeded in doing in the eleven free trade agreements it has made since the 1980s.”**

The President of the Association des fromagers artisans, Louis Arsenault, concluded: **“Our artisan cheese-makers have invested considerable efforts to develop a cheese sector that has become a flagship of our agri-food industry. The imports conceded will have a very harmful impact on our businesses. For us, it’s as if 1,000 new cheese-makers have suddenly arrived to compete with us.”**

The Canadian leader in cheese manufacturing with over 400 cheese varieties, Quebec produces over 50% of Canadian cheese and over 60% of specialty and artisan cheese. Remarkable growth is also noted in the number of small artisan cheese-makers, who now total 51, up nearly 50% since the year 2000. In all, there are 90 cheese-makers in Quebec.

A giant bouquet of 17 black balloons bearing the inscription *Fromages d’ici* in white was deposited in front of the Agency’s offices. This bouquet symbolizes the 17,700 tonnes of domestic cheese that will be replaced by subsidized European cheese, as a result of the free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

On the way, the march made a stop in front of the Quebec National Assembly, where the FPLQ Chairman addressed the Quebec government and the elected members of the National Assembly. **“The Quebec government, alone among the provincial governments, has demanded that the federal government undertake to compensate the dairy sector’s losses, and we appreciate this. We expect your government not only to stand by us, but also to exercise firm leadership to obtain a compensation plan for the dairy sector as quickly as possible. We also expect you to honour your commitment not to ratify a final agreement that does not contain compensatory measures that live up to our expectations,”** he concluded.

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