

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

DEC 11 2009

Quote: 139690

Mr. Greg Marshall
President
Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan
100-2400 College Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 1C8

Dear Mr. Marshall:

Thank you for your letter, also signed by Mr. Ian Wishart and Mr. Humphrey Banack, regarding imports of Canadian canola to China. I appreciate being made aware of your concerns about this matter.

In October 2009, China officially notified the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) that it had detected the more aggressive species of blackleg (*Leptosphaeria maculans*)—a quarantine pest regulated by China—in Canadian canola shipments exported for oilseed crushing. At that time, China indicated that after November 15, 2009, all consignments of canola from Canada must be certified as free from blackleg. This disease is widespread in Canada and worldwide wherever canola is grown. However, China claims that only the less aggressive but related species *L. biglobosa* is present in China. Effective November 15, 2009, shipments that test positive for blackleg will be accepted at a limited number of ports and approved crushing plants only.

I am actively engaging my Chinese counterparts on this important issue. From December 2-6, I accompanied the Right Honourable Stephen Harper during his visit to China and had the opportunity to raise this issue with Minister Wang Yong of the General Administration of Quality Supervision of the People's Republic of China. I indicated that Canada is seeking a science-based resolution to this issue to ensure that trade can resume without delay. This objective was also made clear in letters to Minister Wang and to Minister Sun Zhengcai, Minister of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China. I have also pressed for resolution of this issue during two separate meetings with Ambassador Lan Lijun, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada.

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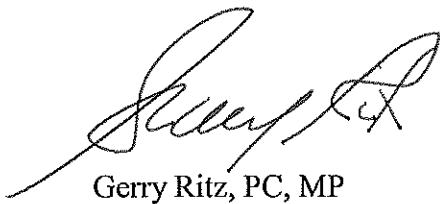
Government of Canada officials continue to meet with their Chinese counterparts to address the risk of introduction of blackleg in canola consignments from Canada. To date, China remains firm on its requirement for certification for freedom from blackleg after November 15, 2009. The CFIA believes that the risk of establishment of blackleg is low, and this is supported by 12 years of canola exports greater than 10 million tonnes with no reported findings of blackleg prior to this event.

Please be assured that the Government of Canada takes the exports of canola to China very seriously. As a result, our officials will continue to work closely with industry representatives and to promote Canada's interests with the best available science and expertise in order to influence China's position. I am sensitive to the economic impact this may have on Canadian canola producers, and I am committed to resolving this issue as quickly as possible.

I am committed to protecting the income and markets of Canadian farmers. In January 2009, I announced the creation of the Market Access Secretariat (MAS) to better co-ordinate government initiatives with producers and industry to aggressively and strategically go after new markets and keep pace with international competitors. The resources of the MAS will be focused on maintaining and expanding Canada's international market access for agriculture and agri-food products.

I trust that this information is of assistance to you. Again, thank you for writing on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Ritz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Gerry Ritz, PC, MP