

Dear

The Canadian government is currently negotiating a trade agreement with the European Union (EU), called the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This is the first time an international trade agreement reaches beyond the federal level and into provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions. As a farmer in your municipality, I am contacting you to make sure you are aware of the potential affects this trade agreement will have on this municipality and its ability to favour local or domestic businesses.

The CETA agreement is being negotiated behind closed doors with little consultation with Canadian citizens. Both the EU and Canadian governments have agreed to keep drafts texts secret until the negotiations are completed. The National Farmers Union has obtained leaked copies of the draft text and Canada's chief negotiator has confirmed that the leaked text is accurate.

Under the covered procurement section of CETA, all governments and government entities, including schools, hospitals, universities and municipalities will be prohibited from favouring local goods and services, including local food. This will be subject to certain thresholds, which are still being negotiated, but some provinces are suggesting thresholds as low as \$25,000. In addition, the Canadian government and the EU have already agreed tenders cannot be broken up in such a way that they will fall within those thresholds.

The Europeans opening up access to the public procurement of goods and services to be the key piece of the trade agreement. In a public lecture, the EU Ambassador to Canada, Mattias Brinkmann, said that Europe needs access to public procurement because that is where they see a market for their exporters. The National Farmers Union analysis of draft texts of the agreement shows that Europe is hardening its position on covered procurement.

Across Ontario, municipalities, schools, hospitals and universities are choosing to support Ontario's farmers by implementing local food procurement policies which favour local food over imported food. All levels of government are supporting these efforts with funding, research and policy. As a farmer, I am deeply concerned that municipalities and other government entities will no longer be able to give this support to local farmers because our federal government is signing away the right of local communities to favour local food.

I urge you to let the Government of Canada know that this municipality believes it must have the right to support local providers of goods and services, including local farmers - there must be a clear and permanent exemption for municipal governments, as well as schools, hospitals and universities from CETA.

I look forward to hearing what action you have taken to prevent this trade agreement from undermining municipal local purchasing policies. More information on this crucial issue, including a leaked copy of the draft text, can be found on the National Farmers Union website – www.nfu.ca.

Yours sincerely,