



# Chicken Farmers of Canada

Standing Committee on International Trade



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**Chicken Farmers of Canada Submission to the  
Standing Committee on International Trade re: Bill C-216**

The Canadian chicken sector is important to the Canadian economy, Canadian families, and Canadian dishes. Canada's 2,877 chicken farmers located in all ten provinces work hard every day to produce the safe, high-quality chicken that helps feed our country. The sector supports over 101,900 jobs in rural and urban communities across the country, contributing \$8 billion to Canada's Gross Domestic Product and paying \$1.9 billion in taxes. Our farmers are leaders in innovation on the farm and want to keep the sector growing, sustainably while strengthening trust and enhancing value for Canadians. We are proud that chicken is Canada's number one meat protein.

Canada's chicken farmers would like to thank MP Plamondon and the Bloc Québécois for putting forward Bill C-216, *An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management)*. This proposed amendment is welcomed by Chicken Farmers of Canada as it would enable the Government of Canada to grant no further concessions into the supply management sectors in any future trade agreements. The more access that is granted, means an erosion of the system, and a weakened system means that the sector is no longer able to guarantee fresh, local, safe chicken, raised with care for Canadians.

Supply management is a uniquely Canadian system that allows Canada's dairy, poultry and egg farmers to produce what the Canadian market demands. Roughly every eight-week period, the Chicken Farmers of Canada Board of Directors, comprised of farmers, and downstream representatives like processors, further processors, and members of the foodservice sector carefully determine how much chicken Canada needs for the coming months, and farmers from coast to coast in turn produce that amount. This also takes into account how much is coming from imports. Farmers then receive a fair and stable return for their work and are able to



reinvest with confidence in their businesses and communities.

Supply management allows the Canadian chicken sector to exceed consumer expectations, with mandatory, audited on farm food safety and animal care programs. The *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* On-Farm Food Safety Program has federal, provincial and territorial government recognition and full recognition by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and guarantees that the highest standards of biosecurity and disease prevention are in place on the farm. Farmers also adhere to a strict, mandatory, and auditable *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program that guarantees high animal care standards are being upheld on Canadian chicken farms across Canada. It is also third-party audited and based on the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys, which was developed using the National Farm Animal Care Council's development process. Thanks to supply management, both the animal care and food safety programs are mandatory and have strict enforcement measures for non-compliance. Food safety and the highest standards of animal care are one of the many reasons that the made-in-Canada system of supply management is good for Canada, and good for Canadians.

Supply management has also proven for decades that it is a unique and stable solution for building a better future in Canadian agriculture, combatting food insecurity, and meeting consumer expectations on food safety and animal care. With the openness of the world and its commerce, this stability can be rocked. Supply-managed farmers' jobs first and foremost are to provide safe, high-quality, local food for Canadian, and every time Canada enters trade negotiations with other countries, the stability of the system is at risk. While we recognize the importance of trade to our country, it should not prevent the supply managed sectors from growing, nor weaken our system, particularly given that Canadian chicken production is a very small percentage of world production.



Recent trade agreements have significantly impacted Canadian production – namely the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). Through the CPTPP, the Canadian government conceded 26.7 million kilograms of new annual market access into the Canadian chicken sector, and not long after, granted more access to the domestic chicken market through the CUSMA. The access granted in CPTPP and CUSMA, combined with our WTO obligations make Canada’s new total market access 129.6 million kilograms, which represents roughly 10% of Canadian production (2020). This new access translates into annual losses of 3,100 jobs and \$240 million in contributions to the Canadian economy. This is an impact that will be felt in every province across the country. Throughout these negotiations, and others in the past, the supply managed sectors never stood in the way of Canada achieving a fair deal. However, it was felt that our system was used as a bargaining chip and without reason. Most countries have sensitive sectors they wish to protect: for example, New Zealand has set impossibly strict biosecurity laws that impose cooking requirements on imported poultry meat which make it practically inedible. For Canada, the chicken sector provides stability at home while those industries with greater export potential have the ability to pursue opportunities in international markets.

By adopting legislation that would enable the Government of Canada to grant no further access into the supply management sectors in any future trade agreements, Parliamentarians would show Canada’s dairy, poultry, and egg farmers that they stand by them, just like farmers have been there for Canadians throughout this pandemic. Thanks to the flexibility of supply management, farmers were able to quickly adjust their production at the start of the pandemic in order to continue to provide an adequate supply for Canadians, and not over-produce or create food waste. No other sector is able to adapt that quickly, and since our main focus is to produce for the domestic market, we haven’t seen empty shelves in the chicken section of the grocery store.



In a recent study of 5,000 Canadians, broad support for supply management remained strong across the political spectrum and government support for the chicken sector was popular.<sup>1</sup> The same study also found that Canadians were uncertain about chicken imports coming into Canada as **89%** believed it was crucial that Canadian consumers have access to affordable Canadian-raised chicken rather than foreign chicken. These findings help point to one of the purposes of this proposed legislation – that support for supply management is high and therefore government should not grant further concessions into the system in future trade agreements.

Canada's dairy, poultry, and egg sectors have given enough when it comes to trade agreements, particularly given that we are structured to focus on the domestic market first. We implore the Standing Committee on International Trade to support Bill C-216 and guarantee there will be no further concessions to the Canadian chicken sector in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Abacus Data conducted a survey with 5,000 Canadian adults between the dates of March 11 to 28, 2021. A random sample of panelists were invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the Lucid exchange platform. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 1.35, 19 times out of 20. The data were weighted according to census proportions.