



# CAFTA "profoundly disappointed" after MPs give final approval to Bill C-282

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by RealAgriculture News Team

**T**he national coalition of export-focused agriculture commodity organizations is voicing major frustration following final approval of Bill C-282 in the House of Commons.

The private member's bill, brought forward by a Bloc Quebecois MP, aims to prevent Canada's trade minister from making any further concessions on supply managed commodities — dairy, chicken, eggs, and turkey — in international trade negotiations. MPs approved the bill at third reading on June 21 by a 262 to 51 margin. It was promptly given first reading in the Senate later the same day.

Dan Darling, president of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, says CAFTA members are "profoundly disappointed" the bill was adopted at third reading.

“Right off the bat, Canada will be going into trade negotiations at a disadvantage,” he says, responding to the bill’s passage through the House of Commons in the interview below.

CAFTA’s membership includes the Canadian Cattle Association, Cereals Canada, Pulse Canada, the Canadian Canola Growers Association, and other organizations representing commodities that rely on trade.

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Darling says CAFTA found no other country in the world has legislation that prohibits its government from including specific commodities in negotiations.

“This is precedent-setting,” says Darling. “And I don’t think government is spending enough time even making all of their MPs aware of it. We’ve put a push on talking to as many MPs as we can, and quite frankly, it’s shocking how many MPs really don’t know what you’re talking about when you talk about Bill C-282 and the ramifications that could come of it.”

“It’s very discouraging. It’s a bad piece of legislation — bad legislation that we do not need,” he says.

Darling also pushes back against the idea that the federal government would still put supply management on the table to get a trade deal done since existing laws can always be overruled by Parliament.

“That’s some of the rhetoric that we’re hearing from some MPs as well. ‘Don’t worry about it, because the next government can get rid of it,’ which I doubt would happen,

because then they'd have the the weight of the supply management lobby coming down on them," he says.

The Conservative caucus was split on the vote — 56 voted in favour and 49 against, while several Tory MPs, including Shadow Minister of Agriculture John Barlow, did not vote. 148 Liberal MPs, including Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau voted in favour, while two Liberals voted against. Bloc, NDP, Green, and independent MPs also voted in favour.

*Listen to CAFTA president Dan Darling discuss the passage of Bill C-282 through the House of Commons and what it means for export-focused sectors of Canadian agriculture:*

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