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Dairy farmers pleased government will address foreign milk protein problem

MISSISSAUGA — Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) is very pleased with the announcement made by Canada's Agriculture Minister to address the problems of foreign milk protein concentrate imports and threats to Canadian cheese quality.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Chuck Strahl has announced that Canada will be initiating negotiations under Article 28 of the GATT to restrict imports of milk protein concentrates.

The request for consultations for a new tariff-quota on the imports of milk protein concentrates is a legitimate right that Canada is exercising to defend its interests.

"This legitimate move to close these trade loopholes is good news for consumers, dairy processors and dairy farmers," said Bruce Saunders, DFO Chair. "Consumers benefit from quality products made from locally-produced milk meeting Canada's high standards, processors can stay off the treadmill pressuring them to use subsidized imports and dairy farmers get improved fairness in import rules and predictable import levels into the Canadian market."

On another issue, Minister Strahl also announced that he would be asking the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to launch a regulatory process related to compositional standards for cheese.

Saunders said this action is also extremely positive. "The Minister's action will hopefully lead to harmonizing conflicting regulations on compositional standards for cheese to keep consumer confidence in dairy products."

The Minister's announcement provides renewed impetus for producers and processors to work together to resolve long-standing industry issues.

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Dairy Farmers of Ontario is the marketing group for all dairy farmers in Ontario and is totally financed by them.