



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Canadian Canary Seed Industry Angry Over Halting of Trade with Mexico**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 23, 2011 (WINNIPEG) - The market for Canadian canary seed in Mexico once again slammed shut on June 21<sup>st</sup> with the expiry of an interim agreement between Mexican and Canadian plant protection officials regarding weeds of quarantine concern. While negotiations are still underway, terms of a new agreement have not been reached and there is no indication when trade will resume.

Gordon Bacon, CEO of the Canadian Special Crops Association (CSCA), expressed members' anger over this failure in plant quarantine diplomacy. "Mexico is Canada's largest canary seed market and we are their main supplier. For nearly a year, government officials have been negotiating a solution, and the expiry of the agreement is a failure to ensure that trade can continue" said Bacon. "Canadian farmers, Canadian processors, Mexican processors and Mexican customers are the ones that will suffer as a result" he said. "A missed deadline means missed sales."

"The failure of negotiations with Mexico points to the strong need to have science-based approaches to assessing risk, managing risk, and ensuring that there are policies that fit for all crops" said Bacon. "Zero tolerance policies create a huge risk to trade and to production, and as illustrated with canary seed shipments to Mexico, inevitably bring trade to a halt." There is no evidence that other imported products are subject to the same extreme level of scrutiny on weed seeds as is being applied to Canadian canary seed.

Canada's export economy, and farmers in particular, are hurt financially by the use of non-tariff trade barriers, and plant quarantine and food safety barriers that are not based on sound science. "At the same time that G-20 countries are talking about price volatility and food security, there are far too many examples where national and international regulatory bodies should be doing more to find solutions that protect human and environmental health as well as ensuring that global trade continues," said Bacon.

The CSCA is encouraging the Government of Canada to take a firm stand on the international stage to push for increased harmonization of policies that impact trade. Examples of policy reformations must include standardizing processes to assess risk and establish maximum residue limits (MRLs) for crop protection products, adopting low level presence policies to recognize that zero tolerance is not achievable, and ensuring that potential trade-restricting measures can only be implemented when using agreed upon science-based approaches to risk assessment and risk management that minimizes the impact on trade. Underlying all of these efforts must be a global recognition that zero-tolerance levels are not possible to achieve in field crop shipments.

The CSCA will continue to work with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and through their Mexican trade partners, with Mexican officials, to restore access to this critical market for canary seed.

*The CSCA is the national trade association representing companies involved in the merchandising of Canadian pulse and special crops, including bean, chickpea, lentil, pea, canary seed, buckwheat, sunflower seed and mustard seed.*