

# 5 Reasons Why We Don't Want

# CETA

## (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement)

The Canadian government is currently negotiating an agreement with the European Union (EU), called the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement** or **CETA** for short. CETA is the farthest reaching trade agreement Canada has ever negotiated. For the first time, an international trade agreement reaches beyond the federal level and into provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions, giving corporations more access and control over governments and government entities than ever before. CETA has deeply negative implications for the future of our family farms, our rural communities and our democracy.

## **CETA is good for corporations and bad for Canadians.**

### **If adopted with current European positions CETA will:**

- 1. Severely restrict farmers' ability to save, reuse, exchange and sell seed.** CETA adds precautionary seizure provisions to intellectual property rights' enforcement. This means that farmers accused of having a patented gene in their crops or seed could lose their farms, crops, equipment and cash – simply for *alleged* infringement. The Agreement would extend precautionary seizure provisions to third parties. For example, the owner of a seed cleaning operation whose customer is accused of patent infringement could also have his/her property seized. These expanded intellectual property rights enforcement tools would increase corporate control of our farms, increase seed costs, and destroy farmers' autonomy.
- 2. Increase corporate patent rights for drugs and chemicals.** The Europeans are calling for monopoly patent rights to be extended by the length of time it takes the regulator to approve a product, which would create pressure for hasty, and perhaps dangerous approvals. They also want to add more time to these patent rights if a minor use for a drug or chemical is found. Any data the company supplied to the regulator would also remain exclusive to the company for 10 to 13 years. These measures would hamper generic manufacturers and add huge costs to purchasers – including our Medicare system where drugs make up 50% of costs. CETA would transfer even more of our healthcare dollars to big pharmaceutical companies.
- 3. Undermine federal, provincial and municipal local purchasing policies.** CETA would forbid all government entities including schools, hospitals, universities and municipalities from favouring local or domestic businesses. Governments would no longer be able to support local providers of goods and services through local procurement policies. For example, a government that wanted to support local agriculture by promoting local food would not be able to implement a policy favouring government purchasing of local food over imported food. This would be subject to certain thresholds – some provinces are suggesting as low as \$25,000.
- 4. Lead to reduction in so-called “production and trade distorting domestic support”.** CETA signatories would agree to co-operate at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to reduce agriculture safety net measures. These negotiations also lay the groundwork and justification for dismantling our supply management system in the future.
- 5. Cripple the Canadian Wheat Board.** CETA would end loan and initial payment guarantees by the federal government for the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). This would cost farmers millions of dollars by making the CWB more vulnerable to unforeseen risks and reducing its ability to negotiate strong prices for farmers in the international marketplace. CETA threatens the viability of western grain farmers' last pillar of market power – the single-desk seller of Canadian wheat into export markets.

Proponents of CETA argue that it would open up the European market to Canada's genetically-modified (GM) crops and hormone-treated beef. **This is false.** Canadian negotiators are only pushing for EU GM contamination level standards to increase from 0.01% to 0.1%. If Canada does obtain more market access, CETA also specifically exempts GM organisms. The European market has been closed to hormone-treated beef due to health concerns, and a trade agreement will not change consumers' opinions. If Canada wants access to the European beef market we could simply adopt equivalent standards and eliminate growth hormones from our production system.

**Canadian agriculture has nothing to gain from  
this agreement and everything to lose.**

(over ...)

# **CETA threatens our democracy.**

The CETA agreement is being negotiated behind closed doors. The vast majority of Canadians have not been consulted. Both the EU and Canadian governments refuse to disclose their draft texts as each round of negotiation is completed. In spite of this we have been able to obtain leaked copies of the text.

The corporate rights claimed under CETA would be enforced via the infamous North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Chapter 11 investor protection mechanisms which give corporations the right to sue governments for lost profits. CETA goes further and also states that governments would be responsible for financially compensating corporations during times of war and civil strife.

Giving corporations the right to sue governments at every level for making decisions in the interest of Canadian citizens is profoundly undemocratic. Ultimately, CETA is a corporate bill of rights that would severely limit the power of our elected officials to act on our behalf. It is unlikely that the Agreement would lead to increased trade between Canada and the EU or in more market access for Canadian products and companies. Instead, CETA would limit the role of government to work in the public interest.

## **CETA is good for corporations and bad for citizens.**

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### **What YOU can do to protect your seed, your farm, and your democratic rights from being bargained away in CETA:**

- 1. Join and/or donate to the National Farmers Union to work on your behalf.** Family farm memberships are \$195.00. Non-farmers can join as associate members for \$65.00. Send memberships or donations by mail to: 2717 Wentz Avenue Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6 or go online at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca).
- 2. Sign the petition to stop CETA.** See <http://www.nfu.ca/petitions/CETA-mar2011.pdf>.
- 3. Write, phone, fax or email your federal, provincial and municipal leaders** to voice your concerns.
  - The Prime Minister, the Minister of International Trade, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and your own Member of Parliament
  - The leaders of the opposition parties and their critics for Trade and Agriculture

Correspondence to Members of Parliament does not require a stamp. The address is: House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6. To send an email, go to [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca) and click on "Senators and Members" to find email addresses.

  - Send a copy to the Premier of your Province.
  - Send a copy to your municipal, school, and hospital representatives.
- 4. Send a copy to the NFU** at 2717 Wentz Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4B6.
- 5. Get the word out about the risks of CETA.** Inform your fellow citizens by email, Facebook and other social media, phone and fax!

In addition to food and agriculture, CETA would increase corporate control over other fundamental aspects of Canadian society, including culture, good jobs, telecommunications, public postal service, public services, indigenous rights, environmental protection and Medicare.

[For more information on CETA from the NFU and our allies in the Trade Justice Network, see the following resources:](#)

#### **National Farmers Union [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)**

Listen to NFU President Terry Boehm's presentation on CETA from the 2010 NFU Convention  
[http://www.nfu.ca/mp3/2011\\_CETA.mp3](http://www.nfu.ca/mp3/2011_CETA.mp3)

#### **Trade Justice Network [www.tradejustice.ca](http://www.tradejustice.ca)**

Open Civil Society Declaration on CETA <http://tradejustice.ca/en/section/22>