

U.S. farming organization Western Growers says the updated North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will make agriculture trade fairer and could help boost U.S. exports.



The Produce Coalition for NAFTA and other industry associations in the U.S. and Canada have also reacted positively to the development.

On Sunday night the three countries in question [reached a deal to reform the major trade deal](#), which will now be named the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

After more than a year of tense talks and strained relations between U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, negotiators from both sides came to a resolution just ahead of a midnight deadline set by the White House.

Western Growers senior executive vice president Matt McInerney on Monday said the three countries had reached an agreement to "modernize and rebalance trade."

"The new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will enable food and agriculture to trade more fairly, and could help expand exports of American agricultural products," he said.

"All food and agricultural products that have zero tariffs under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will remain at zero tariffs."

Other achievements related to the fresh produce industry include setting standards for agricultural biotechnology.

"For the first time, the agreement specifically addresses agricultural biotechnology to support 21st century innovations in agriculture. The text covers all biotechnologies, including new technologies such as gene editing, whereas the Trans-Pacific Partnership text covered only traditional rDNA technology," said McInerney.

He also said there would be "enhanced rules for science-based sanitary and phytosanitary measures."

"In the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures chapter, the United States, Mexico, and Canada have agreed to strengthen disciplines for science-based SPS measures, while ensuring Parties maintain their sovereign right to protect human, animal, and plant life or health," he said.

"Provisions include increasing transparency on the development and implementation of SPS measures; advancing science-based decision making; improving processes for certification, regionalization and equivalency determinations; conducting systems-based audits; improving transparency for import checks; and working together to enhance compatibility of measures.

"The new agreement would establish a new mechanism for technical consultations to resolve issues between the Parties."

## **Reaction from elsewhere**

The Produce Coalition for NATFA, which is made up of leading U.S. and Canadian fruit and vegetable companies that support efforts to modernize the trade deal, today said it "strongly commends" the two countries' administrations for reaching a "significant agreement".

"We sincerely appreciate the hard work of Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo in helping to ensure that this agreement was reached. This modernized trilateral trade agreement will enhance U.S. agricultural exports and build on the success of the NAFTA agreement that was put in place in 1994," it said.

"We commend U.S. Trade Ambassador Robert Lighthizer and Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland for reaching an agreement which re-affirms and builds on the commitment to open trade in agricultural products, including fresh produce.

"The USMCA is a significant victory not only for agriculture but for the U.S. economy and U.S. consumers. We look forward to working with House and Senate Members to ensure

ratification of this significant new trade agreement."

Meanwhile, other groups including the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) and the United Fresh Produce Association have welcomed the development.

"United Fresh is encouraged by the news that a revised tri-lateral agreement has been reached between the United States, Mexico and Canada.

He said the revised agreement "highlights the importance of our continued engagement on key policy issues by those in the produce industry".

"United Fresh looks forward to working with Congress to achieve the swift approval of this new agreement," he said.

The CPMA said it is "pleased" that a new agreement has been reached.

"CPMA has been active over the past 13 months to promote the ongoing free trading environment for our industry within North America," said Les Mallard, CPMA chair.

"We are greatly appreciative of the hard work by Canadian negotiators to finalize the deal in a way that is not harmful to our sector."

CPMA will be reviewing the details of the agreement, particularly those chapters related to sanitary and phytosanitary issues, dispute resolution, trade remedies, good regulatory practices, and competitiveness.

"CPMA looks forward to continued collaboration with Ministers Freeland and MacAulay on other key areas of trade which are focused on diversification and growth within the fresh produce industry," said Ron Lemaire, CPMA president.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said the agreement was "great news", saying the U.S. has secured greater access to North American markets.

"As we celebrate this breakthrough, it is worth noting that there were many detractors who said it couldn't be done. But this is further proof that President Trump's trade negotiation strategy is working. A renewed USMCA, a new KORUS agreement, and the continued progress with Japan, can lead to further deals with other trading partners like the European Union and China," he said.

"The dominoes are falling and it is good news for U.S. farmers. I thank President Trump and

our U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Lighthizer for their perseverance, leadership, and hard work."