

Canada, Turkey focus on legume cooperation



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ANTALYA - The International Pulses Trade and Industry Confederation's annual convention, held in the southern city of Antalya, has contributed greatly to the development of trade between participating countries, says Lyle Stewart, Saskatchewan minister of enterprise and innovation. Stewart says trade relations between Canada and Turkey should be improved.



Bilateral trade between Canada and Turkey has and will continue to benefit greatly from activity in the legume sector, according to industry leaders from the International Pulses Trade and Industry Confederation, or CICILS.

The southern city of Antalya this weekend hosted the international organization's annual convention along with more than 600 delegates from 339 companies and 41 countries.

CICILS is known for setting the trends for legume, also known as pulse, sector players as it enables companies to develop trade by offering a common platform.

"The CICILS convention is definitely essential to the pulse sector. Bringing the sector authorities and companies under the same roof, the convention facilitates information sharing, discussion of common problems, development of trade among the countries and much more," Lyle Stewart, Saskatchewan minister of enterprise and innovation, told Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review in an interview on the sidelines of the meeting over the weekend.

Highlighting the importance of trade between Canada and Turkey, Stewart said they expect the relationships to be developed further via new bilateral trade agreements.

Turkey a gateway for the region

"The basic difference between Canada and Turkey is that Canada is mainly a consumer country, while Turkey is both a producer and a consumer," said Murad Al-Katib, chief executive of Saskcan Pulse Trading, an affiliate of Arbel Pulse Trading, which was the convention's main sponsor. "Besides having a high domestic consumption, Turkey is also a gateway to the world for the pulse industry. This increases our importance in terms of importing and exporting potential," Al-Katib said.

"This is a win-win policy for both Turkey and Canada.

Both countries gain much from years of commercial relationships," said Minister Stewart, who also agreed with Al-Katib on the importance of bilateral coordination. "The sector not only substantially contributes to the national economy, but also creates job opportunities and employment," he said.

Replying to a question about the effect of the current economic crisis on the legume sector, Stewart said there is no single country that has not been affected by the economic crisis. "Even Canada, which has one of the most stable banking sectors, has been affected.

I believe the pulse sector has been getting through the crisis with less damage because pulses are a great source of protein and cheaper when compared to other sources such as meat," he said.

Mersin as a key port for regional pulse trade

"Some 95 percent of pulse trade is based in Mersin, which is the gateway of the sector to the Middle East and Europe via its port," said Hüseyin Arslan, member of the board for CICILS and a partner at Arbel Pulse Trading.

"In the 1980s, the pulse market was based in Gaziantep, a city in Southeast Anatolia. Having the advantage of equal distance to inner Anatolia and southeastern Anatolia, Mersin has now taken on the mission," he said.

Agreeing with Arslan on the strategic importance of Mersin for the sector, Minister Stewart said that just like Turkey is a gateway to Europe and Middle East countries, Canada has a great importance in terms of the movement of products because of its access to a

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