



BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS
PARLIAMENTARY WING

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Milk protein imports

**“THE TIME FOR CONSULTATION IS OVER:
THE GOVERNMENT MUST ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITIES”**

– André Bellavance

Ottawa, Friday, February 2, 2007 – “Milk producers are losing over \$250 million a year because of milk protein imports. They are demanding government action after six months of sterile discussions,” said the Bloc Québécois Agriculture and Agri-Food critic, **André Bellavance**, in the wake of the failure of the task force of dairy producers and processors launched by the Conservative government in an attempt to find solutions to the massive importing of milk proteins.

“To take no measures is to take sides. By not controlling imports of milk ingredients, the government is choosing to impoverish the producers. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Chuck Strahl, promised to take action if there was no agreement. The government has thus far totally failed in its job and its commitment to preserve supply management. It must take advantage of its meeting with producers’ representatives next Wednesday in Ottawa to announce concrete initiatives,” said **André Bellavance**.

The member for Richmond—Arthabaska pointed out that the Conservative government has all the tools it needs to provide dairy producers with appropriate protection. “The Minister simply has to apply the Bloc Québécois’ motion to strengthen import control measures, pass legislation to associate all milk protein concentrates with a tariff quota, and if necessary cap imports of protein concentrates.”

This initiative of the Bloc Québécois now has the support of the majority of parliamentarians in the House. The Conservative members, however, including those from Quebec, have opposed it. “The Stephen Harper government, which already had all the tools necessary to defend supply management in its entirety at the WTO, must now respect the majority will of the House of Commons. Stephen Harper can no longer remain passive in the face of the increase in imports of milk proteins. He must take action and protect the dairy producers who are demanding that supply management be respected,” continued **André Bellavance**.

Here is the text of the Bloc Québécois motion adopted on June 13, 2006:

That the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food present a report with the following recommendations to the House of Commons:

- 1. That, since all the parties support supply management, the government take immediate action to strengthen import control measures, which are crucial to supply management, by limiting the importation of milk protein concentrates and any product specifically designed to circumvent the supply management rules.*
- 2. That the government adopt regulations that would classify all milk protein concentrates, regardless of their protein content, under tariff line 0404, or a tariff quota to be negotiated.*
- 3. That the government invoke Article XXVIII of the GATT where necessary in order to cap imports of milk protein concentrates by immediately launching negotiations with its trade partners and by amending its tariff schedule through a legislative measure adopted by Parliament.*

Other countries are not hesitating to use Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), such as the European Union to protect its chicken industry. **André Bellavance** is therefore calling on the Conservative government to assume its responsibilities. “The Minister is well aware of this issue and the impact it is having on the supply management system. He has said he would defend supply management. It is now time to walk the talk,” concluded **André Bellavance**.

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