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Letter to the editor:

November 23, 2011

The editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on November 22, entitled 'Eggs, milk cheap if trade free' is misleading and fails to recognize the value of supply management.

Supply Management ensures Canadians have access to a consistent, high quality supply of eggs, dairy and poultry products throughout the year, with a fair and reasonable return to local farmers. This Canadian-made solution has worked well for both consumers and farmers since its inception in the early 60's and 70's. The orderly marketing system exchanges the supply boom and bust cycles that used to exist, with market stability, and consumers benefit from a system that provides assurances in food safety, animal care and the environment.

Other countries like the U.S. do not have a regulated system in place, and instead subsidize the demand of milk, eggs and poultry in the form of a government buyout. When surplus production occurs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) spends millions of dollars to reduce storage stocks. The surplus products are then distributed through food assistance programs. The European Union as well continues to dole out billions of dollars to their farmers, while supply managed farmers in Canada do not receive government subsidies.

Egg farmers in our supply managed system receive a fair price from the market, a price that reflects the cost of producing the eggs. Farmers work together to match what they produce with what consumers need and want, resulting in a wide range of diverse egg products. Canadian consumers can choose between locally produced organic eggs, free-run eggs, regular white or brown eggs or nutritionally enhanced eggs such as omega-3.

Supply Management is not reliant on taxpayer dollars or government subsidies, which is why the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Gerry Ritz and Trade Minister Ed Fast have consistently pledged their support. Canadians increasingly want to eat locally grown foods and opening up the borders to uncontrolled imports would be contrary to that aspiration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed. Kleinsasser".

Ed Kleinsasser
Chair
Manitoba Egg Farmers

