



FAST FACTS



Canada stands up for seal products – Belgium and the Netherlands must justify their ban at the WTO

Canada's position

In 2006, Canada exported \$18 million in seal products including \$5.4 million to the EU.

- Sealing is an important way of life for many Canadians, including Inuit and some First Nations. It is a significant source of income for Canadians living in the Gulf of St-Lawrence and Newfoundland-and-Labrador.
- Canada's seal hunt is essential as a source of income for sealers at a time of year when economic opportunities are limited in many remote, coastal communities.
- The Canadian seal hunt is a sustainable and economically viable activity based on sound conservation principles. ([For more information, please visit the DFO web site](#))

Exports of Canadian Seal Product (2006)			
	Exports to EU (M\$)	Exports to Non-EU (M\$)	Total Exports (M\$)
Seal oil/meat/pelts	5.41	12.58	17.99

Canada has taken and will continue to take strong action to ensure access to the European market for all Canadian exports of seal products. WTO consultations will allow Canada and the European Communities to discuss their respective positions regarding seal products.

WTO consultations

On September 25, 2007, the Government of Canada requested formal consultations under the WTO dispute settlement process to address the decision by Belgium and the Netherlands to ban the importation and marketing of Canadian seal products ([See Canada's request](#)). On July 31, 2007, Canada had announced that consultations would be requested in relation to the Belgian measures. ([See news release](#))

The Dutch and Belgian measures are inconsistent with their various WTO obligations arising from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1994 (GATT) and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

WTO consultations, as requested by Canada in this dispute, provide a forum for parties to seek a resolution through dialogue.

Next steps

A request for consultations is the first formal step in the WTO dispute settlement process. Further information about the WTO dispute settlement process can be obtained from the following WTO web page ([Understanding the WTO: Settling Disputes](#))

