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COUNTRY LIFE IN BC

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Dairy pays price in new trade deal



Philip Vanderpol looks to an uncertain future after the latest trade deal capped the market for milk products from his new processing plants in Abbotsford and Winnipeg. SEAN HITREC PHOTO

Supply management not lost, just bargained away

by DAVID SCHMIDT

ABBOTSFORD – Philip Vanderpol of Vitalus Nutrition is frantically trying to reassure his customers around the world that it is “business as usual” when the just-concluded USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada) trade agreement suggests it could be anything but for the Canadian dairy industry.

Most of Canadian agriculture seems to have escaped unscathed from the often rancorous negotiations to replace the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement but Canadian dairy producers and processors, and to a lesser extent, the rest of Canada’s supply-managed sector, have been dealt potentially crippling blows.

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USMCA uncorks wine sales

by PETER MITHAM

VANCOUVER – BC will have to open grocery store shelves to international wines under the new free trade deal with Mexico and the US.

The province has claimed a right to license grocery stores to sell BC wines alongside other products ever since allowing supermarket wine sales in 2015, while allowing sales of international wines through a store-in-a-store model that requires separate checkouts. To date, 29 supermarkets have received

licences to sell wine; none of them have opted for the store-in-a-store arrangement.

Now, as a result of the new US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA), grocers licensed to sell BC wines will also be able to sell international wines without adding a separate checkout. The arrangement is one already well established in other provinces, and the new trade agreement says it must be in place in BC by November 1, 2019.

While not as dramatic as the effects of the original

Canada-US free trade agreement that came into force January 1, 1989, resulting in thousands of acres of vines being ripped out, the new agreement fills producers with trepidation.

BC Wine Institute president and CEO Miles Prodan warmed up to wine sales in supermarkets only after the government granted BC wines exclusive shelf access. He says the arrangement wasn’t one industry sought; government introduced it in

See WINE on next page ↗

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