

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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Agriculture Committee

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## PROPOSALS ON PROGRAMME OF WORK

### UNITED STATES

The CONTRACTING PARTIES, at the twenty-fourth session, established an Agricultural Committee to examine the problems in the agricultural sector. The terms of reference of the Committee are, in essence:

1. All agricultural products important in international trade would be covered in the examination.
2. All contracting parties which have a significant influence on the situation of the markets of the products concerned shall participate in this examination.
3. The work of the Committee should have two aspects: examination bearing on all relevant elements of agricultural trade and production policies, and subsequent consideration of positive solutions which could be mutually accepted by all participating contracting parties.

In order to implement the Committee's terms of reference it will be necessary to assemble information concerning the commodity areas in which problems exist. All contracting parties having a significant influence on the situation of the markets of the commodity concerned should be requested to supply such information to the Committee. This process need not, and must not, prevent discussion of problems and solutions whenever it appears that agreement is within reach.

It would appear practical initially to limit the scope of the examination to a few key commodity areas. If the Committee agrees, it will wish to consider which commodities should be selected for priority examination. We suggest dairy products, grains, beef and veal, other meats (i.e. pork, poultry and lamb), and deciduous fruits, including canned.

Certain broad problems (such as export subsidies) cut across commodity lines. The information to be requested of participating countries should facilitate examination of problems relevant to more than one commodity.

We propose that at the first meeting the Committee consider and approve questionnaires for the purpose of eliciting this information, and authorize the Director-General to send them to participating contracting parties. We suggest

that the responses to each questionnaire be returned no later than dates to be fixed by the Committee for each commodity to the Director-General. He would distribute the submissions together with a bibliography covering work by the GATT, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and other organizations on the commodity in question. This would give contracting parties an opportunity to review the submissions in preparation for subsequent Committee discussions. We propose that, in such discussions, the Committee should consider problems, explore improved techniques of defining problems for purposes of negotiation, and seek solutions that provide a basis for progress toward the objectives of the General Agreement in the agricultural field. Our work should aim both at facilitating trade expansion and at reducing the frictions which arise from conflicting national policies.

Work in the Agricultural Committee should not impair the freedom of contracting parties to have recourse to the regular procedures of GATT to obtain consideration of problems they consider urgent.

As we see it, then, at its first meeting the Committee would agree on which commodities it should initially concentrate its efforts and on questionnaires to be sent to participating countries for each commodity. Specific problems raised by delegations would be discussed with a view to (a) determining the information that should be supplied by countries in order that solutions may later be sought; (b) ascertaining the degree of consensus that exists; and (c) how the problems can best be defined.

At its next meeting, the Committee should have before it a substantial amount of information, which it might find in some cases would have to be clarified or supplemented. Discussion would then proceed directly to problems of specific commodities, or problems common to several commodities, and to possible solutions.

MODEL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE

1. Policies and returns to producers

- (a) Levels and methods of maintaining the guaranteed or supported prices including direct and indirect price supports and measures which tend to limit production;
- (b) average level of returns to producers;
- (c) system of determining returns for producers, including pooling of receipts;
- (d) amount of producer subsidies not included in (b) above;
- (e) other forms of aid.

2. Prices

- (a) Retail and wholesale prices on major internal markets for commodity sold for consumption, including when relevant major seasonal variations;
- (b) levels of international prices prevailing in various markets for different varieties of commodity (f.o.b., c.i.f., free at frontier prices); monthly prices, their direction and evolution, and their main seasonal variations;
- (c) conditions of price formation in domestic and international markets; price relationships among varieties of commodity and of near substitutes.

3. Aids to consumption

- (a) Consumer subsidies;
- (b) use of this product in domestic and international welfare schemes and other non-commercial disposals;
- (c) other measures to stimulate domestic consumption.

4. Frontier protection measures

Measures of protection at frontier - both of central government and of governments of constituent units - to protect and support internal producers such as import duties and all charges, quantitative import restrictions, minimum

import prices, import calendars, conditional import regulations, and all other measures which affect the quantity or price of imports.

5. Statistical data

Statistical data, and cost data where relevant, with appropriate comment, on each country's production, consumption, imports, exports, carryover stocks and stockpiles of product, (with cost to government or quasi-governmental entities) average yield per producing unit, and total acreage or units in production for previous three production years.

6. Aids to exports

- (a) Specific data and appropriate comment on export payments, subsidies and other aids; global values and quantities being aided and value per unit, for previous three production years;
- (b) stock management policies as they relate to export practices..