

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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INTERNATIONAL MEAT CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Note by Chairman

Introduction

1. The International Meat Consultative Group, established by the GATT Council on 7 February 1975, held its first meeting, which was of an organizational character, in the Conference Room of the Villa Le Bocage on 13 and 14 March 1975. The following countries or groups of countries were represented at the meeting:

Argentina	European Communities	Romania
Australia	and its member States	South Africa
Austria	Finland	Spain
Brazil	Hungary	Sweden
Bulgaria	Japan	Switzerland
Canada	New Zealand	United States
Dominican Republic	Poland	Uruguay

In addition, at the invitation of the Group, the representative of the FAO in Geneva attended the meeting as an observer.

Agenda

2. The Group adopted as the basis for its discussion the topics outlined in paragraph 3 of the airgram convening the meeting (GATT/AIR/1148) with the addition of an item for "other business".

Participation in the Group of non-member countries of GATT

3. The Group agreed that the secretariat should prepare a note for circulation to member countries of the United Nations who were not also members of the GATT, drawing their attention to the Group's existence and inviting them to participate.

Relations with intergovernmental organizations interested in international trade in meat

4. Intergovernmental organizations having a special expertise in the field of production and trade in meat and wishing to attend meetings of the Group would be invited to do so as observers. At the invitation of the Group a representative of the FAO which had indicated its interest in the work of the Group, attended the meeting as an observer. The secretariat was requested to advise the secretariats of the ECE and of the OECD of the Group's existence to see whether they would wish to attend future meetings of the Group in the capacity of observers.

Relations with non-governmental organizations

5. It was agreed to hold over discussion on this question until the next meeting of the Group.

Nature and scope of the activities, on which, in the initial stages of the Group's work, it would be appropriate to concentrate

6. In the first place there was general agreement that initially the Group should concentrate on the bovine sector, that is on bovine cattle and meat deriving therefrom at all stages of production, processing and trade. This would be without prejudice to the possible subsequent introduction of other types of meat into the work of the Group or to the discussion of other types of meat on certain occasions, for example, in discussing trends in consumption.

7. Secondly, there was general agreement that, having regard to its terms of reference, the Group would provide a forum for consultation and exchange of views on all matters affecting international trade in livestock and meat based on a regular flow of up-to-date information on production and trade and on national policy measures affecting the bovine sector. The Group would not, however, be a forum for criticism of, or negotiation on, national policies. Rather the Group's activities would be directed to developing closer co-operation amongst participants and a better mutual understanding of the international meat market. The Group's on-going analyses of the market situation would provide something of an early warning system designed to promote the formulation of more harmonious national policies and to avoid market disequilibria.

8. Thirdly, it was noted that in all this every endeavour ought to be made not to duplicate the work done by other intergovernmental organizations.

9. As regards what may be referred to as the modus operandi to be adopted by the Group for its regular sessions, it was agreed that it would have as its basic agenda two items: one would be an analysis of the current market situation and the other would be a review of the immediate or foreseeable market trends and also the

longer term perspective. For the purpose of its review of current market conditions and foreseeable trends the Group would have available to it such data as it may agree to collect on a regular basis. It was suggested that this could be supplemented by assessments to be furnished by individual participants. For its review of the longer term perspectives the Group could draw on the work being done in this field by other organizations.

The identification of the data required to enable the Group to carry out its functions, and the procedures for its collection and dissemination having regard to the availability of such data from existing sources

10. It was noted that a major difficulty encountered in the analysis and interpretation of market conditions and trends was that the available data were often presented on different bases. It was considered fundamental to the effectiveness of the Group's consultations that it should have available to it regularly up-dated information presented so far as possible on a homogeneous basis.

11. As regards the type of information to be collected it was generally considered that this should cover all stages of production and trade including in each case a breakdown according to the major elements and variables. A number of observations were made concerning the collection of retrospective data, on whether data should be collected on a monthly, quarterly or some other basis, and on the areas where there were gaps in the information available. It was agreed that in order to proceed with this matter the secretariat should prepare and circulate a model questionnaire on the kind of data which participants had indicated might be useful to the work of the Group. In the light of the responses received and in consultation with interested participants the secretariat would then refine the model questionnaire and re-submit it to participants for consideration at the next meeting of the Group.

Next meeting of the Group

12. In order to have an exchange of views at the earliest possible opportunity it was agreed that at its next meeting the Group would consult on current market conditions and foreseeable trends. This consultation would be based on submissions and information supplied by participants including to the extent possible data on a retrospective basis.

Date of next meeting

13. It was agreed that, in view of the need for the secretariat to consult with participants on the model questionnaire, the date and duration of the next meeting would be fixed by the Chairman in consultation with participants on the understanding that the next meeting would be held as soon as possible but that physical restraints may require it to be held in June 1975.

Frequency of meetings

14. There was general agreement that the Group should meet on a regular basis. A number of suggestions were put forward concerning the frequency to be established for the regular meetings of the Group. It was agreed to revert to this question at the next meeting of the Group on the basis that in the light of the decisions taken at that meeting on the model questionnaire and of the experience gained from its first consultations, the Group would be better placed to decide the question of the frequency to be established for its regular sessions.

Record of meetings

15. It was agreed that the present note summarizing the main points of the first organizational meeting be prepared for circulation also to non-GATT member countries who may be interested in the work of the Group, but that records of future meetings of the Group would be restricted to participants.

Other business

16. Referring to the question of the frequency of meetings, one participant requested that delegations should be prepared to state, at the next meeting, how soon they could possibly collect and submit data with respect to the various elements which might be agreed upon in terms of the model questionnaire.