

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON
TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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AUSTRALIA: RESUMPTION OF ARTICLE XXII:I CONSULTATIONS ON JAPANESE
RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS OF BOVINE MEAT

The following is the text of a letter dated 19 November 1976, from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the permanent mission of Japan, which is being circulated to contracting parties at the request of the permanent mission of Australia.

I refer to the recent announcement by the Japanese Government that Japan will restrict the level of its beef imports to 20,000 tons for the second half of its 1976/77 fiscal year and to the advice that this level of access will be reassessed at a later date.

Since the lifting in 1975 of the Japanese embargo on imports of beef the Australian Government has continued to emphasize to the relevant Japanese authorities the importance of a stable and predictable trade in beef. This latest announcement of a quota of only 20,000 tons represents a substantial reduction in the prospective level of Japanese imports of beef at a time when Australian producers are already experiencing severe difficulties with access to overseas markets.

I have, accordingly, been instructed to advise you of the Australian Government's desire to resume the GATT Article XXII consultations on Japan's restrictions on imports of bovine meat. It is desired that the next round of these consultations be held in Geneva as soon as possible.

Particular aspects of the Japanese restrictions on which it is desired to consult include the following:

- (a) The consistency of Japan's beef import restrictions with its obligations, and Australia's rights, under the General Agreement;
- (b) The provisions of the GATT under which Japan justifies increased restrictions at this time on access to the Japanese beef market;

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- (c) Japan's obligations under GATT in relation to the State-trading operations in meat of Japan's livestock industry promotion corporation;
- (d) Problems affecting trade in beef arising from the operations of the livestock industry promotion corporation and the desirability of allowing the non-government trading community in Japan greater opportunity to meet consumer demand for beef.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Director-General of GATT, for the information of the contracting parties.