

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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INTERNATIONAL MEAT COUNCIL

Report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES Prepared by the Chairman of the International Meat Council on his own responsibility

1. The International Meat Council held its sixth meeting on 17 and 18 June 1982. In accordance with its rules of procedure it elected Mr. J.C. Raimondi (Argentina) as Chairman for a second term and Mr. A. Cruik (United States) as Vice-Chairman. The Chairman welcomed two new signatory countries, Egypt and Poland, putting signatories at 22. It was noted that no major beef exporting or importing country, except the USSR, was missing from the list of signatories.
2. With the assistance of its subsidiary body, the Meat Market Analysis Group, the International Meat Council carried out an examination of the world supply and demand situation and outlook regarding livestock and bovine meat on the basis of information supplied by the participants as well as on the interpretative analysis drawn up by the secretariat. In this connexion it was pointed out that the demand side of beef markets has recently taken an unprecedented importance, whereas demand has traditionally been regarded as given with market fluctuations originating largely from supply changes. It was noted that cattle industries of many countries, in particular those of certain exporting countries, had not as yet received any positive stimulus, nor did they anticipate any soon. Moreover, it was pointed out that several of the uncertainties facing world markets do not necessarily reflect uncertainty regarding improvement or deterioration, but rather uncertainty regarding further deterioration and that of the status quo.
3. The International Meat Council also discussed a series of papers prepared by the secretariat concerning certain costs in the beef industry, the competition of other meats and new markets. Of interest to note in this connexion is the suggestion that food consumption patterns may be changing to some extent, at least in the more developed countries, i.e. with rising standards of living and a wider variety of food products to choose from, a rise in income will not necessarily mean an equal rise in beef demand. As concerns meat demand in developing countries it was noted that many of those were now starting to produce and import meat in increasing quantities for a population that until fairly recently had had very little meat in their diets. It was suggested that instability of feed costs in the market implied instability for meat prices, in particular in countries where cattle were not grass fed. It was also pointed out that exchange rate changes were very important in this context.
4. The next meeting of the International Meat Council will be held in December 1982, the exact date of which will set in consultations with participants.