

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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## INTERNATIONAL MEAT COUNCIL REPORT TO THE CONTRACTING PARTIES

1. This report gives a brief general explanation of developments in the work of the International Meat Council and the functioning of the Arrangement Regarding Bovine Meat since the International Meat Council's last report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES (L/5397 of 12 November 1982). It also takes into account the request made by the GATT Council at its meeting of 20 April, 1983, (C/M/167, page 8) concerning the action to be taken pursuant to the decision on MTN Agreements and Arrangements set out in the Ministerial Declaration of 29 November, 1982, (L/5424, page 11). Accordingly the report includes information regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the Arrangement and obstacles to its acceptance by interested countries.
2. The Arrangement Regarding Bovine Meat, which has been in force since 1 January, 1980, has at present 25 signatories (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, European Communities, Egypt, Finland, Guatemala, Hungary, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United States, Uruguay and Yugoslavia). Two of the signatories (Belize and Paraguay) are applying the Arrangement provisionally, in accordance with Article VI, paragraph 2 of the Arrangement. One participant has not yet completed its ratification procedure. Four participants (Belize, Bulgaria, Guatemala and Paraguay) are not contracting parties to the GATT.
3. Representatives of the following countries are attending meetings of the International Meat Council as observers: Bangladesh, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Gabon, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malta, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Madagascar, Panama, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, and Zaire. Also attending as observers are representatives of ECE, FAO, IMF, ITC, OECD and UNCTAD.
4. The International Meat Council elected for 1983 Ambassador Federico Grünwaldt Ramasso (Uruguay) as Chairman and Mr. Phillip Douglas (Canada) as Vice-chairman. Mr. Patrick Robertson (Australia) was elected Chairman of the Meat Market Analysis Group.
5. Since the 1982 report the International Meat Council has held two meetings, 9-10 December, 1982, and 23-24 June, 1983. In accordance with its terms of reference as stated in the Arrangement Regarding Bovine Meat, both meetings discussed the functioning of the Arrangement, the bovine meat market situation and outlook, and questions of a policy nature of special concern to participants.

6. At its June 1983 meeting, the International Meat Council reviewed with special interest the functioning of the Arrangement since it had at the beginning of the year been in force for three years, i.e. the period on the basis of which the Arrangement operates. Participants agreed that the Arrangement had been working in a satisfactory manner in its three years of existence. Certain procedures had been instituted to assist the International Meat Council in carrying out its work: a Meat Market Analysis Group had been established and procedures have been instituted to give consideration to national policies. The Secretariat had produced a number of useful papers in different areas of the beef sector, papers which had assisted the International Meat Council in its discussions and one in particular would be of continuing assistance in monitoring the world market situation and providing an early warning function in detecting any imbalance in the world beef market.

7. The International Meat Council also stressed that for the proper carrying out of its work the objectives of the Arrangement should always be kept in mind, and in particular the objectives of promoting the expansion, ever greater liberalization and stability of the international beef and livestock market by facilitating the progressive dismantling of obstacles and restrictions to world trade in bovine meat and live animals as well as the objective of securing additional benefits for developing countries inter alia by means of promoting long-term stability of prices and maintenance and improvement of export earnings.

8. However, in the course of discussions during the last two meetings of the International Meat Council, several of its members pointed out that work as concerns some of the objectives of the Arrangement still lay ahead, namely those of promoting the expansion, ever greater liberalization and stability of the international beef and livestock market. It was suggested that participants reflect on the possibilities to give more attention to those objectives of the Arrangement which have so far been relatively ignored. Furthermore they pointed out that insufficient attention had so far been given to national policies that inhibit the development of world beef trade and that the time has now come for the International Meat Council to give greater emphasis to the work already underway as concerns the consideration of national trade policies of member countries and their influence on the evolution of the international meat market.

9. In accordance with the terms of reference of the Meat Market Analysis Group, the International Meat Council reviewed, at its meeting in June 1983, the operation of the Group. Participants agreed that the work of the Meat Market Analysis Group had been very successful and of great assistance to the International Meat Council in analysing the short term market situation. It was noted that the observers from ECE, FAO, OECD and UNCTAD contributed valuable information and the importance of their participation was stressed. It was noted that the presence of experts at the Group's meetings was very important. The International Meat Council agreed that the work of the Group should continue in its present form and be reviewed by the International Meat Council as necessary.

10. In accordance with the provisions of the Arrangement Regarding Bovine Meat, the Arrangement is open for acceptance by all countries, whether contracting parties or not, which are members of the United Nations or of one of its specialized agencies. There are no formal or procedural obstacles to acceptance inherent in the terms of the Arrangement and the International Meat Council is not aware of any country that has failed to adhere because of the obligations of the Arrangement.

11. The countries that have accepted the Arrangement represent approximately\* 90 per cent of world exports of fresh,\* chilled and frozen beef and veal ; about 60 per cent of world imports and 60 per cent of world production.

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\* excluding intra-EC trade