

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON

RESTRICTED

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# 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

Since the 1986 report<sup>1</sup>, the International Meat Council (IMC) has held two regular meetings on 11 December 1986 and on 18 June 1987, which were both preceded by meetings of the Meat Market Analysis Group (MMAG). At its June 1987 meeting, the IMC elected Mr. Richard Hochörtler (Austria) as Chairman and Mr. Piotr Freyberg (Poland) as Vice-Chairman. The MMAG elected Mr. José Ramón Prieto (Spain) as its Chairman. Currently the Arrangement Regarding Bovine Meat has twenty-seven signatories<sup>2</sup>, representing thirty-eight countries.

Both meetings discussed the functioning of the Arrangement, the meat markets situation and outlook (which, as usual, were debated more in depth in the MMAG meetings) and questions of a policy nature of special concern to participants.

The discussions regarding the functioning of the Arrangement continued to be centered, in both meetings, on two proposals aimed at facilitating the IMC's task of early detection of a serious imbalance in the world bovine meat market within the framework and operation of the Arrangement, as well as of the identification of possible solutions. Both proposals suggest the identification of a certain number of objective criteria or indicators which might provide the factual basis for a determination of serious imbalance. In the December 1986 meeting these proposals were discussed at some length, while in the June 1987 meeting some participants reiterated briefly their background and purpose. The IMC agreed to continue its discussion at the next December meeting.

In its December 1986 meeting the IMC also discussed a background paper prepared by the secretariat concerning the various support and intervention mechanisms in different producer countries and how they work. It was decided that the secretariat should keep this paper up to date. It was also decided that the secretariat would continue to send an annual bovine meat questionnaire to a number of contracting parties and GATT observers not members of the Arrangement.

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<sup>1</sup> BISD 33S, page 213

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, European Economic Community, Egypt, Finland, Guatemala, Hungary, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United States, Uruguay and Yugoslavia

It appeared from the discussions on the bovine meat market situation and outlook, that the major characteristic of the market situation since the second half of 1986 has been the price recovery in an important number of international markets. A rising number of exporting countries was entering, or was already, in a cattle herd rebuilding phase and beef and veal production was expected to decline in a number of major producing countries in the current year. One issue which continued to draw the particular attention of participants was the decline of beef and veal consumption in an increasing number of countries. One of the major factors affecting bovine meat demand was cheaper pigmeat and, in particular, poultry meat, which were both benefiting, to a larger extent than beef and veal, from depressed prices of feedgrains.

The next meetings of the IMC and its subsidiary body, the MMAG, are set for 10-11 December and 7-8 December 1987, respectively.