

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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Group "Agriculture"

Sub-Group on Meat

NOTE BY THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION

Last year Group 3(e) invited members of the Group to submit statements of their present agricultural policies and basic statistical information relating to production and trade.

The Grains Sub-Group agreed in June last that the secretariat in co-operation with Delegations should prepare certain statistical documentation on international trade in grains.

The Meat Sub-Group is carrying out this week an analysis of the characteristics structure and problems of world meat trade and is discussing the secretariat summary of import and export measures affecting the trade in bovine meat.

With the earlier precedents in mind and having regard to this week's discussions in the Meat Sub-Group the Australian Delegation suggested early in the present meeting that it might be a useful step if prior to the next meeting of the Sub-Group importing and exporting countries could set out in a simple way their respective positions in relation to the world trade in bovine meat (including live animals).

In the course of discussion in the Sub-Group the view was expressed that it would be useful if the Delegation would provide a paper on its proposal. It is in response to that view that this brief note is circulated.

In the course of the Sub-Group's analysis of the characteristics of world meat trade and in the course of its discussions on trade measures it seemed likely that questions would arise regarding for example the relationships between measures at the frontier and the framework of policy or policy aims or objectives applying internally in respect of production or consumption, and that it would help in obtaining answers to these and other questions if each member of the Sub-Group could be invited to submit a paper.

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The discussion in the course of this week's meeting may show that papers from members of the Sub-Group would permit a better understanding on the part of the Sub-Group of the total situation within which negotiations in the Sub-Group would be conducted and would contribute to the Sub-Group's work.

The delegation therefore proposes that consideration might be given to inviting members of the Sub-Group to submit prior to the next meeting statements on their respective positions in the world trade in meat (including trade in bovine meat and live animals).

These papers might be compiled as information papers. They would not be a basis for any confrontation process. They could serve as a basis for discussion in the Sub-Group at its next meeting of the situation of each country in the world meat trade and of aspects of different countries' interests in the trade.

With this kind of purpose in view the Sub-Group might consider that it would be appropriate for each country's paper to indicate the policy framework or policy aims in the bovine meat sector (including production and consumption) in that country; to describe measures employed internally or at the frontier and to explain the relationship of those measures to the policy framework or to the policy objectives; to describe the import or export trade indicating the main sources of supply or the main market outlets and any characteristics of the external trade (e.g. types of product). There could be some discussion in the paper of problems experienced in international trade such as problems of access to markets or access to supplies. It would be open to each country to include comments on any other aspect of its position in the world meat trade.

Whilst it might be advantageous to include certain statistical data relevant to production consumption trade or prices in such papers the delegation's view is that if papers of the kind envisaged above are to be invited they should not be regarded as answering statistical needs of the kind the Grains Sub-Group set out to meet. Such statistical questions are a separate matter.