

**MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS
THE URUGUAY ROUND**

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Group of Negotiations on Goods (GATT)

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Negotiating Group on Agriculture

COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED STATES ON
HEALTH AND SANITARY MEASURES

The United States regards harmonization of health and sanitary measures, and a commitment to negotiate more effective rules and procedures governing their use under the General Agreement to be priority issues for the contracting parties.

Accordingly, the United States proposes that the following be considered as the Agriculture Negotiating Group's consensus for improving the effectiveness of the GATT in this area, and for taking into account the relevant international agreements affecting health and sanitary standards.

Agreement on the Harmonization of Health and Sanitary Measures

The contracting parties agree that harmonization of health and sanitary measures should be recognized as a basic principle which can further the objectives of the General Agreement by minimizing the adverse effects that these measures can have on agricultural trade. The measures to be harmonized concern those which are prepared, adopted, and applied for health reasons alone. Specifically, these are: food hygiene, food additives, food identity standards, processes and production methods, methods of analysis and sampling, maximum residue tolerance levels, veterinary drugs, animal health and quarantine, and plant health and quarantine.

Recognizing the important contribution that international standards can make in facilitating trade and ensuring protection of human, plant, and animal health and life, the contracting parties agree that domestic laws and regulations should be based on international standards adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Office of Epizootics, and the International Plant Protection Convention. In furtherance of this objective, the GATT should encourage contracting parties to participate in the activities of these international standards setting bodies with a view to harmonizing health and sanitary regulations. The GATT should also increase linkages and enhance co-ordination between the GATT and these

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international standards organizations. The Director-General of the GATT should communicate this Agreement to the Director General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Director General of the International Office of Epizootics, and should seek to establish a liaison arrangement with them.

Contracting parties further agree that a more effective process for resolving trade issues in the GATT requires that GATT rights and objectives regarding the imposition of health and sanitary laws and regulations be strengthened and clarified. To that end, the GATT should require that health and sanitary measures be based on verifiable scientific evidence, greater recognition should be given to the principle of equivalency, and an early consultative mechanism on health and sanitary measures should be established. The contracting parties further recognize the importance of prompt and mutually satisfactory resolutions of disputes. In this regard, the dispute settlement process involving health and sanitary issues should build on the improved procedures being negotiated in the Uruguay Round Negotiating Group on Dispute Settlement, and may contain elements unique to health and sanitary matters.

The Negotiating Group on Agriculture agrees to establish a working group on health and sanitary measures with terms of reference that will help advance the negotiations towards achieving the above agreed long-term objectives. The final product of the working group should be a report and recommendations to the Group on assigned issues, including proposals for incorporating new obligations into the GATT as Uruguay Round commitments and other questions agreed to by the Group.