

Matters addressed at the Sixty-ninth Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

The purpose of this note,¹ prepared by the Center for Strategic Analysis for Agriculture (CAESPA) of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), is to inform IICA staff of the main points raised at the Sixty-ninth Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, held on March 26 in Geneva, Switzerland. IICA took part in the meeting in its capacity as an observer member of the Committee.

Main points raised

1. Matters relevant to the implementation of the commitments assumed by the countries under the Agreement on Agriculture²

- The United States consulted Brazil about its domestic support program.³
- Canada asked Brazil to clarify its trade and industry policy.
- New Zealand consulted Canada about its dairy policies.
- Canada and the United States asked Costa Rica about its compliance with

its commitments in relation to the Aggregate Measurement of Support.⁴

- The United States consulted Saint Lucia about domestic purchase requirements for poultry and pork.
- New Zealand asked Sri Lanka for clarification concerning its milk powder tariff and compliance with WTO binding.
- Canada and the United States asked Thailand about its paddy pledging scheme.

2. Specific questions with regard to notifications⁵

- Thailand, the United States, Venezuela, and the Russian Federation presented notifications related to the administration of tariff and other quota commitments.⁶

¹ Prepared in April 2013 by Adriana Campos Azofeifa, CAESPA Specialist in Policies and Trade Negotiations and Coordinator of the WTO Regional Reference Centre at IICA.

² Document G/AG/W/108, prepared by the WTO, contains the full text of the matters raised in this section.

³ According to the WTO, a domestic support is any domestic subsidy or other measure that acts to maintain producer prices at levels above those prevailing in international trade.

⁴ “Aggregate Measurement of Support” means “the annual level of support, expressed in monetary terms, provided for an agricultural product in favour of the producers of the basic agricultural product or non-product-specific support provided in favour of agricultural producers in general, other than support provided under programmes that qualify as exempt from reduction under Annex 2 [of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture].”

⁵ Document G/AG/W/108, prepared by the WTO, contains full details of the questions raised in this section.

⁶ Refers to the application of a lower tariff type for a specific quantity of an imported good. When a country wishes to import more than the specified quantity, it may do so, but must pay a higher rate. The WTO permits this kind of quota.

- Brazil, China, Ecuador, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Ukraine, Canada the European Union, Israel, Korea and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia presented notifications related to imports under tariff and other quota commitments.
- Japan, Chinese Taipei, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia, Israel, Korea, South Africa, and Switzerland presented notifications in the context of the special safeguard.⁷
- Argentina, Armenia, Brazil the European Union, Georgia, Israel, Moldova, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Senegal, South Africa, Ukraine, the United States, Botswana, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Switzerland presented notifications on domestic support commitments
- Armenia, Ecuador, the European Union, the United States, and Canada presented notifications in the context
- China, Costa Rica, Ivory Coast,

Ecuador, Guatemala, China, Indonesia, Lesotho, Mali, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Ukraine, and Switzerland presented a notification related to export subsidy commitments.⁸

New Developments

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Guilherme Marquardt Bayer (Brazil) took over as chair of the Committee on Agriculture, succeeding Ms. Emalene Marcus-Burnett (Barbados).

Next meeting

The next meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture is scheduled for June 13-14, 2013. We will provide details of the results in July. For more information, please contact Adriana Campos Azoifeifa, CAESPA Specialist in Policies and Trade Negotiations and Coordinator of the WTO Regional Reference Centre at IICA, either by email (adriana.campos@iica.int) or phone ((506) 2216-0170).

⁷ Used for the agricultural sector. Temporary increase in import duty to deal with import surges or price falls, under provisions that are special to the Agriculture Agreement.

⁸ Economic advantage that a government provides, directly or indirectly, to producers of certain goods or services to improve their competitive position. Some economic aid measures are prohibited because they distort trade (export and local content subsidies), while others are subject to reduction commitments.