



## Eighty-second Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization

The purpose of this document <sup>1</sup> is to report on the main issues discussed during the Eighty-second Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held on November 9 and 10, 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland.

In general terms, at each of these meetings countries report on the measures taken to improve their agricultural trade, under the commitments established in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. These commitments relate to issues such as market access (tariffs, safeguards), domestic support (direct or indirect payments of assistance to agriculture), export subsidies (subsidies and disbursements, export quantities, food aid), export restrictions and prohibitions and decisions concerning measures that could have negative effects on the Least Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs). In addition, organizations such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) report on their contributions to these countries.

This document describes the status of compliance (in November 2016) of the countries of the Americas regarding their notification obligations under the Agreement on Agriculture. Below is a summary of the main issues discussed during the meeting:

### 1. Issues addressed

#### 1.1. Review and discussion of agriculture notifications

The Member States discussed certain trade measures and notifications pertaining to 25 member countries of the WTO (the European Union counts as a single country), nine of which are members of IICA. This is a positive result, indicating that the national authorities are complying with their transparency obligations under the WTO trade agreements and participating in the multilateral trade regulation system.

As shown in the left hand column of Table 1, Canada and United States asked questions about domestic support and market access measures<sup>2</sup> applied to specific products. They also raised issues regarding certain programs, policies and plans that have implications for international agricultural trade and formulated observations and questions on measures notified by other WTO members related to dairy products, rice and wine. In addition, Canada, the United States and Argentina answered specific questions formulated by three countries outside of the Americas: Ukraine, Australia and New Zealand.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by IICA's Flagship Project "Competitiveness and Sustainability of Agricultural Chains for Food Security and Economic Development."

<sup>2</sup> In the context of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, any domestic support in favor of agricultural producers is subject to regulation. There are basically two categories of domestic support: support with no, or minimal, trade-distorting effects (referred to as Green Box measures); and trade-distorting support (Amber Box measures). In WTO terminology, subsidies in general are identified by "boxes", which are given the colors of traffic lights: green (permitted), amber (slow down – i.e. must be reduced) and red (forbidden).

**Table 1. Issues raised on implementation of commitments related to agriculture**

Countries that asked questions	Countries questioned	Issues raised
New Zealand	<b>Canada</b>	Market price support for dairy products
Australia	European Union	EU intervention programs
Vietnam	Greece	Tax on coffee
European Union	India	Export subsidies for onions
<b>United States</b>		Minimum price support for kharif crops
European Union		Restrictions on sugar exports
Australia, New Zealand, <b>United States</b>	<b>Canada</b>	New class of milk ingredients
New Zealand, <b>United States</b>		Wine sale policies
Australia	European Union	Agriculture policies
New Zealand	India	Apple imports
European Union		New agricultural insurance plan
Australia		Export subsidies for sugar
New Zealand	Sri Lanka	Increase in milk powder tariffs
Australia, <b>Canada</b>	<b>United States</b>	Purchase of cheese stocks
Australia		Price Loss Coverage and Agricultural Risk Coverage Programs
Ukraine	<b>Argentina</b>	Fiscal policies
Australia	China	Regional assistance programs
<b>Canada</b>	Turkey	Domestic support policies
New Zealand		Subsidies aimed at incentivizing the use of domestic dairy products
European Union	Zambia	Public stocks and exports of maize

**Source:** Eighty-second Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee of Agriculture, November 9-10, 2016.

During the meeting delegates also discussed notifications submitted by some Member States (Table 2), related to the **administration and implementation** of commitments on *tariff quotas, special safeguards, domestic support and export subsidies*. Several member countries of IICA —Argentina, Costa Rica, Panama and Paraguay— provided information on some of their agricultural trade policy measures.

**Table 2. Issues raised on agriculture notifications**

Countries consulted	Notification topics
European Union	Notifications on the implementation of commitments on tariff and other quotas
European Union and Thailand	Notifications on imports in the context of commitments on tariff and other quotas
Japan, Malaysia	Notifications on the special safeguard <sup>3</sup>
Afghanistan, <b>Argentina, Costa Rica</b> , Cuba, Norway, <b>Panama, Paraguay</b> and South Africa, Tunisia	Notifications on domestic support commitments
Afghanistan, Norway	Notifications related to export subsidy commitments

**Source:** Eighty-second Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, November 9-10, 2016.

Aside from the notifications on which countries raise their concerns (Table 2), countries may also submit notifications to the WTO Secretariat prior to each Agriculture Committee meeting, but regarding which no WTO member has asked a question during that meeting (see Table 3). However, these notifications may be reviewed at subsequent meetings of the Agriculture Committee and further clarification may be requested on these.

**Table 3. Agriculture notifications submitted that were not subject to questions**

Countries that submitted notifications	Agriculture notification topics
Thailand	Notifications on implementation of commitments on tariff and other quotas
Brazil, Moldova, Vietnam, European Union	Notifications on implementation of commitments on tariff and other quotas
Japan, Malaysia	Notifications related to the special safeguard
<b>Argentina, Brazil, Canada</b> , Cuba, Mauritius, Moldova, Russia, <b>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</b>	Notifications related to domestic support commitments
<b>Canada</b>	Notifications related to modification of domestic support measures
Moldova, <b>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</b> , Vietnam, <b>Argentina, Honduras</b> , Australia, <b>Brazil</b>	Notifications related to related to export subsidy commitments

**Source:** Eighty-second Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, November 9-10, 2016.

## 1.2. Implementation of outcomes of the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference

The Member States raised various issues related to implementation of the outcomes of the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2015. **Chile** presented its concerns to New Zealand regarding export competition measures and the structure of state monopolies, specifically the firms Kiwifruit New Zealand and Zespri Group Limited.

## 1.3. Other matters pertaining to the Committee on Agriculture

Other topics discussed during the meeting were the following:

- Annual monitoring exercise on implementation of the “Marrakech Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Program on Least Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries (NFIDC)”:

<sup>3</sup> **Safeguards** are exceptional measures applied by countries to temporarily protect specific national industries from a significant increase in imports of any product which is causing, or is threatening to cause, severe harm to that industry. A special safeguard is a temporary increase in import duties to deal with import surges or price falls, under provisions that are special to the Agriculture Agreement.

International observer organizations submit an annual report to the Agriculture Committee on their main activities in response to the Marrakech Decision. Accordingly, IICA submitted a report on its cooperation efforts to support its member countries on food security issues in 2016, described in the technical document “The Marrakesh Decision and Food Security: Contribution of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.”<sup>4</sup> This document, which is prepared each year, describes the actions implemented in IICA’s member countries in four aspects of food security, as part of the Institute’s contributions as an observer at the WTO Committee on Agriculture.

- Renewal of IICA’s status as an international observer organization:

For the seventh consecutive year, members approved the Institute’s status as an international observer organization of the WTO Committee on Agriculture for another one-year period.

- Upcoming events of the Committee:

- o Updating the system for online submission of agriculture notifications by member countries. At present, these notifications may be uploaded to a special platform to which authorized members of government have access.
- o It was announced that a “Workshop on agriculture notifications” would take place on March 20-24 of 2017. Invitations were sent to the WTO member countries at the end of 2016. The workshop will be imparted in English; however, at the request of members, interpretation services will be provided in other languages.
- o Tentative dates for Committee meetings in 2017 were announced for March, June and September. These dates will be confirmed in light of preparatory activities for the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference, which will take place on December 11-14, 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

## 2. Institutional contact points

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<sup>4</sup> Document available at: <http://www.iica.int/es/publications/decisi%C3%B3n-de-marrakech-y-seguridad-alimentaria-contribuci%C3%B3n-del-instituto-0>.