



## ***Eighty Third Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization***

This note<sup>1</sup> describes the main points discussed during the Eighty Third Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO),<sup>2</sup> which the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) attended in an observer capacity.

It also provides details of the status of the implementation by the countries of the Americas of the matters addressed in agricultural notifications (through March 2017), and the approval, at the same meeting, of the IICA-WTO joint work plan for 2017.

### **1. Matters addressed during the meeting**

In its meetings, the Committee on Agriculture monitors WTO Member States' implementation of the commitments established in the Agreement on Agriculture. The delegates of the countries review and discuss the trade measures notified to the WTO within the framework of the agreement.

#### **1.1. Review of agricultural notifications**

The meeting reviewed and discussed the following notifications sent to the Secretariat of the Committee on Agriculture by WTO member countries.

In the specific case of countries in the Americas, two IICA Member States (Canada and the United States) raised questions related to domestic support<sup>3</sup> and market access. Furthermore, Brazil, Canada and the United States responded to specific points raised by other WTO members (see Table 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by the IICA flagship project "Competitiveness and sustainability of agricultural chains for food security and economic development," May 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Held on 27-28 March 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> Under the Agreement on Agriculture, all domestic support in favor of agricultural producers is subject to rules. There are basically two categories of domestic support — support with no, or minimal, distortive effect on trade (often referred to as "Green Box" measures), and trade-distorting support (often referred to as "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. be reduced), red (forbidden).

**Table 1. Matters raised regarding the implementation of agricultural commitments**

<b>Countries that raised questions</b>	<b>Country to which the question was addressed</b>	<b>Issue concerned</b>
European Union	Australia	Wine equalization tax
	India	Minimum price for sugar cane in Uttar Pradesh
	India	India's support price for Rabi crops (spring)
	Indonesia	Indonesia's draft regulation on supply and distribution of dairy products
	Russia	Russia's higher applied tariffs than bound rates
	Zambia	Zambia's public stocks and exports of maize
Indonesia	<b>Canada</b>	Canada's Agri-Marketing Program
	Egypt	Egypt's new regulations
	United Kingdom	United Kingdom's modification of agricultural schedule of commitments
New Zealand	European Union	European Union's support for livestock sector
	<b>Canada</b>	Canada's market price support for dairy products
	India	India's importation of apples
	Switzerland	Switzerland's export subsidy budget
	Turkey	Turkey's subsidies aimed at incentivizing the use of domestic dairy products
Australia	India	India's minimum support price for wheat
	India	India's sugar export subsidies
<b>United States</b>	India	India's trade statistics
	Thailand	Thailand's financial assistance to fruit farmers
	<b>Brazil</b>	Brazil's domestic support programs
	India	India's wheat stocks and exports
	Thailand	Thailand's rice policies
<b>Canada</b>	India	India's buffer stocks of pulses
	<b>United States</b>	Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO)
China	Japan	Japan's mark-up on imported rice
Australia, European Union, <b>United States</b>	Thailand	Thailand's import permits for feed wheat
	<b>Canada</b>	Canada's wine sale policy
Australia, European Union, New Zealand, <b>United States</b>	<b>Canada</b>	Canada's new milk ingredient class
New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland	<b>Canada</b>	Canada's tariff-rate quota <sup>4</sup> for cheese
<b>Canada, United States</b>	India	India's minimum support price for Kharif crops

**Source:** Eighty Third Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, March 2017

<sup>4</sup> A tariff quota is a ceiling on exports or imports of a good, which is applied to a specific quantity of the good concerned or for a specific period. In other words, a tariff quota is applied for a certain period of time to a maximum amount of goods, in which case the exports or imports are exempt from paying custom duties, or a preferential tariff is applied.

Also reviewed at the meeting were notifications sent in by various member countries. In the case of the Americas, seven IICA Member States (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Peru and the United States) responded to questions regarding notifications related to tariff quotas, special safeguard issues,<sup>5</sup> domestic support and export subsidies (see Table 2)

**Table 2. Points raised in connection with individual agricultural notifications**

Countries to which the question was addressed	Subject of the notification
Iceland and Moldova	Notifications related to imports under tariff and other quota commitments
Chinese Taipei, Japan, <b>United States</b>	Notifications related to special agricultural safeguards
<b>Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile,</b> European Union, Jordan, Mali, Moldova, Russia, Togo, <b>United States</b>	Notifications related to domestic support commitments
<b>Canada,</b> European Union, <b>Mexico, Peru, United States</b>	Notifications related to new or modified domestic support measures
Switzerland	Notifications related to export subsidy commitments

**Source:** Eighty Third Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, March 2017.

Finally, there was a series of notifications sent to the WTO Secretariat that were not discussed (see Table 3); they could be reviewed at subsequent meetings, however. On this occasion, seven IICA Member States (Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru and the United States) presented notifications regarding which other countries did not seek clarification.

**Table 3. Agricultural notifications subject to review in respect of which no technical questions were raised**

Countries that sent in notifications	Subject of the notification
European Union and Thailand	Notifications related to the administration of tariff and other quota commitments
Australia, <b>Brazil, Chile,</b> Chinese Taipei, European Union, Israel, Russia, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine	Notifications related to imports under tariff and other quota commitments
Australia, Botswana, Chinese Taipei, European Union, Israel, Korea <b>Nicaragua,</b> Norway, Switzerland, <b>United States</b>	Notifications related to special safeguards
<b>Barbados,</b> Botswana, Croatia <b>Guatemala,</b> Mauricio, <b>Peru,</b> Seychelles, Ukraine, <b>United States</b>	Notifications related to domestic support commitments
Australia, Botswana <b>Brazil, Chile,</b> Chinese	Notifications related to export

<sup>5</sup> Safeguards are exceptional protection measures applied by a country to temporarily protect specific national industries that have been harmed or face the threat of serious harm due to a significant increase in the goods entering the domestic market under unfair competitive conditions.

Taipei, <b>Guatemala</b> China, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kuwait, Mali, Montenegro, <b>Nicaragua</b> Qatar, Russia, Seychelles, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine	subsidy commitments
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**Source:** Eighty Third Regular Meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture, March 2017.

## 1.2. Other matters addressed

The meeting agenda also included discussion of the IICA-WTO joint work plan for 2017, which the WTO Secretariat had distributed among the member countries as WTO document G/AG/GEN/139. During the meeting, IICA gave a brief presentation of the principal aspects of the work plan.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, it was decided that the next regular meeting of the Committee on Agriculture would be held on 7-8 June this year.

## 2. Visit to the WTO by IICA's Director General

During the week in which the Eighty Third Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture took place, Mr. Víctor M. Villalobos visited the European Union. On 30-31 March, he visited several organizations in Geneva, including the WTO. The visit was designed to reaffirm and strengthen IICA's ties with the WTO, and to seek ways of enhancing and improving the technical capabilities of the Institute's member countries. During his visit, Mr. Villalobos met with delegates from the office of the WTO Director General and the WTO's Committee on Agriculture, Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, and the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation.

## 3. Institutional contact points

For further information, please contact IICA Trade Specialist Adriana Campos Azofeifa by email ([adriana.campos@iica.int](mailto:adriana.campos@iica.int)) or phone ((506) 2216-0170); or Technical Assistant Nadia Monge Hernández by email ([nadia.monge@iica.int](mailto:nadia.monge@iica.int)) or phone ((506) 2216-0358).

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://docs.wto.org>. To download the work plan in English, Spanish or French, type G/AG//GEN/139 into the document search engine.