

August 2012

San Jose, Costa Rica

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Issues discussed at the Sixty-sixth Regular Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

As noted in Technical Note No. 05-12 of 18 June 2012, the WTO's Committee on Agriculture meets four times a year (March, June, September, and November) to address agricultural and trade issues.

On June 20, 2012, the Committee on Agriculture held its Sixty-sixth Regular Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation for Agriculture (IICA) attended in an observer capacity, thanks to IICA's collaborative relationship with the WTO.

The main issues discussed at the meeting, during which Ms. Emalene Marcus-Burnett (Barbados) was elected as the new chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, are listed below:

- I. *Concerns related to the implementation of the obligations assumed by the countries under the Agreement on Agriculture*
 - As it had at the meeting in March, **Argentina** raised the **question** of the obstruction of access to markets caused by trade measures without scientific or technical justification, which is incompatible with the agreements of the WTO.
 - **The United States questioned** Brazil's domestic supports program.
 - **The European Union and the United States expressed concern** about Costa Rica's noncompliance with its obligation related to the Aggregate Measure of Support.¹
 - **The European Union questioned** India's domestic support notifications (Table DS:2) related to measures exempt from the obligation to reduce special and differential treatment.
 - **The European Union and the United States** raised the issue of India's restrictions on exports.
 - **The United States** also **expressed concern** about Indonesia's quantitative and other restrictions on imports of certain food products.
 - **The United States raised the question of** the harvest insurance program that Morocco implemented recently.

- II. *Specific concerns were raised about notifications presented by WTO member countries, such as:*
 - Notifications presented by *the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Switzerland, Chile, Nicaragua, Panama* and *Tunisia* concerning imports and the management of obligations related to tariff and other types of contingents.
 - Notifications presented by *Korea, Chinese Taipei, Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Norway, and Tunisia* on the context of the special safeguard.
 - Notifications by *Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, European Union, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Norway, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Botswana, Cuba, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Macao, Nicaragua Qatar* and *Singapore* on domestic support obligations.
 - Notification presented by the *European Union, Chile, Japan, Macao, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan* and *Singapore* on obligations related to export subsidies.

¹ "Aggregate Measurement of Support" means the annual level of support, expressed in monetary terms, provided for an agricultural product in favor of the producers of the basic agricultural product or non-product-specific support provided in favor of agricultural producers in general, other than support provided under programs that qualify as exempt from reduction under Annex 2 to the WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

Forthcoming events

The next meeting of the WTO Committee on Agriculture is scheduled for September 20, 2012. We will report on its results in October. For more information, please contact Adriana Campos Azofeifa, Specialist in Policies and Trade Negotiations of the Center for Strategic Analysis for Agriculture (CAESPA), and Coordinator of the WTO Regional Reference Center at IICA, either via e-mail (adriana.campos@iica.int) or by phone (506) 2216-0170.