

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

G/AG/W/3

22 March 1995

(95-0611)

Committee on Agriculture

ORGANIZATION OF WORK AND PROCEDURES

Note by the Secretariat

The attached text prepared by the Secretariat following informal consultations as provided for in paragraph 2 of PC/IPL/12 is being circulated at the request of the Chairman for consideration under Item 2B of the proposed agenda for the 27-28 March 1995 meeting of the Committee on Agriculture (WTO/AIR/37 refers).

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Organization of Work and Procedures

General

1. In accordance with its terms of reference (WT/L/43) the Committee shall oversee the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture ("the Agreement"). The Committee shall afford Members the opportunity of consulting on any matter relating to the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement.

2. Pending a decision by the Committee on formal rules of procedure based on those adopted by the General Council (WT/L/28) and subject to these provisions, the proceedings of the Committee shall be guided by the customary procedures and practices of the GATT 1947 as appropriate.

Meetings of the Committee

3. The Committee shall meet at regular intervals to review progress in the implementation of the Uruguay Round reform programme under Article 18:1 & 2 of the Agreement (the "review process") and generally to carry out such other tasks as are provided for in the Agreement, or which may be required to be dealt with.

4. The agenda for regular meetings and the work of the Committee itself shall be in two parts: Part I shall comprise items relating to the review process; Part II shall comprise items relating to other matters within the purview of the Committee, as well as items relating to reports to be submitted by the Committee to other WTO bodies.

5. Notice of regular meetings of the Committee and a draft agenda shall be issued at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. It shall be open to any Member to request, in writing to the Secretariat, the inclusion of items under Part I or II of the proposed agenda up to, but not including, the day of which the notice convening the meeting is to be issued.

6. In principle, regular meetings of the Committee shall be held in March, September and November. Each regular meeting shall provisionally schedule the dates for the next meeting. Additional regular meetings of the Committee may be scheduled as appropriate.

7. At the request of a Member and where the matter involved is one of significant importance or urgency, the Chairperson may, unless it is considered that resort to other procedures would be more appropriate, convene a special meeting of the Committee.

Part I of Regular Meetings of the Committee - The Review Process

8. In general the review process under Part I of a regular meeting of the Committee shall be conducted on the basis of notifications which have been circulated to the Members prior to the notice convening the meeting and are listed in that notice.

9. A Member which proposes to raise any matter relating to a particular notification in the course of a regular meeting shall give notice of its intention to the notifying Member concerned and to the Secretariat, together with an indication of the specific points it proposes to raise, as far as possible

in advance of the meeting but not later than one day prior to the day on which the notice convening the meeting is to be issued. The purpose of this procedure is to enable the notifying Member to provide adequate responses to these points in the course of the review process.

10. Notifications circulated or made available after the date on which the notice convening the meeting is issued shall be considered under a distinct item of Part I of the Agenda. In the light of the information provided at that meeting by the notifying Member concerned, the Chairperson may decide that such notifications be inscribed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.

11. A Member which proposes to raise or revert to any matter in connection with a notification considered at a previous meeting of the Committee shall give notice of its intention to the notifying Member concerned and to the Secretariat, together with an indication of the specific points it proposes to raise or revert to, as far as possible in advance of the meeting concerned but not later than 1 day prior to the day on which the notice convening that meeting is to be issued.

12. Counter notifications under Article 18:7 of the Agreement on Agriculture shall be considered by the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

13. A Member raising a matter relevant to the implementation commitments under Article 18:6, may request the Member to which the matter in question relates, through the Chairperson of the Committee, to provide in writing specific information, or an explanation of the relevant facts or circumstances, regarding the matter that has been raised. The role of the Chairperson shall be to ensure that the matter to which the request relates is one of interest or concern to at least several Members and that as far as possible duplication and unduly burdensome requests are avoided. The information or explanation thus requested should normally be provided to the Committee by the Member to which the request is addressed within 30 days.

14. With respect to any matter which has been raised under the Agreement, the Chairperson may, at the request of the Members directly concerned, assist them in dealing with the matter in question. Such requests shall be made in writing and, where the Chairperson has agreed to make its assistance available, shall be brought to the attention of the Committee so as to enable any Member having a substantial interest in the matter to indicate its interest in being associated as appropriate with the Chairperson's consideration of the matter. A report shall be made to the Committee as appropriate on the general outcome with respect to the matter in question.

15. A Member which has commitments in Section II of Part IV of its Schedule in respect of incorporated products shall, where so requested by another Member, provide appropriate information to the Committee, normally within 21 days of the request, on per unit subsidies in terms of Article 11 of the Agreement on Agriculture in relation to transactions during a particular period as specified in the request to the Member concerned.

16. As regards tariff and other market access quota commitments specified in Schedules, a Member may request another Member, through the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, to provide information to the Committee on the functioning of a specific quota, including the quantity of imports effected or authorized under that quota. The information requested should normally be provided within 30 days of the request. The role of the Chairperson shall be to ensure that there are reasonable grounds for the request and that as far as possible duplication and unduly burdensome requests are avoided.

Part II of Regular Meetings of the Committee

17. The work of the Committee under Part II shall comprise items relating to other matters within the purview of the Committee, as well as items relating to reports to be submitted by the Committee to other WTO bodies.

18. The annual consultation pursuant to Article 18:5 of the Agreement shall be undertaken at the March meetings of the Committee.

19. There shall be an opportunity at each regular meeting of the Committee to raise any matter relating to the Decision on Measures concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing countries and to monitor actions taken within the framework of that Decision on the basis, *inter alia*, of notifications submitted to the Committee. A report on the follow-up to this Decision shall be prepared by the Committee for the purposes of the review to be undertaken by the Ministerial Conference.

Other Matters

20. Representatives of international intergovernmental organizations may be invited to attend regular meetings as observers in respect of items under Part II of the agenda on the invitation of the Committee in accordance with the guidelines to be adopted by the General Council.

21. The Secretariat shall prepare on its own responsibility a summary of the main points raised in the course of each meeting.