

**STATEMENT MADE BY CANADA AT THE MEETING
OF 20-21 MARCH 1996**

**Preliminary Comments on Development and Application of Residue Limits
to Foods in Trade under WTO SPS Principles (G/SPS/W/34)**

At the outset, Canada would like to acknowledge the excellent job our Australian colleagues have done in pulling together the trade and public health issues associated with the existence of chemical residues in foods.

Of the issues raised for consideration, in paragraph 22, Canada supports the "widest possible adoption at the national level of Codex MRLs" and "the need for importing countries to take into account the Good Agricultural Practices of exporting countries in the use of particular agricultural chemicals". In this latter regard Canada routinely requests supporting data for the establishment of MRLs to cover imports.

With respect to the proposal for a "mechanism to set additional MRLs on a temporary basis", Canada feels that this has merit and should be explored further provided that it is recognized as truly a temporary measure for use in abnormal situations i.e. it should not be used to circumvent national approval systems. With respect to the proposal "to systematically review established nil or default tolerances to identify situations in which such standards are unjustifiably restrictive of trade", Canada would request further clarification from Australia as to exactly how this could be accomplished. As we all know, consumers are becoming more and more discriminating and suspicious, in general, of the food they eat, whether from residues, contaminants or additives in those foods.

In addition, the "proportionality concept" advanced in the paper needs to be addressed further in the context of:

- implications to national regulatory frameworks for protecting public health;
- the resource implications of conducting health hazard evaluations for each violative shipment;
- the potential perception that health protection is being compromised for increased commercial benefits.

Canada would appreciate further discussion of how these issues could be satisfactorily addressed.