

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10-11 JUNE 1998

Note by the Secretariat

Corrigendum

1. The following paragraphs replace paragraphs 41 and 42 of G/SPS/R/11:

41. The representative of Australia responded that the justification of the measure was the need for inactivation of pathogenic organisms, that the measure had not been notified as it was put in place before 1 January 1995, and that imports had been stopped when it was realized that the established procedures were not being complied with. The preliminary assessment report for the proposed variation of the relevant food standard, which was being sought by Switzerland, had been issued for public consultation. With reference to the matter raised by the delegation of the European Communities, the representative of Australia advised that an application for variation of Australia's food standards as they relate to roquefort cheese was at an advanced stage of consideration under the procedures of the Australia/New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA).

42a. The representative of New Zealand noted that pasteurization of milk used for cheese manufacture had been required since well before 1 January 1995 as a measure to mitigate the health risks which might arise from the presence of pathogenic organisms in raw milk cheeses, and that this measure was in line with the practices of many other WTO Members. As the measure was introduced before the SPS Agreement entered into force, it did not need to be notified to the WTO.

42b. The New Zealand representative advised that his country fully accepted its obligation to consider requests to accept the sanitary measures of other members as equivalent, and that New Zealand had already advised the Swiss authorities that it considered the processes for the manufacture of Swiss hard cheeses from unpasteurized milk to provide an equivalent level of protection to that offered by pasteurisation, in terms of animal health requirements. In respect of public health protection, a review of the food standard for hard cheeses made from unpasteurized milk was currently being carried out by ANZFA, which was now responsible for setting new food standards for both Australia and New Zealand. A risk assessment was currently underway, in response to an application by the Swiss government and French cheese producers, and the consideration of the proposed standard would be done as expeditiously as possible. New Zealand would await the completion of the ANZFA standard-setting process before reconsidering its position on the importation of such cheeses.

2. The reference to the delegation of Hong Kong in paragraph 68 should read: "... The delegation of Hong Kong (China) ...".

¹ English only