INTERNATIONAL MEAT COUNCIL
DERESTRICTION OF DOCUMENTS
Note by the Secretariat

1. At its second meeting, the Council noted that its creation seemed to have generated considerable interest in non-governmental organizations concerned with meat, both non-profit-making organizations and others, particularly in respect of the documentation coming out of the Council (IMC/2, page 10, paragraph 25). The secretariat was therefore requested to consider possibilities for making available to the public certain IMC documents. The results of its research are set forth hereunder.

2. At present, the following distribution is given to IMC documents:

   (i) Spec/... (draft reports): distribution limited to the signatories.

   (ii) IMC/... (reports of the Council, after adoption): distribution to signatories and observers. Contracting parties other than signatories and observers can obtain those reports on request.

   (iii) IMC/W/... (working documents, such as status reports and summary tables prepared by the secretariat): distribution to signatories and observers. Communicated, upon request, to non-signatory contracting parties that are not observers.

   (iv) IMC/STAT and IMC/INV (replies to questionnaires, and inventories): distribution to signatories. Communicated, upon request, to observers and to contracting parties that are neither signatories nor observers: also available in the meeting room.

3. To date, the question of derestricting documents has not been raised in the administering organs of other Arrangements or Codes resulting from the MTN. A consolidation of GATT procedures currently in force for the derestric
documents is set out in document L/2737 of 25 January 1967, which states
inter alia:

"The secretariat gives advance notice to contracting parties
and intergovernmental organizations of the documents due for
derestriction and fixes the date for the derestriction to take
place. Any document, or any item in a summary record or Council
minute, remains restricted at the request of a contracting party
or an intergovernmental organization. A list of newly-derestricted
documents is issued by the secretariat shortly after each date fixed
for derestriction."

4. Those procedures could conceivably be adjusted in respect of IMC
documents. In particular, the Council could determine at its third meeting
which document series (IMC/, IMC/W, IMC/STAT, IMC/INV) could be derestricted.
Thereafter, once a year, the secretariat would give advance notice to
participants of the list of documents in those series issued during the
year. Those documents would be derestricted thirty days after communication
of the list if the secretariat had received no objections in the meantime.
Any document would remain restricted if a participant so requested.

5. Nevertheless, unless the Council authorizes the secretariat to
derestrict automatically one or other document series without submitting
them to the participants for approval, such a system is likely to be slow,
and the information thus made public would lose its topical interest.

6. The Council also discussed the possibility of publishing each year a
report on the meat situation and outlook (IMC/2, page 10, paragraph 26).
It was suggested that such a report would be an amalgamated version of:

(a) The bi-annual status reports (i.e. IMC/W - status report made
by the secretariat and updated by information furnished by
participants at the Council's December meeting);

(b) The summary tables (rearrangement and summary of IMC/STAT/
documents).

7. Such a report would therefore contain mainly information taken from
Council documents, as updated at the December meeting. It would give
as complete a picture as possible of the market situation for bovine meat
and would be published\(^1\) in the second week of January, bearing a special
cover with no symbol number. (If it bore an L/ symbol number, it could
not be sold even after derestriction.) Contracting parties would receive
the report as a matter of course, and it might be made available on a
payment basis to all interested persons or organizations.

8. The International Dairy Products Council is to have a similar annual
publication with no symbol number, and it might be of interest for the
International Meat Council to do the same, all the more so since from
the financial aspect no excessive additional expenditure would be implied
for the secretariat.

\(^1\)Publication would be announced in a press release.