Introduction

1. The International Meat Consultative Group held its third meeting on 2 and 3 October 1975. The following countries or groups of countries were represented:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Canada
- Colombia
- Cuba
- Egypt
- European Communities (and its member States)
- Finland
- Hungary
- Japan
- Mexico
- New Zealand
- Panama
- Poland
- Romania
- South Africa
- Switzerland
- Sweden
- Thailand
- United States
- Uruguay
- Yugoslavia

In addition representatives of the ECE, the FAO, the OECD and UNCTAD attended the meeting as observers.

Agenda

2. The Group adopted as the basis for its discussion the topics outlined in the airgram convening the meeting (GATT/AIR/1214) with the addition of an item for other business.

Consultations

3. In accordance with the procedure adopted at its previous meeting the Group consulted on current market conditions and foreseeable trends in international trade in bovine meat and live cattle. In this regard the Group had before it a background
paper submitted by the Australian delegation on demand and supply forces in the world beef market (IMCG/W/9), together with the replies of a number of participants to the model questionnaire.

4. It was not considered necessary for the Group at this stage in the development of its consultative process to attempt to draw conclusions. Consistent with the early-warning function of the Group it was sufficient that the impressions gained from the consultations should be taken into account by participants in their further decision-making in capitals and in their preparations for the next meeting of the Group.

5. To facilitate reflection by participants on the matters raised and the views expressed in the consultations it was agreed that statements made by participants would, if they so wished, be reproduced and circulated by the secretariat.

Model questionnaire

6. Replies from nine participants, representing a large proportion of international trade, had been received by the secretariat either shortly before or at the meeting.

7. In the discussion of the difficulties encountered by individual participants in completing the model questionnaire, reference was made, inter alia, to the conversion of data to a "carcass weight equivalent" basis; to the provision of value data on trade and the related question of converting national currencies to a common unit of account; and to the appropriateness of including forecasts and other sensitive data in the replies to the model questionnaire rather than in some other more specialized context. With only a limited number of the replies to the model questionnaire available at the meeting it was not considered practicable to assess the significance of, or take decisions on, the points raised. The Group would therefore revert to these matters at its next meeting as part of its regular review of the content and format of the model questionnaire.

8. It was agreed that participants should continue to employ their best endeavours to submit replies to the model questionnaire, together with replies relating to the most recent quarter for which data or estimates are available, sufficiently in advance of meetings of the Group in order that there can be an informed and meaningful discussion of the current market situation and foreseeable trends based on prior analysis of the information. It was also agreed that the secretariat would prepare and issue a summary of this information.

9. For the purposes of the next meeting, including the review of the content and format of the model questionnaire, participants are invited to submit replies to the secretariat before 16 January 1976.
Frequency of the Group's regular meetings

10. The view was expressed by a number of participants that the Group should meet on a quarterly basis. Other views expressed were: that the Group should meet bi-annually with provision being made for additional meetings as circumstances required; and that the Group should meet every three months. It was agreed that the Group would keep this matter under review.

Other business

11. It was agreed that it would be in order for the secretariat, after consultation with the chairman as appropriate, to transmit documents of the Group to countries which had expressed an interest in receiving them.

Next meeting

12. The Group will hold its next meeting on 5 and 6 February 1976.