

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

IMC/W/3

20 October 1980

Special Distribution

Arrangement Regarding Bovine Meat

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 derestriction of

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 published¹ 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.

¹Publication would be announced in a press release.