GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

INTERNATIONAL MEAT CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Note by the Chairman

Introduction

1. The International Meat Consultative Group held its fifth meeting on 1 and 2 July 1976. The following countries or groups of countries were represented (a list of participants was circulated in document IMCG/INF/3):

- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Colombia
- Egypt
- European Communities (and its member States)
- Finland
- Hungary
- Japan
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Poland
- Romania
- South Africa
- Switzerland
- United States
- 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/1290) with the addition of an item for other business.

Consultations

3. In accordance with the procedure adopted at its previous meetings 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 an up-dated
secretariat summary relating to the main aggregates of production and trade (IMCG/W/15/Rev.1), a table of prices practised in international trade (IMCG/W/23), and the replies 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. The following statements have been circulated:

- Australia IMCG/W/24
- European Communities IMCG/W/25
- United States IMCG/W/26
- Canada IMCG/W/27
- New Zealand IMCG/W/28

6. In the course of the discussion it was proposed that, as a further step in the presentation and analysis of the data submitted by participants, the secretariat should prepare a background note on current market conditions and trends which, in dealing with factors influencing market trends, would take account of the impact of drought conditions prevailing in a number of major producing countries on the structure and size of herds. It was suggested that such a note would draw on country contributions, on the short-term forecasts and other data furnished in reply to the model questionnaire, and on other sources. It was agreed to revert to this proposal at the next meeting of the Group.

Model questionnaire

7. Replies or revised replies to the model questionnaire had been received by the secretariat from the following seventeen participants: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, European Communities, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Switzerland, United States and Uruguay.

8. As a point of departure for the longer-term exercise of determining what data should be collected on a permanent basis for the purposes of its regular consultations, the Group undertook a preliminary discussion and examination of the problems
encountered by governments as regards the provision of data. In this connexion, the Group had before it a detailed checklist of the replies to the model questionnaire which had been prepared by the secretariat in accordance with the decision of the Group at its meeting in February 1976 (IMCG/4, paragraph 8). It was agreed to continue this examination at the next meeting of the Group and that for this purpose the checklist of replies to the model questionnaire be up-dated.

9. 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 again prepare and issue a summary relating to the main aggregates of production and trade.

10. 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 29 October 1976.

Prices practised in international trade

11. The Group took note of the monthly data on prices supplied by a number of participants and reproduced in document IMCG/W/23. It was agreed that this document should be up-dated for the next meeting of the Group on the basis of additional information to be supplied by the participants concerned, including those participants who had not been in a position to do so for the present meeting.

Frequency of the Group's regular meetings

12. It was agreed that the Group would continue to meet on a regular basis and at intervals to be decided at each successive meeting.

Other business

13. The Group was advised that Chad had expressed an interest in receiving documents of the Group. It was agreed that selected documents be made available in response to this request in accordance with the decision of the Group at its meeting in October 1975 (IMCG/3, paragraph 11 refers).

Date of next meeting

14. Subject to confirmation, the Consultative Group will hold its next meeting on 15 and 16 November 1976.