



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

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The American Farm Bureau is the largest agricultural organization in the United States. We represent over 4.8 million member families in the United States and Puerto Rico. Our members produce every commodity grown in America and depend on access to customers around the world for the sale of over one-third of our production. Agriculture is one of the few U.S. industries that consistently runs a trade surplus, posting a positive balance of trade every year since 1960. U.S. agriculture must be at the negotiating table in the next WTO round in a meaningful way to ensure that this trade surplus continues.

FARM BUREAU'S WTO AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES

Structure and Framework

The American Farm Bureau supports expediting action on the next round for agriculture in the WTO. The negotiations must be completed in three years to ensure that our producers gain increased market access in a timely manner.

The next round of negotiations should encompass all sectors as a comprehensive, single undertaking. All aspects of the negotiation should be concluded and implemented as a package in order to get the best results for all sectors.

Export Subsidies and Export Credits

Export subsidies must be eliminated by all WTO member countries. Export subsidies distort world trade and undermine producer competitiveness in vital export markets.

We believe that the negotiations in the OECD hold the best potential to impose disciplines on export credits.

Market Access

The next round should result in tariff equalization and increased market access by requiring the elimination of tariff barriers within specified time frames. All WTO member countries should reduce tariffs, both bound and applied, in a manner that provides commercially meaningful access on an accelerated basis.

All nontariff barriers to trade must be ended. Provisions to address nontariff barriers should be written into the new agreement on agriculture.

We support a trade round wherein there are no product or policy exceptions. Adopting a formula approach on tariffs is the best method for ensuring that all sectors are included in the negotiations. As with the Uruguay Round framework, we recognize the need to address import sensitive products. It is imperative that the Seattle Round address tariff disparities, peak tariffs and tariff escalation in a commercially meaningful manner.

Domestic Support

We support transitioning countries to provide an increasing portion of total domestic support for agriculture in a decoupled form, as the United States has already done under the FAIR Act.

We support elimination of the blue box.

SPS and Biotechnology

The negotiations must include a recommitment to binding agreements to resolve sanitary and phytosanitary issues based on scientific principles in accordance with the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). The provisions of the Uruguay Round SPS Agreement are sound *and do not need to be reopened*.

Ensuring market access for biotechnology products produced from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is critical. Significant delays and a lack of transparency in the regulatory approval process for GMOs have heightened the need for science based, transparent provisions governing bioengineered products. We oppose the formation of a WTO working group on bioengineered products in the WTO.

Multifunctionality

We oppose attempts to disguise protectionist policies as an endorsement of the multifunctional characteristics of agriculture. While we agree that agricultural production holds multifaceted benefits, trade-distorting subsidies should not be allowed to sustain multifunctional endeavors. Government spending for such pursuits should be reasonable and non-trade distorting.

State Trading Enterprises

Disciplines must be imposed on state trading enterprises (STEs) that distort the flow of trade in world markets. The pricing practices of STEs must be made more transparent and discriminatory practices of STEs must be ended.

Dispute Settlement Procedures

Dispute settlement resolution procedures and processes must be changed in a manner that shortens the overall process, ensures implementation of WTO ruling and facilitates trade.

Developing Countries

Special provisions should be negotiated to address the concerns of developing economies. All WTO members should agree to eliminate export restraints, including export taxes, sanctions and embargoes, to improve global food security. Continuing the use of reasonable export financing will enable developing countries and transitioning economies to purchase food and fiber.

Environment and Labor

Environment and labor issues should only be addressed in a manner that facilitates rather than restricts trade.