

TO THE TRADE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, JAPAN AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY:

Producers from each of your countries have met together in search of lasting and fair solutions to the agricultural trade conflicts which are damaging relations between and among our nations.

We have discovered that our similarities far outweigh our differences, and that many of our current agricultural trade difficulties are not caused by competing interests between us as farmers in different countries, but instead by the actions of our governments attempting to achieve misleading objectives.

We urge you to base your discussions and conclusions on the following principles which ensure better market balance and price stability in agriculture at world levels:

- 1) Domestic agricultural problems must be solved by changes in domestic policy, not by shifting the burden onto the backs of producers in other countries. The idea that prosperity for farmers can be achieved simply through an expansion of trade is both false and misleading.
- 2) Countries should take appropriate measures to avoid the sales of commodities at prices below the cost of production. To this end, they should jointly define world reference prices based on the cost of production plus a reasonable profit.
- 3) Trade negotiations should focus on solving trade conflicts between countries and should not force other countries to make changes in domestic farm policies.
- 4) There is an urgent need for short term actions to improve the present state of agriculture markets. International trade in the major agricultural commodities must be based on the principles of a shared market, minimum reference prices, cooperatively maintained buffer stocks, and supply management by surplus producing nations.
- 5) The food security needs of all countries, especially developing nations, must be the highest concern of all trade arrangements. This includes the right of all nations to achieve the level of food security they determine is appropriate for their own circumstances.
- 6) Long-term environmental considerations must be included in both domestic agricultural policy considerations and trade negotiations.

The undersigned endorse the attached statement addressed to the Trade Ministers.

Solving Agricultural Trade Conflicts -- June 20, 1988 -- Brainerd, MN

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