

December 2007

To the Editor,

It seems that Diego Petersen Farah ("Men de Maiz", December 15) did not have time to get out of his car at the Plaza Angel de la Independencia to talk to protesters who demanded a renegotiation of the agricultural chapter of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The result of his haste is an uninformed contempt, circling around the corn culture without focusing on the treatment of corn and other foods from the basic basket in NAFTA.

I participated in a press conference of the National Campafia in Defense of the Sovereignty and the Reactivation of the Mexican Field on December 14 at the Plaza Angel de la Independencia.

I presented a solidarity letter in support of the peasant and indigenous organizations that call for governmental measures for Mexican food sovereignty, including the renegotiation of NAFTA. On December 7, a letter signed by over 70 American, Canadian and international organizations had been sent to the Heads of State and legislators of the three NAFTA countries.

According to Petersen Farah, agricultural liberalization is unidirectional, which he characterizes as a rocket without possibility of returning to land. In fact, there is a very relevant legal precedent to advocate for the renegotiation of the NAFTA agricultural chapter, which is the renegotiation of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) underway in the World Trade Organization. The Special Products clause will not subject agricultural products to full liberalization. The clause is already included within the framework of the renegotiation, provided that WTO members document the use of such Products for food security, rural development and / or the creation and maintenance of jobs.

I do not believe that the Government would have any difficulty in justifying to the WTO the exclusion of white maize, beans and other products from the basic basket of total liberalization that will take place on January 1 under NAFTA. NAFTA must be legally consistent with WTO agreements. If the Government of Mexico does not identify the Products to exempt from the total liberalization, it will be for lack of political will. Likewise, if it does not propose a renegotiation of NAFTA, taking advantage of the framework already agreed for the renegotiation of the AoA, it will be due to an analytical vacuum and among certain governmental officials and certain journalists.

Steve Suppan  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
2105 First Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN (USA)  
612-870-3413  
[www.iatp.org](http://www.iatp.org)

