

Road to Seattle - Back Issues

The Whole World's Watching! (Issue II)

June 8, 1999

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ROAD TO SEATTLE BULLETIN INFORMATION

ARCHIVED ISSUES

For those of you just receiving your first issue of "The Road to Seattle," you can view all archived back issues online at <http://www.newsbulletin.org> -- you can also use this site to do a full-text search within issues.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

USTR 'ROAD SHOW'

This from Public Citizen... (<http://www.tradewatch.org>)

USTR Hearings on the WTO

The hearings will go over two days, and are organized by issue. Business, agriculture and labor will be on the first day, environment and "other" on the second. We are organizing press conferences in all the cities (Chicago took place June 7th & 8th), and need to build crowd for the events. If you have people who are interested in participating, contact the local organizer or Margrete Strand (mstrand@citizen.org).

Monday, June 7th & 8th: Chicago

June 10th & 11th - Atlanta, Georgia Press conference on the 10th at 12.45: Federal Building, 75 Spring St, SW For more information contact Lynn Bumiskey, 404-525-9073

June 21st & 22nd - Los Angeles, California Press conference on the 21st at 12.45: Los Angeles Public Library, 630 West 5th St For more information contact Juliette Beck: 415-775-0822

June 24th & 25th - Dallas, Texas Press conference on the 24th at 12.45: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, 2200 North Pearl St For more information contact Tom Kemper, 214-827-8627

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RECENT PRESS ON THE WTO/TRADE

BEEF TRADE WAR LOSSES

(Pittsburgh Post-Gazette; 06/04/99)

GENEVA - The World Trade Organization set up an arbitration panel yesterday to assess the losses incurred by the United States and Canada because of a European Union ban on hormone-treated beef.

The panel must report back by mid-July. At that point, the United States and Canada will be entitled to slap punitive 100 percent duties against EU products ranging from chocolate to mineral water to offset losses incurred by the ban, which has been ruled illegal by the WTO.

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BELGIAN DIOXIN SCANDAL EXPANDS TO PORK

BELGIAN DIOXIN SCANDAL EXPANDS TO PORK, BEEF (Pittsburgh Post- Gazette; 06/04/99)

A scandal over Belgian poultry laced with cancer-causing dioxin spread from chickens to pork and beef yesterday, engulfing most of the nation's meat industry.

The government approved new measures banning the slaughter and even transport of poultry, pork and beef across the country, worsening the biggest food scare in the 15-nation European Union since Britain's 1996 mad cow disease.

And the European Union expanded its decision to destroy Belgian poultry that may be contaminated to include pork and beef, and said it will also ban the export of such products. Nations from Greece to Ghana scrambled to keep Belgian food off supermarket shelves.

In Washington, the Agriculture Department said it was reviewing all imports of pork and poultry imports from the European Union since Jan. 1. The review is in addition to a hold placed on incoming pork and poultry imports.

The sale of poultry had already been outlawed, but Belgian Health Minister Luc Van den Bossche said the government also would "take a more stringent attitude when it comes to pork and beef."

The scandal broke last week when a television station reported that dioxin- laced fat was used to make poultry feed. Dioxin is a carcinogenic byproduct in the manufacture of herbicides and pesticides.

Van den Bossche said 175,000 pounds of contaminated animal feed had been distributed to poultry, beef and pig farms early this year. Initial tests have shown that dioxin levels in some chickens were 1,000 times the accepted limit.

Belgian authorities were checking more than 1,000 farms to see whether animal feed containing dioxin had been used. Some 70 beef farms were quarantined yesterday, since they were on a list of farms that may have been given the contaminated animal feed.

The food scandal has forced the resignations of two Cabinet ministers. Two managers of the animal feed fat producer where the contamination is thought to have originated are under arrest on fraud charges.

ARTICLES ON TRADE/WTO

CUERNAVACA CONSENSUS

The Cuernavaca Consensus is a statement agreed to by 60 participants from 13 countries, activists and academics that are fighting the negative consequences of globalizing an industrial model of agriculture. The declaration is a list of issues that participants felt the upcoming agriculture negotiations at the WTO should address.

----- Cuernavaca Consensus

Upcoming WTO (World Trade Organization) negotiations provide an opportunity to reform world trade and investment rules and policies which are currently working against food security, family farmers, nature, the environment, human rights and democracy.

The purpose of this declaration is to make specific recommendations for reforms to reverse these negative effects. The undersigned groups are committed to working together to realize these urgently needed reforms:

1. A small number of transnational corporations now exercise monopoly control over major sectors of agricultural production, processing, and distribution, including international trade. Anti-competitive and restrictive business practices, such as monopoly control, price-fixing, and manipulation by one or a few corporations, must be disciplined by trade rules and actions.
2. Food security, including adequate supplies of basic foods and water is an internationally guaranteed human right for every family, community, and nation. World trade and investment must be reformed to eliminate all provisions that harm food security, including the creation of greater dependency on imports. Present trade rules and food assistance conventions need to be re-written to ensure that they do not interfere with the right of individuals or nations to feed themselves. We view trade and international financial institution policies that encourage or require Third World countries to export cash crops and import basic foods as a serious threat to food security and should be reformed. Proposals to exclude all staple foods from trade liberalization by placing them in a food security "bread box" should be incorporated into trade regulations.
3. Consumers must have access to safe, nutritious and accurately labeled food at fair prices. Agricultural trade and investment rules and policies must enable consumers to have access to healthy food and water and to complete and truthful disclosure of vital information via labels and other "right to know" mechanisms. However, these mechanisms and other food safety concerns must not be mis-used to discriminate against local producers, small farmers and processors, or poor countries. Sanitary and phyto-sanitary provisions of trade agreements must be re-written to restore control over food safety to local and national authorities legally responsible for food

safety. Nutrition policies designed to promote public health through improved diets must be protected from challenge under trade and investment rules.

4. Producer-controlled and public-controlled trading enterprises can be important elements in regulating and limiting the negative impact of monopolies. At the same time, they can be used to reinforce monopolies. Global trade and investment rules must support those producer and public enterprises operating to promote an equitable world market fair to producers and consumers.

5. Each family, community and nation has the right to determine their own diet and level of acceptable risk based on religious, cultural, social, scientific, and ethical considerations. Trade and investment rules and policies must support this right to food sovereignty, including guaranteeing the right to ban genetically-manipulated and other bio-engineered foods and crops or to require the labeling and segregation throughout the food chain of these products, and to control imports that could potentially result in the introduction of dangerous or invasive non-native organisms or species.

6. Export dumping is the sale of goods overseas at prices below the full cost of production, which includes direct costs (raw materials, inputs, machinery, land, labor, etc.) and all government paid or subsidized inputs. Export in agricultural trade must be rapidly phased out, including the elimination of de-coupled government payments that serve as hidden forms of dumping.

7. The Marrakesh Agreement, which guaranteed assistance to poor and developing countries whose food security was harmed by the Uruguay Round of global trade talks, has been ignored. It must be fully implemented and all assistance provided must be unconditional.

8. Current trade and investment rules are discouraging the growth of fair trade regimes that guarantee small producers in developing countries fair prices and credit, and preferential access to markets. Rules should be reformed to encourage fair trade regimes.

9. Climate change, biological pollution, deterioration of the ozone layer, chemical contamination of the atmosphere, soil and water and the loss of cultural, genetic and biological diversity all threaten food production and producers. World trade and investment rules must be urgently reviewed for their impacts on these threats and immediately reformed to stop contributing to these problems.

10. Worldwide currency and commodity speculation has caused hunger, poverty, social destruction and civil unrest. World trade and investment rules must be reformed to reduce such fluctuations and speculation, and the rules of agriculture trade must not hamper national policies designed to mitigate the negative effects of currency fluctuations, including quantitative import controls, emergency food stocks, and capital controls.

11. Communities and governments have the right to control issues relating to ownership and access to the use of biodiversity, natural resources and knowledge. World trade and investment rules should explicitly acknowledge this right through recognition of sui generis and other local control mechanisms such as import and export controls. The imposition of US style patenting and other intellectual property laws in seeds and plant genetic resources pose a serious threat to biodiversity and food security.

12. Countries must retain the right to exclude patenting of humans, animals, plants, seeds and other life forms. 13. Farms, fishing and forestry all have many dimensions and multiple functions in societies. World trade and investment rules must recognize the multi-functionality of these activities and ensure their proper promotion and protection, including government programs, such as affirmative procurement, consumer labels, price supports and equitable supply controls, designed to promote small scale, environmentally sound production practices and producers.

14. World trade and investment rules currently elevate property rights above all other considerations, often resulting in a denial of basic human rights, especially the right to food and to feed oneself. Internationally guaranteed human rights, as defined in the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights (UDHR) and in the covenants on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights, must be placed before property rights in all trade and investment rules. Every person's right to food needs to be recognized and enforced in international law.

15. Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are crucial for addressing the dangerous ecological crises we are facing today. World trade and investment rules must not be allowed to preempt or reduce the effectiveness of MEAs.

Concrete proposals, including suggested treaty language, is available on the website of the International Forum on Food & Agriculture (IFA), at www.iffah.org

We are working to implement these reforms as part of the ongoing negotiations taking place within the World Trade Organization. We invite you and your organization to join us in this effort by signing onto this document, circulating it to other groups for their support, and by working to gain the support of your government for these reforms.

For more information, or to join this initiative, contact:

The International Forum on Food & Agriculture (IFA) 2105 First Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55404 USA Phone: 612-870-3423 Fax: 612-870-4846 <mailto:rvanstaveren@iatp.org> or <mailto:mritchie@iatp.org>

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

JOIN AN ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM FOR PLANNING ON THE WTO!

<http://www.iatp.org/trade>

New Forum!

The WTO Ministerial Planning Forum is available to groups and individuals who are working on preparations for the November WTO Ministerial in Seattle, Washington.

The forum contains a variety of threaded discussions on topics including Agriculture, Trade and Environment, TRIPs, Antitrust and Competition Policy, Logistics and Trade and Investment.

This is a private forum. If you are interested in joining the discussion, please send your name, email address and a brief description of your institution to wtoforum@iatp.org.

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Submissions to the Road to Seattle should be sent to Renske van Staveren at: rvanstaveren@iatp.org, or faxed to Renske at: (1) 612-870-4846.