

ATSDF Agricultural Tent Recommendations
November 17-18, 2003

To be presented to FTAA Trade Ministers November 19, 2003.

ATSDF Agriculture Tent: Recommendations

Existing agricultural trade policies have failed to promote sustainable, viable agriculture in either developed or developing countries, with particularly dire consequences for the rural poor in the developing world.

FTAA proposals to date represent a continuation of these failed policies, and are therefore unacceptable.

Trade rules should be developed that:

- Grant all countries the right to develop their own agricultural and food policies, including the right to manage both production and inventories.
- Grant countries the right to protect themselves from dumping of agricultural commodities at below the cost of production.
- Prohibit dumping by any country into international markets.
- Provide farmers with a fair price and consumers with a safe, secure and affordable food supply that is environmentally sustainable.
- Reduce the anti-competitive market distortions caused by the disproportionate market power of agribusiness cartels.

Subsidies and Dumping:

- Developed countries are exporting agricultural products at prices below the costs of production, a form of dumping.
- In some cases, Northern agricultural subsidies contribute to agricultural dumping.
- For many crops, dumping is not the result of subsidies but of policies in the North that encourage chronic overproduction.
- Ending Northern subsidies will not by itself raise farm prices or end dumping for most crops.
- Putting an end to agricultural dumping should be the highest and most immediate priority for fairer trade rules.

Environment:

- Current agriculture and trade policies externalize many environmental costs, such as pesticide pollution.

- The FTAA, as proposed, would continue to externalize these costs with severe environmental impacts throughout the hemisphere.
- Any future trade agreement should include mechanisms to assess, avoid, and mitigate these environmental impacts.

Genetically Modified Organisms:

- Given the strong concern about the health, environmental, and socio-economic risks associated with the introduction of GMOs in agriculture, the precautionary principle should be the accepted basis for decisions about GMO cultivation and imports.
- Any trade agreement must recognize the right of countries to implement precautionary policies regarding the cultivation or importation of GMOs.
- The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is an important new international agreement, and represents the broadest consensus to date on GMOs.
- The Cartagena Protocol should therefore take precedence over trade agreements.
- We therefore oppose the proposed strengthening of the SPS Agreement that is reflected in the FTAA negotiating text, which would further restrict the rights of countries to implement the precautionary principle.
- Consumers must have the right to choose whether they are willing to consume GM products, and governments must have the right to protect their consumers from potential health threats posed by GM products.