

Remarks by Dean Kleckner
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American Farm Bureau Federation

Sydney, Australia
31 March 1998

Good afternoon.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to review the Cairns Group Farm Leaders Communiqué on behalf of farmers in the United States.

It took years for negotiators to complete the existing world trade agreement.

I see little reason to expect the next round of negotiations to proceed more expeditiously.

It is good to have a strategy going in to the negotiations, which will begin later next year.

The communiqué developed by Cairns Group Farm Leaders is an admirable start.

There is no question that another agreement must be drafted.

The Uruguay Round left too many loose ends untied.

In most cases, it is the world's farmers and consumers who were left dangling from those ends.

It is apparent to farm leaders in Cairns countries, as well as us in America, that agriculture must be included in any future global trade pacts.

It is also apparent that future world trade organisation negotiations must focus on and strive for increased market access and transparency concerns.

This would certainly include lessening tensions caused by state trading enterprises.

In addition, US farmers look for the next set of negotiations to eliminate quotas.

If tariffs must be set, put them at zero.

Any new treaty should treat all countries and all commodities fairly and equally.

Agreements will no longer be acceptable if they exempt from general agreements, specific commodities.

US farmers want all agricultural matters to be on the table.

Because our borders are already relatively open, we know we will gain if other countries would only do what they have agreed to.

I believe many farm leaders, and more importantly, many farmers in Cairns countries agree.

Specific goals we have in the next round will be to set specific time frames for the reduction and elimination of tariffs.

Any agreement must adhere to WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary rules.

And we will definitely work for the creation of better, faster dispute settlement procedures, so our concerns can be addressed before our crops rot in the fields.

People around the world are supporting fairer, freer trade.

Farmers in the US and, I believe, in the Cairns Group countries are willing to produce competitively priced agricultural goods of a quality, and in a quantity, desired by the global marketplace.

Working together, we can bring down barriers and raise standards of living worldwide.

I look forward to working with my friends in the years of negotiations that lie ahead.

Thank you for this chance to comment on the communiqué.

I will present a far more comprehensive view of global trade during the Cairns Group Farm Leaders Seminar on Thursday.

I hope to see many of you there.

For now, I will answer any questions you have.