



Disenchantment with Global Trading System's Prospects Impacts Agricultural Trade Promotion Group's Future -- 28 Years of IPC Policy Analysis and Discourse to End

Washington DC – September 28, 2015

For over 28 years, the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) has promoted the role of trade in creating a more open, equitable, productive and sustainable global food and agricultural system but will cease operations September 30, 2015.

“IPC has influenced the global discussion of the critical role food and agricultural trade plays in food security and economic development with its analyses and seminars for nearly three decades”, commented JB Penn, IPC’s chair and chief economist at Deere & Company. Topics have ranged from the impacts of multilateral and regional trade agreements to internationally recognized rules on export restrictions to trade facilitation measures.

“Our discussions aired new ideas and facilitated exchanges about challenges to the world’s food system among civil society, business, academics and trade policy experts” added Jason Clay, an IPC board member and Senior Vice President, World Wildlife Fund. “It helped build understanding and raised further issues to explore among a geographically and professionally diverse group.”

Begun in 1987, the organization invited individuals with experience in farming, agribusiness, civil society, trade negotiations, and academia to address critical issues affecting agricultural trade. Over the years, hundreds of policy papers have been generated to inform decision makers and the public. IPC was begun with institutional support from the Rockefeller Foundation; its first chair was Lord Henry Plumb, former president of the European Parliament. In its early years, IPC played an important role in developing recommendations for the Uruguay Round negotiations with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which achieved substantial trade liberalization of agriculture for the first time.

“Agricultural trade will be more critical in the years ahead as we seek to address the food needs resulting from global population and economic growth. The context in which this occurs impacts consumer prices and farmer returns. IPC’s contributions will be missed,” noted Carlos Perez del Castillo, IPC’s vice chair and Uruguay’s former representative to the World Trade Organization.

IPC made pragmatic trade policy recommendations to help solve the major challenges facing the global food and agricultural system in the 21st century—the need to promote global food security, to sustainably increase productivity, and to

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contribute to economic growth and development. IPC convened influential policymakers, agribusiness executives, farm and civil society leaders, and academics from around the world to explore and clarify complex issues, foster broad stakeholder participation in policy deliberations, and build consensus around pragmatic policy recommendations.

Ellen Terpstra, the President and CEO, noted that “IPC’s papers will remain available on its web site, www.agritrade.org, for the foreseeable future.”