

# Geneva Watch

*An overview of the WTO negotiations on agriculture*

## Editorial: Bumpy Road Ahead

The G-8+ plan to conclude the Doha round in 2010 is already facing growing uncertainty after only a week following the L'Aquila (Italy) meeting. In effect, the political support for the Doha Development Agenda demonstrated by the heads of state has yet to produce its positive repercussions in Geneva where intensive negotiations on substance are not foreseen before September at the earliest. In addition, news coming from the U.S. have cast a great amount of doubt as to whether the country will be ready to engage intensively to unlock Doha's deadlock this fall. Trade observers claimed this may have to wait until 2010—a suggestion once made by India—because of the continued delay in the delivery of Obama's trade policy speech. The U.S. is likely to turn inward and focus on domestic issues such as the raging battle on health care. The week of July 20<sup>th</sup> is expected to bring another load of political support to conclude the Round as APEC ministers gather in Singapore on July 21-22. But, the first signs as to whether 2009 will have to be considered "lost" will be provided by the September 3-4 mini-ministerial in Delhi.

## Agriculture Consultation July 20-24, 2009

In a fax sent to delegations, Agriculture Negotiations Chair, David Walker invited Members to an informal, open-ended template discussion meeting on schedules based on the Uruguay Round scheduling process.

Similar to what was done this week for the NAMA negotiating group, Walker invited the WTO secretariat to make a presentation regarding schedules and the related documentation necessary to ensure that they can be accurately and quickly verified. Walker's goal is to develop a common understanding of the relevant timelines and gaps related to scheduling issues in agriculture. For that, a common understanding of the data required for completion of the schedules following the establishment of modalities is needed, Walker explained in his fax.

However, in a communiqué circulated to Members on July 16<sup>th</sup>, the G-20 reiterated their belief that completing modalities should be a pre-requisite to the scheduling process and the focus of negotiations. "The group is of the view that the Template Discussions should continue in the fall until we reach an agreement on the formats of scheduling tables and supporting tables for Agriculture in the DDA, based on the current draft modalities text," the statement reads.

In addition to the template discussion, Walker is likely to convene Room "E" gatherings where a select number of Members will brainstorm about what issues should be tackled and in which priority in the fall. The chair is expected to wrap up his week-long consultations by convening an open-ended informal gathering on July 24<sup>th</sup> to report on the template discussion and the anticipated way forward for the agriculture negotiations.

## Delhi Mini-Ministerial

India's Commerce Minister, Anand Sharma, is expected to invite about 35 trade ministers to the New Delhi mini-ministerial meeting that will deal with the Doha negotiation ahead of the G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh. This gathering of ministers is expected to fuel the statement on trade that is anticipated to arise from the G-20 declaration in Pittsburgh. Invited to the Sept 3-4 meeting (dates are still tentative) are all G-20 (WTO group of developing countries) trade ministers as well as a number of G-33 Members (developing countries that are committed to Special Products and the Special Safeguard Mechanism) and all developed countries involved in the G-20 Summit. Among potential absentees is U.S. Trade Representative, Ron Kirk, who sources said, is still uncertain as to whether he will be able to participate in the Delhi meeting.

The ministerial is expected to be more political than dealing with actual negotiations on substance. That said, bilateral or plurilateral discussions on substance could well take place on the sidelines of the two-day gathering.

## Non Agricultural Market Access

The NAMA negotiating group devoted most of its meetings to a workshop provided by the WTO secretariat on how to incorporate the results of the negotiation into their schedules once the modalities are finalized. Officials described this as a very complicated and time-consuming technical exercise which, at this stage, can only be done as a simulation.

In addition, NAMA Chair, Luzius Wasescha, also held consultations with a group of countries concerning a possible roadmap for the fall. Officials said that, generally speaking, Members felt that it was important to send a positive signal from Geneva and start the intensive negotiations as soon as possible in September. Wasescha plans to start his fall process with consultations on Non-Tariff Barriers and will move to sectorals later, but he admitted that he does not foresee core modalities work in September.

## Upcoming Events

- Agriculture Consultations (various formats) July 20–24, 2009
- Technical workshop on information for schedules, July 20–24, 2009
- APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Trade, July 21–22, 2009 (Singapore)
- Agriculture Open-Ended, July 24, 2009
- Trade Negotiation Committee, July 24, 2009
- General Council, July 28–29, Oct. 13–14, Dec. 17–18, 2009
- G-20 Trade Ministers Meeting, September 3–4, 2009 (Delhi)
- G-20 Summit, September 24–25 (Pittsburgh, USA)
- WTO Public Forum, Sept 28–30, 2009
- WTO Ministerial Conference, November 30–December 2, 2009

**Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.**

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