

Editorial: What to Expect This Fall?

It is a widely shared opinion among delegates that a deal on modalities this year is rather unlikely. Members are waiting to see what will come out of the U.S. mid-term elections to really get a sense of what will await them in the final months of the year, and more importantly what they will be facing in the first quarter of 2011. That said, delegates have no choice but to increase the pace of their consultations if they want to be able to show concrete progress on the remaining outstanding issues at the November 11-12 G-20 Summit.

Agriculture Chair Set to Leave Position

Members are set to recommence their work the week of September 13th with a brainstorming session on the composition of small groups that will take on various subjects of the WTO negotiations such as Rules, Agriculture, NAMA, and Trade Facilitation. The shortened week of September 6th (due to Geneva's September 9-10 holiday) only featured inconsequential debate about the replacement of the outgoing Agriculture negotiations chairman and New Zealand ambassador to the WTO, David Walker. Ambassador Walker is set to leave Geneva at the end of April 2011 to take on a new position within New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade as Deputy Secretary Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

John Allen, from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Chief Executive assured Members that the "process to appoint a replacement for Dr. Walker as New Zealand's WTO Ambassador will start shortly". However, it is still unknown when Members will start their own process to replace Walker as Chairman of the agriculture negotiations. As it stands for now, Walker has called for delegates to reconvene discussions mainly on issues pertaining to templates and data the week of September 27.

Lamy in Seoul

This past week, the WTO's Director General, Pascal Lamy, undertook a trip to Seoul to meet with Korean President Lee Myung-bak as well as Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon, to discuss the November 11-12 G-20 Summit's trade agenda. Lamy has high hopes that G-20 leaders will provide a big political backing to the Doha Round that would set up the beginning of another strong push to finally finalize modalities. "We all know that this will not happen before the end of this year," Lamy said referring to the conclusion of the Round. "Maybe next year, depending on the progress made in the Seoul Summit."

G-20 leaders barely touched the issue of trade at their Toronto meeting last June, leaving it aside for a more detailed discussion at their second summit of the year in Seoul in November. As Lamy put it "the Toronto summit was the first time leaders devoted an hour and half during lunch (...) to discuss the state of the round and what needed to be done for it to be concluded." He went on to claim that that discussion has led to more engagement in Geneva where intense work on the remaining outstanding issues is anticipated in the weeks preceding the Seoul Summit.



Upcoming Events

- WTO Public Forum, September 15-17, 2010
- Regular Agriculture Committee, September 16-17, November 18-19, 2010
- NAMA Week, September 20, 2010
- Agriculture Consultations, Week of September 27, 2010
- General Council, Oct. 6-7, Dec. 14-15, 2010
- G-20 Summit, November 11-12, 2010 Seoul, (South Korea)
- OECD Global Forum on Agriculture, November 29-30, 2010, Paris (France)

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.

For more information or comments, please visit: www.farmsandfoods.ca

Legal Deposit:
National Library of Canada
ISSN 1496-9254

