

WTO WORKSHOP ON AGRICULTURE NOTIFICATIONS

**BUILDING TECHNICAL CAPACITY
TO PREPARE/ANALYSE
NOTIFICATIONS IN THE EXPORT
SUBSIDIES AREA**

presentation by

AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

- Who notifies?
 - All members
 - *most will have a “NIL” response for export subsidies*
 - Significant exporters
 - Food aid donors
- What to notify?
 - Annual use of subsidies: both volume and budgetary outlays
 - *even if ‘NIL’*
 - For “significant exporters” (G/AG/2/Add.1):
 - *Total volume of exports of products concerned*
 - Food aid volume

Preparing Australia's CoA Notifications

- Either DFAT/DAFF assume responsibility
 - E.g. DFAT coordinates export subsidy notifications
- Involves:
 - Building and maintaining relationships with other agencies
 - Responding to queries
 - Compiling Australia's notification
 - Reviewing notifications

Australia's Export Subsidies Notifications

- Australia's scheduled commitments:
 - pears, butter and butteroil, skim milk powder, cheese and other milk products
 - Nil since 1995
 - *Except twice: MY 1998/99 and 1999/00*
- Australia is a “significant exporter” (G/AG/2/Add.1):
 - wheat and wheat flour, sugar, bovine meat, sheep meat and cotton
- Food Aid:
 - Nil since 2006
 - *money now sent directly to international agencies*

Challenges & Solutions:

Australia's Experience

Challenges:

- Staff turnover
 - Corporate knowledge - lost
 - Rebuilding networks takes time

Solutions:

- Handover notes
 - List of agencies, sections and contacts
- Detailed footnotes in notifications, including:
 - Why information was included
 - Sources

Challenges & Solutions:

Australia's Experience (2)

Challenges:

- Submitting notifications on time – delays due to:
 - Focus on Doha Round negotiations
 - Availability of trade data
 - Working with other agencies

Solutions:

- Balance competing priorities
- Promote better coordination / communication
 - Guidelines and in person
- Calendar of dates

Challenges & Solutions

Australia's Experience (3)

Challenges:

- Different marketing years for different commodities
 - Pears: Calendar year
 - Dairy: Financial year (July-June)
 - CoA guidelines (G/AG/2)
 - Stipulates notification deadlines
 - » Multiple notifications for different products?

Solutions:

- Harmonise reporting
 - Submit one annual notification, covering all products

Challenges & Solutions

Review Process

Challenges:

- Expertise & time to review
- Incentive to review
 - *Need certainty that meaningful responses will be provided*

Solutions:

- Earlier reminder of forthcoming CoA meetings
- Utilise guides
 - *WT/TC/NOTIF/AG/1*
 - *Cairns Group guide to reviewing CoA notifications*
- Encourage detailed information (e.g. footnotes)
- Discourage inadequate responses
 - *Not just cite websites or domestic regulation numbers*

Challenges & Solutions

Review Process (2)

Challenges:

- Verifying data in export subsidy notifications

Solutions:

- Ensure reporting periods and data is consistent across ES tables, and from year to year
- Provide tariff line details for each product group
 - Some product groups are broad: fruit and vegetables
 - Some products incorporated across several product categories
- Update list of “significant exporters”
 - G/AG/2/Add.1 (16 October 1995)

Final Observations

- Transparency is critical
- Internal systems are important
 - Establish and maintain knowledge-base & communication channels
- Continuous improvement
 - Promote 'best practice' when preparing and reviewing notifications
 - 'Best practice' improvements could avoid repeated questions and make the notification and review processes less burdensome.

Further Information

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Cairns Group Guide to Reviewing
CoA Notifications