

Annex I: APEC FOOD SYSTEM

Letter to the Hon. Lockwood Smith

8 June 1999

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Dr. the Hon. Lockwood Smith
Minister for International Trade
Chair, APEC Trade Ministers
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
New Zealand

Dear Minister

At its recent meeting in Tokyo 21-23 May, ABAC discussed an integrated plan to translate its vision for an APEC Food System (AFS) into reality. As the basis for this plan, it sets out specific proposals for action by APEC governments under the four inter-related headings:

1. A strategy for building the rural infrastructure
2. Food safety, food system technologies and SPS issues
3. Achieving food security in an APEC Food System
4. A process of trade and investment liberalisation

1. A Strategy for Building the Rural Infrastructure

Objectives:

- To realise the potential of the APEC Food System to stimulate growth in APEC economies through broad-based sustainable economic activity in non-metropolitan areas.
- To foster the growth and strengthening of well-functioning markets in the non-metropolitan areas of APEC member economies, thereby ensuring that these areas benefit from closer integration with both the remainder of the domestic economy and with the international economy.
- To encourage infrastructure development to support the growth of alternative economic activity in rural areas to complement efficient and sustainable food production.
- These objectives will be pursued by developing basic physical and financial infrastructure, human capital and institutional frameworks that promote rural enterprise and well being.

2. Food Safety, Food System Technologies and SPS Issues

Objectives:

- To create a “technology culture” within the food sector in APEC economies which is welcoming to an inward flow of technology, and through which targeted application of appropriate technology will promote a competitive, safe and environmentally friendly APEC food system.
- To promote mutual recognition and harmonisation of internationally-recognised science-based food safety standards, and in doing so, to facilitate the reduction of unnecessary barriers to trade in food products within the APEC region.

3. Achieving Food Security in an APEC Food System

Objectives:

- To provide the peoples of APEC's member economies with reliable access to safe affordable food supplies within an open, environmentally sustainable food system. This objective is to be pursued by:
 - Adopting an inter-dependent approach in which APEC economies will produce and trade food in a manner that complements other means of assuring supply.
 - Supporting proposals for building the AFS infrastructure and for facilitating technology transfer, and supporting the process of trade and investment liberalisation as well as ensuring sustainable agricultural production.

4. Process of Trade and Investment Liberalisation

Objectives:

- To promote social and economic development and benefit all APEC member economies in recognition of the important role of rural sectors, and thereby facilitate building an APEC Food System which promotes economic prosperity and food security for all APEC economies.

In pursuit of this objective APEC economies are urged to:

- Adopt further measures to facilitate trade in food products
- Establish APEC as an "export subsidy free zone"
- Assist in overcoming deficiencies identified by individual members in their own capacity to trade food
- Eliminate unnecessary impediments to trade and investment in food products in a progressive manner, and ahead of Bogor goals
- Assure all APEC economies of non-discriminatory and unrestricted access to the food supply of other APEC economies
- Recognise the social, environmental and other non-food roles of agriculture.

I have pleasure in attaching ABAC's report on the AFS which details the issues and recommendations summarised above.

Yours sincerely

HON PHILIP BURDON

ABAC Chair 1999

cc.: APEC Trade Ministers
ABAC Members