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Agro-exporter Nations Call On G-7 To Take Lead In Breaking G.a.t.t. Stalemate On Farm Subsidies

by Barbara Khol

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On July 9, at the close of a two-day meeting in Manaus (Brazil), representatives of 13 agricultural exporter nations, known as the Cairns Group, released a communique calling on the world's most industrialized nations to take the lead in reforming world agricultural trade and production. Group of 7 (G-7, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US) leaders are scheduled to meet next week in London. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round of talks has been stalemated on the farm subsidy issue. The Cairns Group communique said, "Trading tensions between the major industrial exporters have continued to intensify especially through the uncontrolled and aggressive use of export subsidies." The statement asserted that despite pledges to reduce agricultural subsidies, direct payments and consumer transfers in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations increased by 12% in 1990 to \$299 billion. The statement was signed by agriculture or commerce ministers from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Thailand, Philippines and Uruguay. The United States, Poland and the European Community sent observers to the Cairns meeting. The Cairns Group also called on G-7 nations to cut protectionist barriers and reduce export subsidies by 90% by 1996. (Basic data from AFP, 07/09/91)

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