

The agriculture framework clearly points in the direction of a more level international playing field, but it goes further on a few issues than Canada would have liked. It provides Canada scope to continue pursuing its key negotiating objectives, and it reflects many key ideas that Canada has put forward over the course of the negotiations. These include substantial reductions in overall levels of trade-distorting domestic support with larger reductions by those countries that subsidize the most; complete elimination of export subsidies by a credible date to be negotiated—a landmark in international agriculture trade; and substantial improvements in market access for all products. However, there is more work to be done on all of the issues of importance to Canada in the next stage of the negotiations, as WTO members work toward the establishment of specific rules and commitments. Canada will continue to press hard for a positive outcome for the entire agri-food sector.

The Government of Canada will continue to consult the full range of agri-food stakeholders and the provincial governments over the course of the agriculture negotiations. The government will also continue to inform Canadians on developments in the negotiations through the Web sites of International Trade Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

## TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Canada's objective is to ensure that regulatory measures and standards relating to goods serve legitimate objectives, do not unnecessarily restrict access for exports of Canadian products, and do not represent unnecessary obstacles to trade. Such measures include mandatory technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures, as well as voluntary standards.

The WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) defines the rights and obligations of WTO members with respect to the development and application of technical measures that affect trade in goods. The Agreement is based on the principle that countries have the right to adopt and apply mandatory technical measures in order to achieve a legitimate objective, provided the measures do not discriminate against imported goods and do not restrict international trade more than is necessary. TBT-related measures are subject to WTO dispute settlement provisions. Canada has well-established procedures

for coordinating domestic compliance with the Agreement and for implementing the Agreement to improve market access for Canadian exports.

Canada promotes wide acceptance of, and adherence to, the WTO TBT Agreement and its Annex 3 (Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards). Canada also participates in the activities of many international standards bodies, including the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Under the WTO TBT Agreement, Canada will continue to press for the removal of unnecessary, ineffective or inappropriate regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures that act as trade barriers in order to help maintain or enhance market access and lower costs for producers and exporters. For example, Canada continues to raise concerns over other countries' proposals for unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to products derived from biotechnology, as well as over mandatory requirements for non-product-related process and production method (npr-ppm) labelling. In 2004, Canada issued a communication to the TBT Committee regarding its voluntary standard for the labelling of foods derived from biotechnology. This document is available on the WTO Web site ([www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)) under its official document number G/TBT/W/134/Add.2. Canada is working to ensure that the draft European Community legislation for chemicals (known as "REACH"—Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals) does not create unnecessary barriers to trade and is designed to operate in a non-discriminatory fashion. Canada also raised concerns with an ongoing New Zealand ban on the importation of trout and with proposed legislation by Belgium to ban market access for sealskin products.

Canada will continue work to align or harmonize standards internationally with trading partners and to promote WTO members' acceptance of the results of conformity assessment procedures generated in other members' territories. Our policy framework for mutual recognition activity developed in 2001, under which proposals are assessed on a case-by-case basis, continues to be a sound one. This document is available on the WTO Web site ([www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)) under its official document number G/TBT/W/167. In 2003, Canada also submitted a document outlining our