

EU proposes big cuts in farm subsidies at WTO talks

AFP, Brussels

The European Union Monday proposed to transform poor nations' access to its farming markets in the latest round of WTO talks, and called on the rest of the rich world to follow suit.

The plan unveiled by the European Commission -- the EU's executive arm -- proposed cutting EU agricultural export subsidies by 45 per cent, domestic aid to farmers by 55 per cent and customs tariffs by 36 per cent.

Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said the EU was proposing "win-win" liberalisation of agriculture at the World Trade Organisation talks, unlike allegedly unrealistic proposals put forward by the United States.

WTO negotiations on freeing up farming trade are due to begin towards mid-2003, with the European Commission negotiating on the EU's behalf.

Lamy said. "It is fair to others, particularly developing countries, as it takes into account their development needs," he said.

"Better food at lower prices is also good news for consumers around the world. I call upon other developed countries to match this level of ambition, to the benefit of all."

But campaigners hit back at the "vacuous public relations document" produced by Brussels, noting the proposals would see the rich world only implement the market-opening measures over six years from 2006.

"It is absurd that farmers in the world's poorest countries should have to wait until 2013 for the EU to halve export subsidies," said Justin Forsyth, policy director with British aid charity Oxfam.

"They should be prohibited with immediate effect," he said.

Critics argue that the most effective weapon against grinding poverty in the developing world is a level

playing field in agriculture, which in Europe, the United States and Japan remains heavily protected.

Washington in July unveiled a package of proposals for the WTO talks on agriculture it said was designed to boost export competition and market access while reforming domestic support programmes.

But developing countries have condemned another US proposal to eliminate tariffs on industrial and consumer goods by 2015 as unrealistic, claiming it failed to address their needs.

And, critics charge, the United States this year erected new barriers through a law protecting US farmers while the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) remains the worst example of rich-world protectionism.

An EU farmer receives 2.2 dollars a day per cow in the form of subsidies, while three billion people, or half the world's population, have less than two dollars a day to live on,

according to the Catholic Agency For Overseas Development.

The European Commission proposals would see the EU give duty-free and quota-free access for all farm exports from the "least developed countries".

If adopted by the WTO, the Brussels plan would also make rich countries give access at zero duty to at least 50 per cent of developing countries' imports and guarantees so that they can ensure "food security".

But Oxfam was unimpressed, pointing to the EU's decision in October to put off any reform of the CAP until at least 2007 at the insistence of France.

"The EU had an opportunity to provide global leadership in addressing a problem at the heart of global poverty," Foster said.

"Instead, it has produced a vacuous public relations document designed to paper over differences between member states."



PHOTO: GOLDEN LIFE INS

The new office of Bandhu Bima Prokalpa of Golden Life Insurance Ltd was inaugurated by its chairman Md Musa Meah recently. Engr. Syed Munif Ali, immediate past chairman and director, A K M Azizur Rahman, director, and M Thowhidul Alam, managing director (CC), along with other project directors also attended the function.

CURRENCY

This is yesterday's forex trading statement by Standard Chartered Bank

Selling	Currency	Buying
TT/OD	BC	TT Clean
59.2500	59.3000	58.3300
61.5252	61.5771	59.1525
95.1733	95.2536	92.2664
34.1695	34.1983	32.4431
0.4952	0.4956	0.4785
41.5207	41.5557	40.3249
6.6976	6.7032	6.5750
38.2110	38.2433	37.1623
7.6051	7.6115	7.4719
34.0772	34.1059	33.2611
16.2618	16.2756	15.7542
15.9236	15.9370	15.4312
		15.3859
		15.3875

Exchange rates of some currencies against US dollar

Indian rupee	Pak rupee	Lankan rupee	Thai baht	Norwegian	NZ dollar	AUD
48.145	58.425	96.715	43.165	7.1055	0.5154	3.80

Local Interbank FX Trading:

The local interbank foreign exchange market was active on Tuesday. The US dollar ended weaker against the Bangladesh taka as supplies of USD were boosted by export receipts. Taka was quoted at 58.95/59.20 against the dollar compared with 59.10/20 previously.

Local Money Market:

Demand for overnight borrowing was moderate. Call money rate eased after private and foreign banks borrowed funds through repurchase agreements. Call money rate ranged between 9.00-10.00 per cent compared with 9.50-10.00 per cent previously.

International Market:

The international market was active on Tuesday. The dollar tumbled to a new three-year low against the euro and slid on the yen as the

market tightened its focus on the prospects of war with Iraq after the US found fault with Baghdad's weapon declaration. Market players think it is the US economy that would suffer the most from a war involving major economies. The latest fall of dollar against the yen alarmed Japanese policy makers, who want a weaker yen to help Japan's export-dependent economy. On the other hand, some analysts think that the dollar's latest drop might have been overdone, and the market is due for a correction. If Germany's IFO business climate indicator, due today, falls below the market forecast that would lead to a correction. The Swiss currency also hit a new four-year high against the dollar. At 16.30 hours on Tuesday, euro was quoted at 1.0321/28, GBP at 1.5999/05 and yen at 120.62/68 against the dollar.

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SHIPPING

Chittagong port

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 17.12.2002

Berth No	Name of vessels	Cargo	L Port call	Local agent	Date of arrival	Leaving	Import disc
J/1	Gui Jiang	Wheat (P)	Vish	Mutual	12/12	27/12	
J/2	Dai Hong Dan	GI (S Ash)	Dali	Move	9/12	19/12	X
J/3	Amalfi	C Clink	Lumut	OLM	8/12	18/12	3360
J/4	Lyong Gun Bong	GTS (P)	Sing	Unique	11/12	19/12	2830
J/5	Pathain	GI (Y Ma)	Yang	MTA	2/12	19/12	570
J/6	A She Sky (Liner)	GI	Sing	Everett	16/12	18/12	2637
J/7	Banglar Mookh	GI (S Ash)	Pipa	BSC	15/12	23/12	336
J/8	Eagle Strength	Cont	Sing	Nol	15/12	20/12	423/333+750
J/9	Keishun (Roro/4)	Vehi	Sing	Everett	16/12	18/12	X
J/10	Taraman Bibi	Sugar (P)	Mumb	Mutual	23/11	21/12	X
J/11	Banga Bortl	Cont	P Kel	Bdship	12/12	20/12	207/222
J/12	Xpress Resolve	Cont	Col	Everbest	14/12	18/12	197/10+200
CCT/1	Banga Borat	Cont	P Kel	Bdship	13/12	18/12	309/X
CCT/2	Mardios	Cont	P Kel	RSL	12/12	19/12	448/X

Vessels due at outer anchorage

Name of vessels	Date of vessels	L Port call	Local agent	Name of cargo	Loading
QC Pintal (Cont) 11/12	19/12	Mong	QCSL	Cont	L/Sing
Almalaz	18/12	Dubai	Ceacost	In Bag(P) MJ	
Sammi Frontier	17/12	Kohsi	ASSLL	C Clink(United)	
Giem	17/12	Lumut	OLM	C Clink (S Cir/Star)	
Teknik Glora	17/12	Sing	OTBL	For Demolition	
Aft Section Maxita	17/12	Sing	OTBL	For Demolition	
Tug Ton Woon Ocean-10	17/12	Sing	OTBL	Towing D/VL: A. S. Maxita	
Tug Smith Luzon	17/12	Mala	OTBL	Towing D/VL: Moon	
Moon	17/18	Mala	OTBL	For Demolition	
Handy Sea	18/12	Kant	Uniship	C. Clink	
Baltic Leader (Roro/24/8/12)	19/12	Sing	JF	Vehi (20 Pkgs)	
Asimont (Cont) 30/12	18/12	PKL	Seaborne	Cont	L/Sing
Kentung	20/12	Yangoon	Everett	GI(STC)	
AA Venture	20/12	Kaki	CLA	Rice	-
Agios Fanourios	20/12	Zhan	Move	Rice(P)	
Banga Bonik (Cont) 9/12	20/12	Sin	Bdship	Tsp In Bag (M. Jetty)	
K. Berjaya (Cont) 10/12	20/12	Sing	Pil(BD)	Cont	L/Sing
Peace	20/12	Sing	OTBL-	For Demolition	
Hazel Ace (Roro/24/8/12)	21/12	Sing	OTBL	Vehi	L/Sing
Haneburg (Cont) 11/12	21/12	Sing	JF	Cont	L/Sing
QC Dignity (Cont) 10/12	21/12	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	L/Sing
Banga Biraj (Cont) 10/12	21/12	-	Bdship	Cont	L/Sing
Banga Barta (Cont) 17/12	21/12	Mgl	Baridhi	Cont	L/Sing
Banga Bodor (Cont) 18/12	23/12	-	Bdship	Cont	L/Col
Bangla Lanka (Cont) 12/12	23/12	-	Baridhi	Cont	L/Col
QC Lark (Cont) 12/12	23/12	P Kel	QCSL	Cont	L/P.Kel
Banga Borak (Cont) 14/12	24/12	-	Bdship	Cont	L/Sing
Feng Shun Shan (Liner)	25/12	-	Bdship	GI	-

Vessels at outer anchorage Ready on

Tarpon Santiago	Sugar (P)	Sant	Lilmond	24/11
Bright Moon	Fert (P)	Zhan	TOSL	15/12
Kota Singa (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	15/12
Sadan Kaptanoglu	Salt(P)	Kand	Mas	15/12
Kota Cahaya (Cont)	Cont	Sing	Pil (BD)	16/12
Orient Freedom (Cont)	Cont	P Kel	PSSL	16/12
Novorossiysk	Vehi	Sing	JF	16/12
QC Honour(Cont)	Cont	P Kel	QCSL	16/12

Movement of vessels for 19/12/2002

Outgoing	Incoming	Shifting
J/3 Amoli-5.5	K.Sing 7.5-J/10 0930	J/8-B. Strength 6.6-CCT-01
J/6 A.She Keya-4.5	K. Chaya 7.5-J/12 *	J/10 T. Bibi-6.5-J/8/9
J/9 Keishun-6.0	Novo Rossisk-6.4-J/3 *	
J/10 T. Bibi-6.0 (T-1500)	B. Shourab 7.5-DDJ *	
J/12 Xp. Relolve-5.5	(P) Bright Moon-7.7-J/9 *	
CCT-1 B. Borat-6.0	Freedom-8.0-J/8	
DOJ B. Jyoti-5.0	Al Malaz 8.6-RM-4	

The above are shipping position and performance of vessels at Chittagong Port as per berthing sheet of CPA supplied by HRC Family, Dhaka.

US urges Europe to embrace deeper farm trade reforms

AFP, Washington

The United States gave a cool reception Monday to a new European Commission proposal for lower farm tariffs, saying it failed to embrace fundamental reforms.

"The EC's proposal, while welcome, does not embrace fundamental reform in world agricultural trade," the US Trade Representative's office spokesman, Richard Mills, said in a statement.

He pressed the Europeans to reform their Common Agricultural Policy to enable them to support deeper farm tariff and subsidy cuts in World Trade Organization (WTO) talks.

The European Union has proposed cutting its agricultural export subsidies by 45 per cent, domestic aid to farmers by 55 per cent and customs tariffs by 36 per cent.

cized as "absurd" by aid charity Oxfam because the world would only implement the market-opening measures over six years from 2006.

Under an agenda hammered out in November 2001 in Doha, Qatar, WTO trade ministers agreed to work for a slow of tariff reductions, including phasing out agricultural export subsidies.

"Any movement toward reform on agriculture is important, particularly from a large producer, exporter, and importer like the EU," Mills said. But it failed to go far enough, he said.

"We need to cut subsidies substantially and move away from distorting production. We need to slash tariffs. Without aggressive agriculture reform, Doha will be paralyzed," Mills said.

WTO negotiations on freeing up farming trade are due to begin towards mid-2003, with the

European Commission negotiating on the EU's behalf.

Critics argue that the most effective weapon against grinding poverty in the developing world is a level playing field in agriculture, which in Europe, the United States and Japan remains heavily protected.

Washington in July unveiled a package of proposals for the WTO talks on agriculture it said was designed to boost export competition and market access while reforming domestic support programmes.

In May, President George W. Bush signed into law a bill providing domestic farm subsidies of 173.5 billion dollars over 10 years.

US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick has defended the domestic subsidies, saying they are much smaller than Europe's and that the US aid is within its WTO limits.

OECD economies grow 0.8pc in third quarter

AFP, Paris

OECD economies expanded at a rate of 0.8 per cent in third quarter 2002 from the 0.5 per cent recorded in the previous three months, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reported here Monday, citing preliminary estimates.

But compared with the third quarter of last year, growth was even greater, reaching 2.3 per cent in the third quarter from a rate of 1.4 per cent in third quarter 2001, said the OECD, which groups 30 industrialized countries.

The OECD estimated that US gross domestic product grew at a rate of 1.0 per cent in the third quarter from 0.3 per cent in the second quarter while growth on an annual basis rose to 3.2 per cent in the third quarter from 2.2 per cent in the same period last year.

STOCK