



United States
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Foreign
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Service

FACT SHEET

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AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR TRADE

The Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) for Trade and six Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees (ATACs) for Trade are a formal mechanism to ensure ongoing liaison between the federal government and the private sector regarding agricultural trade issues. The committees are jointly chartered by the Secretary of Agriculture and the United States Trade Representative pursuant to the Trade Act of 1974, as amended. The committees' current charter runs until May 2007.

The APAC and the ATACs consult with, advise and make recommendations to the Secretary and to the U.S. Trade Representative on a wide range of agricultural trade issues. The committees provide information and advice on U.S. negotiating objectives and bargaining positions before the United States enters into trade agreements; on the operation of existing trade agreements; and on other matters related to the development, implementation, and administration of U.S. agricultural trade policy.

The APAC provides trade policy advice regarding all agricultural trade issues, while the ATACs provide detailed technical advice and information on specific commodities. The six technical advisory committees are:

- ATAC for Trade in Animals and Animal Products
- ATAC for Trade in Fruits and Vegetables
- ATAC for Trade in Grains, Feed, and Oilseeds
- ATAC for Trade in Processed Foods
- ATAC for Trade in Sweeteners and Sweetener Products
- ATAC for Trade in Tobacco, Cotton, Peanuts, and Planting Seeds

Background: The APAC and the ATACs were formed in 1974, when Congress established a private sector advisory committee system to ensure that U.S. trade policy and trade negotiation objectives adequately reflect U.S. commercial and economic interests. Private sector agricultural advisors were first used on an ad hoc basis in the Kennedy Round of the General Agreement on

Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as part of the U.S. policy development and review process during the multilateral trade negotiations of the 1960's.

The Trade Act of 1974 included a formal mechanism for agricultural advisory committees. This advisory mechanism proved to be so successful during the 1979 Tokyo Round of GATT multilateral trade negotiations that the legislation to implement the agreements of the Tokyo Round included a provision to continue gathering advice from the private sector through advisory committees.

Today the private sector trade advisory system consists of almost 40 committees, arranged in three tiers: The President's Advisory Committee on Trade and Policy Negotiations (ACTPN); seven policy advisory committees, including the APAC; and more than 30 technical advisory committees, including the six ATACs. The Departments of Commerce and Labor also administer policy and technical or sectoral committees.

Meeting and Membership Information: Members of the APAC and ATACs are appointed to the advisory committees by, and serve at the discretion of, the Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative.

The advisory committees must represent a balance between varied interests. All members must have demonstrated leadership qualities. ATAC members must have commodity expertise, and knowledge of the effects that various trade barriers—or the lack of barriers—can have on the commodities they represent. All members should be recognized leaders in their fields, and be able to defend those interests fully and professionally.

Due to the sensitive nature of the issues discussed, committee meetings are generally closed to the public and all members are required to hold a confidential security clearance. Meetings are held in Washington, D.C.

The committees meet, on average, three times per year, but meetings may be called more often. Committee members serve at their own expense, are not compensated for their services, and do not receive per diem or travel funds.

For more information, contact: Office of Negotiations and Agreements, Foreign Agricultural Service,
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