

**U.S.-INDIA ENHANCED TRADE POLICY FORUM
FOCUS GROUP ON AGRICULTURE**

**Joint Record on Agricultural Accomplishments as of January 1, 2006
Videoconference**

1. Discussions in the Focus Group took place in a spirit of understanding and constructive engagement.
2. Initiating the discussions, the two sides recalled earlier discussions held under the India-US Trade Policy Forum on 11.11.2005 and updated each other on the subsequent developments.
3. On the SPS requirements for export of Indian mangoes to the US, the Indian side noted that a US Technical Team will be visiting India January 31 to February 7, 2006. The team is expected to examine irradiation as an option. The Indian side stated that they would like to look at other treatment options also, which could be discussed during the visit of the US team.
4. On almonds, the US side acknowledged the extension of the interim arrangement up to June 30, 2006. However, the US side informed that they will be providing the complete data on Phosphine efficacy by May, 2006 and hoped that the matter will be resolved satisfactorily. The Indian side stated that the results of the first phase of the study appear encouraging and hoped that the matter could be resolved as soon as possible, when the results of the second and final phase of the study are available.
5. With respect to pulses, India announced the extension of the interim arrangement (fumigation at port of entry with methyl bromide) until March 31, 2007. The United States concurred that a long-term solution needs to be identified and agreed to discuss further in February meetings.
6. On dairy exports, the Indian side informed that the response received from United States in October 2005 is under active consideration by the experts, and that a reply would be forthcoming soon.
7. On edible wax application on fresh fruits and vegetables, the Indian side informed the US side that the Central Committee on Food Standards (CCFS) in the Health Ministry had recommended for approval the use of bee and carnauba waxes on fresh fruits and vegetables according to Codex standards. An official

notification on the subject is being issued and will invite public comments. The finalisation process is likely to take at least a year. The US side expressing satisfaction on the development, but requested that shellac should also be included under the permitted category of waxes, as it is also a Codex-approved coating. The Indian side advised the US to make the request along with their comments on the notification, for further consideration.

8. On the ongoing agriculture negotiations in the WTO, the Indian side stated that, a number of crucial issues such as tariff reduction ambition and formula, reduction in domestic support, treatment of Special Products and detailing of SSM remain unresolved. India also reiterated that, the inter-linkages among the three pillars must be recognized in the negotiations and that the special and differential treatment for developing countries must be commensurate with the development needs of these countries as per the Doha Agenda. The US side reiterated that they would pursue a high ambition in market access and hoped that they will be able to work with India to achieve a positive outcome in the negotiations.

9. On biotechnology, the Indian side briefed the US delegation about the work already done in identification of priorities for joint research under the India-US Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture. The US side also wants to discuss how biotechnology research translates into products that reach farmers and markets, including how crops improved through biotechnology move through the regulatory system and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues. But the Indian side responded that IPRs could be discussed in the Focus Group on IPRs. Finally, it was agreed that in all subsequent meetings of the Focus Group on Agriculture, a stock of the developments under the Indo-US Knowledge Initiative will be taken to identify any possible issues which could be taken up in this Group.

10. On the grant of equivalence to Indian organic products with the National Organic Programme of the USA, the US side informed that the process of granting equivalence is a cumbersome process and has not been completed for any countries. They suggested that India and the USA could work together for recognition of the Indian Programme on Organic Production under the US Regulations so that market access to USA is available to India. The US side also mentioned that they have forwarded certain queries to APEDA in this regard. The representative from APEDA informed that they are in the process of examining the US queries, a reply to which would be sent shortly. The US side

offered, and the Indian side accepted, a separate video conference specific to organics. No date for such a video conference was set.