



4 November 2002

MEDIA STATEMENT

MEAT INDUSTRY WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S WTO INITIATIVE

The Meat Industry Association has welcomed today's announcement by Hon Jim Sutton that New Zealand will propose the removal of all remaining tariffs on non-agricultural products.

"This dramatic move could lift the Doha Round negotiations out of the doldrums and give them a fresh impetus," said Brian Lynch, MIA Executive Director. "Every previous set of global trade negotiations has ebbed and flowed and the Doha Round is proving no different. The challenge is to find the circuit breaker that focuses renewed attention on the job at hand and gets negotiators back to the table. The Government's timely initiative has potential to do just that."

Mr Lynch said that the last multilateral negotiations, the Uruguay Round, had led to reduced tariffs of nearly \$200 million annually on New Zealand meat exports. "That's a sum close to the savings on non-agricultural exports the Government is forecasting could come from this proposal. Lower tariffs have enabled our meat companies to compete aggressively and profitably in key overseas markets. Improved company returns from those markets have benefited the New Zealand economy and made jobs in the industry more secure."

Mr Lynch said the meat industry was looking for further progress on agricultural reform to be made in the Doha Round. "But we appreciate that an acceptable package of gains and concessions will only come about if there is something in it for every WTO member. The Government's initiative on non-agricultural tariffs promises to contribute to a satisfactory final outcome."

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