

Humane Sustainable Agriculture and the Doha Development Agenda



World Trade Organization
Sixth Ministerial Conference

Hong Kong

December 13–18, 2005

**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**

Global Alliance for Humane Sustainable Development

Animal welfare concerns are more than ethical or moral issues—they are also economic issues

Introduction

HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL (HSI) IS THE INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATE of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Founded in 1954, The HSUS today leads a family of organizations (including a regional Central America nongovernmental organization—the Global Alliance for Humane Sustainable Development) with a constituency of 9.5 million and a significant global presence. We actively advance international trade policy and local sustainable development projects to help developed and developing countries address such issues as humane and sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and wildlife and habitat protection.

We are a member of the Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (TEPAC) in the United States, advising the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on international trade policy. We also promote humane, sustainable, and equitable development in discussions

of international trade and economic policy at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Locally, we implement a number of trade capacity building and technical assistance programs in developing WTO Member countries such as Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to support sustainable economic development including humane agricultural practices and habitat protection policies.

Success Story

Humane Handling and Slaughter

HSI and the Global Alliance for Humane Sustainable Development (Global Alliance)—with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—have helped to improve cattle handling and slaughter practices, creating a more efficient process that results in better quality meat in markets throughout Central America. Our “Training of Trainers” program in Costa Rica, Nicaragua,

El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras provides training in sustainable agricultural practices to a core group of experts who design and implement local assistance programs with private, government, and academic interests.



The WTO and Sustainable Development

THE CENTRAL AIMS OF THE DOHA DECLARATION, ADOPTED BY WTO Members at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, in 2001, are to achieve greater market liberalization while encouraging sustainable economic development in developing and least developed countries.¹ According to the Doha Declaration, WTO Member countries “strongly reaffirm [their] commitment to the objective of sustainable development, as stated in the Preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement [and] are convinced that the aims of upholding and safeguarding an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, and acting for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development can and must be mutually supportive.”²

In addition to its broad commitment to sustainable development, the Doha Declaration also sets out a number of specific areas for negotiation. But since the Fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancún, Mexico, in 2003, the Doha Round has focused on WTO Committee on Agriculture negotiations on the reduction of trade-distorting domestic support subsidies by developed countries in exchange for greater access to developing country markets. Although these are important Doha Development Agenda goals, they are not the only objectives of the Doha Declaration.

Sustainable development, humane and sustainable agriculture, capacity building and technical assistance, environmental conservation, and wildlife and habitat protection can be accomplished along with the other goals of the Doha Round. More importantly, they can be achieved without sacrificing the aspirations and priorities of developing countries whose economic development depends largely on their ability to utilize resources in ways that promote growth without degrading the environment. Equitable access to the opportunities of international trade are within reach of all WTO Member countries in the context of the Doha Round and must not be ignored.

Preparing for New Markets

HSI and the Global Alliance work with Central American countries to address animal welfare concerns. We helped Costa Rica's livestock industry establish a five-year plan for implementing strategies to improve animal welfare within the beef sector. We also worked with Costa Rican producer and auction associations in rural areas to incorporate animal welfare practices into their strategic planning. We provided targeted training and technical assistance to help the Nicaraguan livestock industry comply with animal welfare standards that improve production and meat quality. We also supplied technical assistance to help producer groups in Guatemala and El Salvador with their efforts to improve animal welfare awareness.



Success Story

Agriculture Negotiations

IN THE DOHA DECLARATION, WTO MEMBER COUNTRIES COMMITTED TO comprehensively negotiating “substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support.”³ In addition to these concerns, however, agricultural producers face mounting pressure to respond to the demand for humane and environmentally responsible agricultural practices and products. This demand has opened growing markets in Europe, the United States, and other countries,⁴ where consumers increasingly express a desire to purchase humanely produced chicken, beef, pork, dairy products, and cage-free eggs.⁵

Practicing higher animal welfare standards, however, increases production costs for farmers in many developed and some developing countries. This led the European Communities (EC) to put forth a proposal in the WTO Committee on Agriculture seeking an express recognition that animal welfare payments—including

those made to offset these increased costs—be included in the “Green Box” of permissible agricultural subsidies. Some developing countries, however, met the EC proposal with skepticism, viewing it as an attempt at increased protectionism.

The United States, on the other hand, has publicly stated that animal welfare payments are already covered by the present criteria of the Green Box in the current text of Annex 2, paragraphs 1 and 12 of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). The United States has also taken the position that such payments should not be limited by any expenditure caps. We agree with this position, which reflects the reality that the way animals are treated directly impacts the sustainability and profitability of agricultural operations. Indeed, many studies demonstrate that mistreating or failing to provide adequate veterinary care for animals reduces economic output.

Furthermore, recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease, avian influenza, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) provide dramatic evidence of the need for higher animal welfare standards. Simple measures

Success Story

Responding to Losses

HSI and the Corporación de Fomento Ganadero (CORFOGA), which represents more than 40,000 beef and dairy producers in Costa Rica, developed a study that revealed the economic losses caused by poor livestock handling practices. CORFOGA quantified the economic impact of different types of lesions on beef carcasses and identified the factors causing the lesions on cattle prior to slaughter.

The study indicated an annual animal industry loss of more than US\$1 million as a result of poor handling and proposed alternative practices to reduce these

losses for farmers and slaughter facilities. CORFOGA is disseminating the results of the study within Costa Rica to train livestock handlers to improve animal welfare, and we are helping other Central American countries adopt the study's methodology.



Growth through Humane Production

El Salvador is the second most deforested country in the Western Hemisphere, and the La Quesera community in the northern area of the country is no exception. In 2004, HSI and the Global Alliance worked with USAID funding to promote sustainable organic agricultural production to protect habitat and create jobs for local women. Shuchil Industries—a Salvadoran natural products company—also invested in the community, helping families develop long-term production processes to increase the value of their lemongrass products. In addition to raising income for the people of La Quesera without causing environmental damage, the program allows both permanent and migratory species in the area to count on shelter provided by shade trees.



such as prohibiting the transport of sick animals, reducing the stock density of poultry, and eliminating the use of feed containing animal byproducts—which qualify under current Green Box criteria—would help reduce the spread of these diseases, improving animal welfare and agricultural productivity.

To ensure that higher animal welfare standards will benefit farmers, ranchers, consumers, and the larger society in both developed and developing countries, however, such payments must not be used for protectionist purposes. Only programs that are non-trade-distorting and meet the Green Box criteria of the AoA should be allowed. In addition, developing country producers who observe higher animal welfare standards are just as eligible for these payments from their governments as their counterparts in developed countries. Furthermore, not only is animal welfare in the best interests of developing WTO Members, but it is also an issue that must be addressed in any attempt to improve sustainable farming throughout the world.

Trade Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MUST BE PROVIDED WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED to take advantage of access to international trade. To this end the WTO should enlist the support of all sectors of society to engage in capacity building and provide technical assistance to developing countries.

So how do humane and environmentally friendly agricultural policies further the economic interests of developing countries? Development and economic priorities vary from country to country, but one important thread connects all decisions about development—the sustainability of the policy.

Resources must be used in ways that benefit citizens while protecting the environment, natural resources, domestic animals, and wildlife and habitats.

Containing the Spread of Disease

Its size and biological diversity make Bosque El Imposible National Park the most important natural area of El Salvador. In 2004, SalvaNATURA—a national environmental group—invited HSI and our RAVS program to the area to develop a program that provides education and veterinary clinics to help control homeless companion animal populations and increase awareness of



animal welfare issues. While working in communities around El Imposible, however, RAVS personnel encountered an outbreak of Newcastle disease in local chicken populations. We demonstrated proper disposal of diseased birds and treatment for coops to prevent further spread of the disease.

Development priorities must be mutually supportive so that agricultural practices will be compatible with sustainable development, environmental conservation and associated tourism opportunities, and other economic objectives.

For example, the widespread use of pesticides and other chemicals on farms and plantations near protected areas with endangered wildlife may produce toxic

runoff that threatens the animals and their habitats. Such chemical use also may contaminate organic crops, livestock, and freshwater sources and have equally devastating consequences for tourism. The situation faced by many developing countries, however, is not hopeless. Opportunities abound for developing country producers to reach growing markets in developed countries for humane, sustainable agricultural production.

According to a 2003 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, sustainable organic agriculture is worth an estimated US\$26 billion worldwide and, at 15–30 percent annual growth, “is generally the most rapidly growing sector of agriculture ... albeit from a very low base.”⁶ The countries that successfully retool their agricultural systems, laws, and regulatory programs to take advantage of these markets will have the greatest chances of success.

We support developing countries’ efforts to undertake such changes. For example, we encourage the efforts of Humane Farm Animal Care, a nongovernmental nonprofit organization that developed standards for the humane treatment of animals for farmers, ranchers, and the food industry.⁷ Compliance

with these humane standards allows producers to voluntarily use the “Certified Humane” label in the United States, helping consumers make informed choices about the products they purchase.

We also work directly with government officials, industry representatives, grocery chain managers, university faculty, and livestock workers in developing countries to help improve animal handling, transport, and slaughter methods—and we provide training on the economic benefits of such changes⁸ and how they help both the animals and the workers.

With The HSUS Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) program, we provide veterinary services—including routine and emergency medical care, sterilization surgeries, and vaccinations—and training for community members and local veterinarians in rural areas of developing countries. This program helps residents better care for pets, helps reduce the incidence of animal-transmitted diseases and injuries, and helps improve the productivity of working animals.

Many developing countries in Central and South America depend on ecotourism, so we also engage in capacity building programs to help humanely control homeless or “street” companion animals who roam into protected areas frequented by tourists. In addition, we teach residents how to be responsible pet owners and to control and maintain a healthy population of domestic animals who will be less likely to enter protected areas seeking food and posing a threat to wildlife.

Our ongoing work with developing countries continues through our programs to provide the training, expertise, and hands-on services needed to improve agricultural systems and the lives of people in rural communities. These programs illustrate that animal welfare concerns are more than ethical or moral issues—they are also economic issues.

Conclusion

THE WTO IS IN A POSITION TO RESHAPE ITSELF BY TAKING A BROADER agenda into account at this Ministerial Conference. The results of the Doha Round need not be narrow in scope. Indeed, WTO Member countries—developed and developing alike—have the unique opportunity to embark on a more open, humane, equitable, and environmentally supportive agenda—one that creates improved standards for all animals and people and for the environment.

Notes

¹ WTO Ministerial Declaration, Fourth Session Doha, WT/MIN(01)/DEC/W/1, 14 Nov. 2001 (Doha Declaration).

² Doha Declaration at 2, para. 6.

³ Doha Declaration at 3, para. 13.

⁴ *Organic Agriculture: Sustainability, Markets and Policies*, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Agriculture and Food, 2003.

⁵ OECD, Organic Agriculture Report at 179. See also “Whole Foods Market Named ‘Best Animal-Friendly Retailer,’” 4 Jan. 2005, available at www.wholefoodsmarket.com/company/pr_01-04-05.html.

⁶ OECD, Organic Agriculture Report at 9.

⁷ Humane Farm Animal Care, Adele Douglass, executive director, www.certifiedhumane.org.

⁸ See *The Economic Benefits of Humane Slaughter*, Humane Society International and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2001.

Opportunities
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*Promoting the protection
of all animals*

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