

154945 United States General Accounting Office

Briefing Report to Congressional Requesters

December 1987

# INTERNATIONAL TRADE

International Trade Commission's Agricultural Unfair Trade Investigations



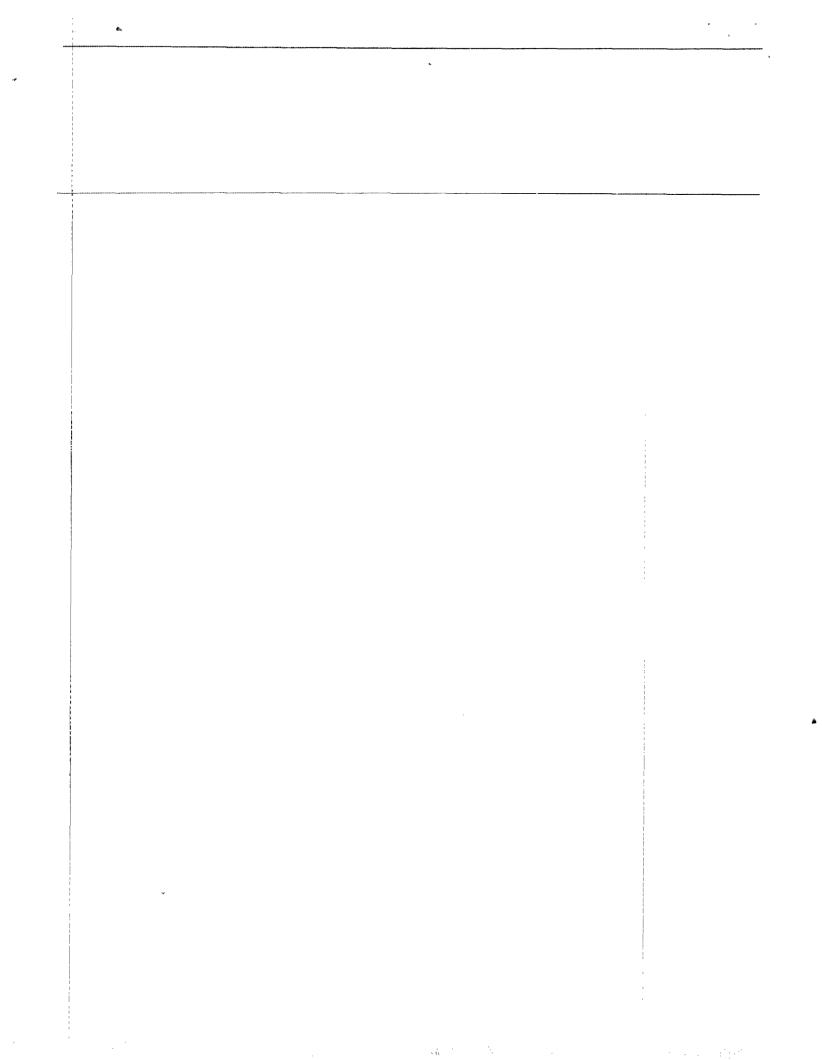


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NSIAD-88-58BR



# GAO

#### United States General Accounting Office Washington, D.C. 20548

#### National Security and International Affairs Division

B-226098

December 30, 1987

The Honorable Jesse A. Helms The Honorable Pete Wilson United States Senate

This briefing report is in response to your letter dated March 17, 1986, requesting that we review the ability of petitioners to obtain relief against the unfair importation of agricultural commodities that have been either subsidized or dumped in U.S. markets at less than fair value. Your letter stated that the International Trade Commission (ITC), as a result of its completed investigations between October 1981 and March 1985, made only one affirmative determination that the domestic industry had been materially injured by these imports. Your letter further stated that there is evidence suggesting that the general ITC data and documentation requirements and method of analysis may not be appropriate as applied to agricultural growers and harvesters. A follow-up letter from Senator Wilson, dated January 29, 1987, also asked us to focus more on the difficulties of gathering and developing accurate written information on growers' costs and profits in response to the ITC questionnaires, particularly when a large number of small growers are involved.

We analyzed all 29 agricultural and agriculture-related antidumping and countervailing duty cases for which the ITC had made either preliminary or final determinations about material injury by reason of imports between January 1, 1980 and June 30, 1986.

- Six of the 29 cases were terminated at the conclusion of preliminary investigations because the ITC found no reasonable indication of material injury to the domestic industry by reason of the imports.
- Two cases were pending.
- In the remaining 21 cases (72 percent), the ITC reached affirmative injury determinations at the conclusion of its preliminary 45-day investigation. However, 3 of these cases were terminated or suspended because of Commerce Department findings and actions and did not proceed to a final investigation.
- Of the 18 cases that proceeded to a final investigation, the ITC reached a final determination in 8 cases (44 percent) that the domestic industry had suffered material injury by reason of imports that were either unfairly subsidized or "dumped" in the U.S. market at less than fair value.

Growers and harvesters were not involved in 14 of the 29 cases, which involved only processed products, such as canned tomatoes, corn starch, or cheese. Therefore, either agricultural producers did not join in the petition or, in a few cases, the ITC determined that they should be excluded because they were not part of the industry adversely affected by the imports. For the 15 cases in which producers were involved, the ITC reached a final determination that the domestic industry had suffered material injury by reason of unfair imports in 6 (54 percent) of the 11 cases completed. Thus, over the longer period we measured, the final affirmative determination rates for both agricultural cases in general and for cases involving producers are substantially higher than the negligible percent for agriculture cases during the October 1981 - March 1985 period cited in the March 1986 request letter. The results of our analyses are described in greater detail in appendices I to IV.

None of the Commissioners' determinations in the 29 cases we reviewed indicated that problems with the questionnaires substantially impeded their ability to reach determinations as to whether the domestic industry was materially injured by reason of the unfair imports. The only case in which we found the lack of questionnaire data to be cited was the 1980 fish from Canada case when the fishermen declined to submit information on their profitability despite repeated ITC requests. In this case the ITC satisfied its data needs from other sources.

During investigations, the ITC develops and uses information not only from producer questionnaires but also from such sources as importer questionnaires, state government and Department of Agriculture agricultural statistics, and Department of Commerce import statistics. From the evidence developed, each Commissioner then makes individual determinations about whether the petitioners have suffered material injury by reason of the imports. Commissioners can and do give different weights to the various data and facts developed during the investigation and occasionally have cast different votes based on the same body of evidence. Therefore, a retrospective determination of what precise evidence, or combination of data, led any Commissioner to vote affirmatively or negatively would be very difficult.

We completed a broad survey of ITC's operations this year that included some work on the questionnaires.<sup>1</sup> Basically, we observed that a number of problems are being experienced with ITC's generic questionnaire, not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Observations on the Operations of the International Trade Commission (GAO/NSIAD-87-80) Feb. 25, 1987.

only in agricultural cases but in industrial cases as well. These range from formatting problems to low response rates for some questions, particularly in cases involving a large number of smaller producers, such as occurs in agriculture.

Your request for this review and our February 1987 report have helped to focus attention on ITC's questionnaire and data gathering methods. ITC Commissioners and key staff have acknowledged problems with the questionnaires and are considering steps to improve this method of collecting and analyzing data.

Our objectives, scope, and methodology are described in appendix I.

Unless you announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the ITC Commissioners; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; chairmen of selected congressional committees; and to interested parties upon request.

If you have any further questions on this matter, please call me on (202) 275-4812.

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Allan I. Mendelowitz Senior Associate Director

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	CVD ITC	Countervailing duty International Trade Commissio	on
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### Analysis of U.S. International Trade Commission Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Investigations of Agricultural Imports

Antidumping and countervailing duties are imposed on imports into the United States to correct unfair practices which benefit imports over domestically produced goods. Antidumping duties are placed on imports which are sold in the United States at a price lower than in the country where they are produced (dumping). Countervailing duties are levied to counteract export or other subsidies provided by the producing country for goods that are imported into the United States. Generally, antidumping or countervailing duties are applied only if an import materially injures or threatens to materially injure a U.S. industry or materially retards the establishment of an industry in the United States.

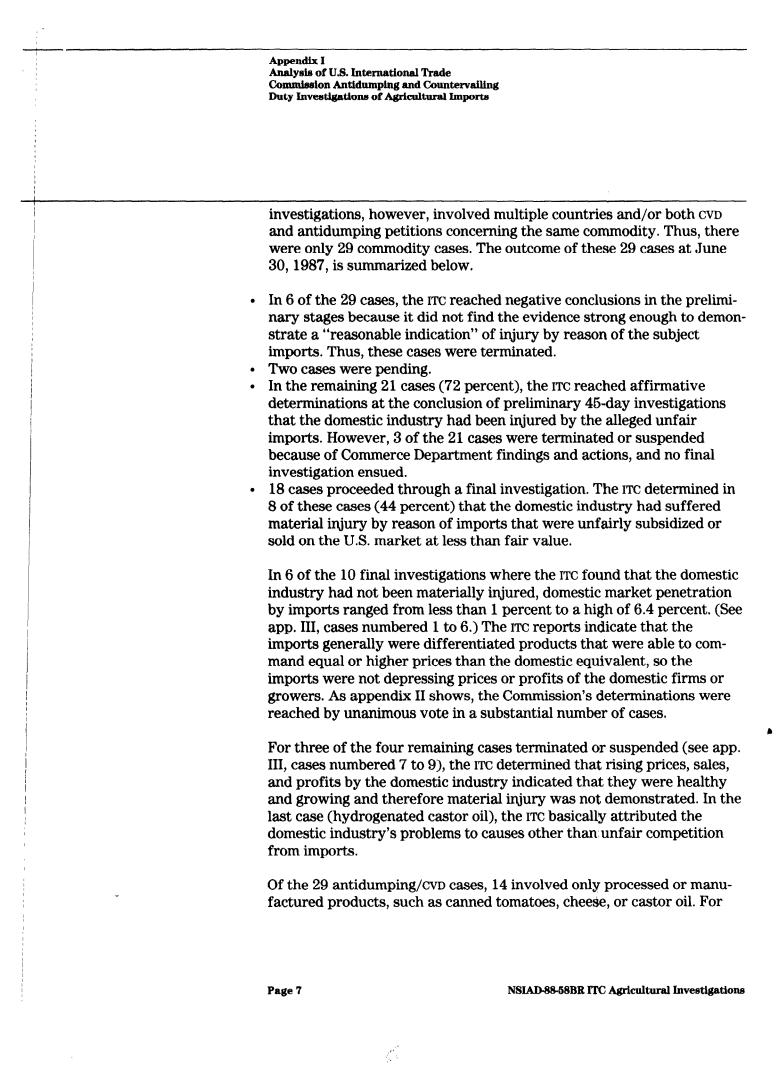
In dumping cases, the Department of Commerce investigates whether goods are being dumped in the United States. In countervailing duty cases, Commerce investigates whether foreign subsidies have been provided to U.S. imports. The International Trade Commission (ITC) determines whether dumping practices or subsidies have injured U.S. industry. Petitions for actions are reviewed by Commerce and ITC. Commerce determines whether a petition meets the requirements for an investigation of dumping or subsidies. Each agency makes preliminary and then final determinations in its area of responsibility subject to statutory timeliness. Commerce also may suspend an antidumping or countervailing investigation before a final duty order is imposed if a foreign government or exporter agrees to correct or neutralize the unfair trade practice.

**GAO** Analysis

We analyzed all antidumping and countervailing duty (CVD) investigations involving products of the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries for which the ITC had made either a preliminary or final determination of material injury by reason of unfair imports between January 1, 1980 and June 30, 1986. We selected 1980 as the starting point because the Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (19 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) amended the underlying legislation to require that to obtain an affirmative determination from the ITC and the remedies that such determination can bring, petitioners in CVD cases must demonstrate that they have suffered or are threatened with material injury, or that establishment of an industry is materially retarded by the alleged unfair imports. Thus, the 1979 Act put CVD cases on a par with antidumping cases, which already were subject to an injury test, and made CVD cases more difficult to sustain.

The ITC concluded 108 preliminary and final agricultural investigations between January 1, 1980 and June 30, 1986. (See app. II.) Most of these

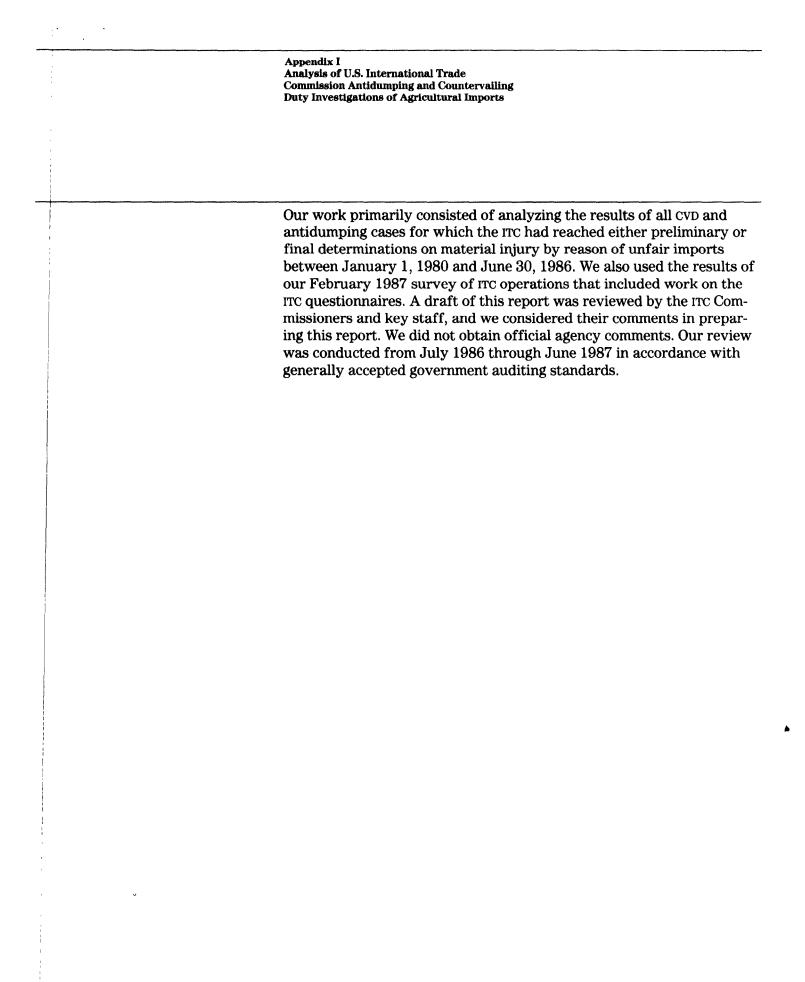
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	Appendix I Analysis of U.S. International Trade Commission Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Investigations of Agricultural Imports		
•	the 15 cases in which growers/harvesters were involved, 11 had been completed as of June 30, $1987.^1$		
	The ITC determined in 6 (54 percent) of these 11 cases that the domestic industry was materially injured by reason of the imports. (See app. IV.) In these 6 cases, the ITC satisfied its data needs from questionnaires and other information sources, such as the Department of Agriculture.		
	ITC reached negative injury determinations for the remaining five grower/harvester cases. Two of them (lamb meat and roses/Nether- lands) were terminated because preliminary investigations did not sup- port "a reasonable indication" of injury to the domestic industry by reason of imports. The other three cases (1980—fish/Canada, roses/ Columbia, and potatoes) resulted in final negative determinations of injury by the ITC.		
	In the case of fish/Canada, the ITC found that (1) any injury to U.S. fish- ermen was more likely to be caused by imports of fish products that were not the subject of the complaint, (2) domestic prices were at record highs, and (3) domestic production and employment had increased. The ITC also noted that the amount of the Canadian subsidies had declined to 1.22 percent or less. In the case of roses/Columbia, the ITC majority ruled that the U.S. industry was healthy and growing and was not mate- rially injured by the imports. In the case of potatoes, the ITC report noted that market penetration by the imports was minimal and that the prob- lems of the eastern potato farmers primarily stemmed from overproduction.		
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	In response to the request of Senator Jesse A. Helms, then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, and Sena- tor Pete Wilson, we reviewed the disposition of antidumping and CVD investigations by the ITC which involved the domestic agriculture indus- try, especially growers and harvesters. We also examined whether there were any indications that agricultural interests were disadvantaged in such investigations by the documentation requested in ITC's questionnaires.		

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Two cases were pending; one petition was withdrawn after the ITC reached a preliminary affirmative determination; and one case was terminated after the Department of Commerce reached a negative determination on alleged subsidies.



### Appendix II

### ITC Investigations Involving Agricultural Products (Jan. 1, 1980 to June 30, 1986)

Case no.	Investigation number	f investigation: Section 701, Tariff Act of Short title	Date completed	Commission vote
1	701-TA-3 P	Frozen potato products/Canada	02-11-80	Negative 0-5
2	701-TA-11 F	Cornstarch/Belgium	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-12 F	Cornstarch/Dengam	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-13 F	Cornstarch/FRG	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-14 F	Cornstarch/France	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-15 F	Cornstarch/Ireland	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-16 F	Cornstarch/Italy	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-17 F	Cornstarch/Luxembourg	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-18 F	Cornstarch/The Netherlands	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-19 F	Cornstarch/United Kingdom	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-22 F	Potato starch/Belgium	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-23 F	Potato starch/Denmark	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-24 F	Potato starch/FRG	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-25 F	Potato starch/France	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-26 F	Potato starch/Ireland	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-27 F	Potato starch/Italy	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-28 F	Potato starch/Luxembourg	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-29 F	Potato starch/The Netherlands	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-30 F	Potato starch/UK	05-01-80	Negative 0-5
3	701-TA-21 P	Roses/The Netherlands	02-12-80	Negative 0-5
4	701-TA-31 F	Canned hams/Belgium	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-32 F	Canned hams/Denmark	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-33 F	Canned hams/FRG	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-34 F	Canned hams/France	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-35 F	Canned hams/Ireland	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-36 F	Canned hams/Italy	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
k k	701-TA-37 F	Canned hams/Luxembourg	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
1	701-TA-38 F	Canned hams/The Netherlands	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
1	701-TA-39 F	Canned hams/UK	07-03-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-40 F	Fish/Canada	05-14-80	Negative 0-4
	701-TA-42 F	Tomatoes/Belgium	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-43 F	Tomatoes/Denmark	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
i t	701-TA-44 F	Tomatoes/FRG	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
,	701-TA-45 F	Tomatoes/France	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-46 F	Tomatoes/Ireland	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-47 F	Tomatoes/Italy	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-48 F	Tomatoes/Luxembourg	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-49 F	Tomatoes/The Netherlands	05-29-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-50 F	Tomatoes/UK	05-29-80	Negative 0-5

(continued)

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#### Appendix II ITC Investigations Involving Agricultural Products (Jan. 1, 1980 to June 30, 1986)

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Case no.	Investigation number	Short title	Date completed	Commission vote
7	701-TA-51 F	Butter cookies/Denmark	06-18-80	Negative 0-5
3	701-TA-52 F	Cheese/Belgium	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-53 F	Cheese/Denmark	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-54 F	Cheese/FRG	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-55 F	Cheese/France	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-56 F	Cheese/Ireland	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-57 F	Cheese/Italy	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-58 F	Cheese/Luxembourg	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-59 F	Cheese/The Netherlands	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
•	701-TA-60 F	Cheese/UK	06-24-80	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-61 F	Cheese/Norway	03-27-80	Terminated
9	701-TA-80 P	Lamb meat/New Zealand	11-05-81	Affirm. 4-2
	701-TA-80 F	Lamb meat/New Zealand	01-04-82	Terminated
IQ	701-TA-81 P	Hard-smoked herring/Canada	10-22-81	Terminated
	701-TA-82 P	Hard-smoked herring/Canada	12-17-81	Negative 1-4
11	701-TA-184 P	Orange juice/Brazil	08-30-82	Affirm. 3-0
	701-TA-184 F	Orange juice/Brazil	07-14-83	Affirm. 1-1
2	701-TA-197 P	Softwood lumber/Canada	11-22-82	Affirm. 3-0
	701-TA-198 P	Shakes & shingles/Canada	11-22-82	Affirm. 3-0
	701-TA-199 P	Fence/Canada	11-22-82	Affirm. 3-0
13	701-TA-210 P	Table wine/France	03-12-84	Negative 0-3
	701-TA-210 P	Table wine/France	12-03-85	Affirm. 5-0
	701-TA-211 P	Table wine/Italy	03-12-84	Negative 0-3
	701-TA-211 P	Table wine/Italy	12-03-85	Affirm. 5-0
4	701-TA-214 P	Lamb meat/New Zealand	06-04-84	Negative 2-4
5	701-TA-224 P	Live swine & pork/Canada	12-17-84	Affirm. 3-0
1	701-TA-224 F	Live swine & pork/Canada	07-31-85	Affirm, 2-2ª
6	701-TA-239 P	Ethyl alcohol/Brazil	04-11-85	Affirm. 5-0
	701-TA-239 F	Ethyl alcohol/Brazil	03-17-86	Negative 1-4
7	701-TA-254 P	Raspberries/Canada	08-30-85	Affirm. 5-0
	701-TA-254 F	Raspberries/Canada	12-26-85	Suspended <sup>b</sup>
8	701-TA-257 P	Groundfish/Canada	09-19-85	Affirm. 5-0°
	701-TA-257 F	Groundfish/Canada	05-08-86	Affirm. 3-3
19	701-TA-258 P	Wine/FRG	10-25-85	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-259 P	Wine/France	10-25-85	Negative 0-5
	701-TA-260 P	Wine/Italy	10-25-85	Negative 0-5

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#### Appendix II ITC Investigations Involving Agricultural Products (Jan. 1, 1980 to June 30, 1986)

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Type of investigation: Section 731, Tariff Act of 1930 (Antidumping) Case no. Investigation number Short title Date completed Comm					
1	731-TA-3 F	Sugar/Canada	03-06-80	Affirm. 3-0	
	731-TA-3 F	Sugar/Canada	10-05-81	Affirm. 2-1	
	731-TA-3 F	Sugar/Canada	04-16-82	Affirm. 4-1d	
2	732-TA-17 P	Clams/Canada	04-18-80	Negative 0-5	
3	731-TA-93 P	Frozen FF potatoes/Canada	06-13-81	Negative 1-4	
1	731-TA-115 P	Canned mushrooms/PRC	12-02-82	Affirm. 3-0	
	731-TA-115 F	Canned mushrooms/PRC	09-30-83	Terminated	
5	731-TA-124 P	Fresh potatoes/Canada	03-28-83	Affirm. 1-1	
	731-TA-124 F	Fresh potatoes/Canada	12-19-83	Negative 0-3	
3	731-TA-43 P	Roses/Colombia	06-30-81	Terminated	
	731-TA-148 P	Roses/Colombia	11-14-83	Affirm. 2-0	
	731-TA-148 F	Roses/Colombia	09-10-84	Negative 1-3	
7	731-TA-167 P	Table wine/France	03-12-84	Negative 0-3	
	731-TA-167 P	Table wine/France	12-03-85	Affirm. 5-0	
	731-TA-168 P	Table wine/Italy	03-12-84	Negative 0-3	
	731-TA-168 P	Table wine/Italy	12-03-85	Affirm. 5-0	
3	731-TA-188 P	Lamb meat/New Zealand	06-04-84	Negative 2-4	
)	731-TA-196 P	Raspberries/Canada	08-20-84	Affirm. 5-0	
	731-TA-196 F	Raspberries/Canada	06-17-85	Affirm. 5-0	
0	731-TA-199 P	Dried salted codfish/Canada	09-04-84	Affirm. 4-1	
	731-TA-199 F	Dried salted codfish/Canada	06-27-85	Affirm. 4-1	
1	731-TA-236 P	Hydrogenated castor oil/Brazil	02-11-85	Affirm. 5-0	
	731-TA-236 F	Hydrogenated castor oil/Brazil	01-27-86	Negative 0-5	
	731-TA-237 P	12-hydroxystearic acid castor oil/Brazil	02-11-85	Affirm. 5-0	
	731-TA-237 F	12-hydroxystearic acid castor oil/Brazil	01-27-86	Negative 0-5	
2	731-TA-248 P	Ethyl alcohol/Brazil	04-11-85	Affirm. 5-0	
	731-TA-248 F	Ethyl alcohol/Brazil	03-17-86	Negative 1-4	
3	731-TA-283 P	Wine/FRG	10-25-85	Negative 0-5	
1	731-TA-284 P	Wine/France	10-25-85	Negative 0-5	
	731-TA-285 P	Wine/Italy	10-25-85	Negative 0-5	
4	731-TA-287 P	Pistachio nuts/Iran	11-12-85	Affirm. 5-0	
	731-TA-287 F	Pistachio nuts/Iran	07-02-86	Affirm. 6-0	
15	731-TA-326 P	Orange juice/Brazil	06-13-86	Affirm. 5-1	
	731-TA-326 F	Orange juice/Brazil	04-13-87	Affirm. 3-2	

<sup>a</sup>Affirmative vote on live swine; negative vote on fresh, chilled, or frozen pork.

<sup>b</sup>Supension agreement negotiated under which Canada agreed to stop alleged unfair subsidies.

<sup>c</sup>Affirmative vote on whole fish; negative vote on fish fillets.

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<sup>d</sup>Includes votes by one commissioner who voted affirmative on part of the industry and negative for the remaining portion of the industry.

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### Appendix III

### Our Analysis of 10 ITC Cases Resulting in Negative Final Determinations

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	Case	Imports' market share	Import prices compared to U.S. prices/profits	Domestic prices/profits
(1)	Corn/potato starches-EC	2.76 to 1.91%	Mixed price data. No significant undercutting	Modest increases
2)	Canned hams-EC	5.5% and declining sharply.	Imports 30 to 50% higher	Increasing sales, profits
3)	Tomato products-EC (San Marzano Valley)	3 to 1.1%	Imports 5 to 60% higher	Mixed. Declining domestic price due to oversupply of U.S. tomatoes
4)	Butter cookies- Denmark	0.5%	Prices of largest importer 15 to 27% higher	Only two U.S. firms. Pepperidge Farm not being injured. Other firm's profits increasing
5)	Cheese-EC	Feta-6.4 to 5.1% Pecorino-no domestic equivalent/no injury	Feta imports 33% higher	Steadily increasing prices and sales, but rising costs caused 66% decrease net profit from 1977-79
6)	Potatoes-Canada	2.5 to 4.0%	Imports higher in 42 of 42 months	Northeast farmers incurring losses, but more because of domestic overproduction and quality standards.
7)	Fish-Canada (1980) (A) whole fish	0.9 to 1.5%	Some imports lower, but subsidy less than 1.22% and frozen imports usually lower than fresh domestic fish/fillets	No indication of injury; domestic prices at record high, production/employment increasing
	(B) Fillets	40.3 to 30.3%	Same as above	Same as above
8)	Ethyl alcohol-Brazil	8 to 25% (estimated)	Mixed. Some imports lower depending on geographic market, state subsidy. No evidence of significant under- selling; gasoline prices also major factor.	No injury per majority view. Average unit revenue rose consistently. Majority concluded U.S. industry strong and growing. Imports dropped substantially in 1985, due to Commerce imposing CVD
9)	Fresh roses-Colombia	10 to 16%, but U.S. consumption rose more than double the rise in imports.	Imports averaged 20% lower in 62 of 110 cases, but in 43 cases averaged 18% higher. Most wholesalers buying imports to supplement domestic supplies in peak demand periods.	Rising prices, sales, productivity. ITC concluded domestic industry is healthy and imports stimulated domestic production.
10)	Hydrogenated castor oil (HCO)	Significant increase in market penetration in 1984, but no figures provided.	Pattern of imports selling at lower prices, but no effect on domestic prices. Final dumping margin less than 3%. Also, Gulf Coast major market and imports enjoy cost advantage on shipping.	HCO not profitable since 1980. Price tied to world price for oil and the lone domestic producer purchasing under higher price long-term contracts, but selling at lower prices to remain competitive.

### Status of 15 Cases in Which Farmers/ Harvesters Were Directly Involved

		Ne	Negative		
		Prelim.	Final	Final affirm	Other
(1) -	Roses/Netherlands	X			
(2&3)-	Lamb meat/New Zealand	······································			
	1st case (1981-82)				Prelim. affirm. but withdrawn
1	2nd case (1984)	X			
(485)-	Table wine/EC		····		
	1st case (1984)		·····		Final pending
	2nd case (1985)				Final pending
(6) -	Orange juice/Brazil (1983)			X	
(7) -	Lumber/Canada		<u></u>		Prelim. affirm.; terminated per Commerce negative determination on subsidies
(8) -	Live swine/Canada			X	
(9) -	Raspberries/Canada			X	(a)
(10)-	Fish/Canada (1980)		X		
(11)-	Groundfish/Canada (1986)	- // - 1807 Alata Ang, Alata Alata		X	
(12)-	Fresh potatoes/Canada		X	······	
(13)-	Roses/Colombia		X		······································
(14)-	Pistachio nuts/Iran			X	
(15)-	Orange juice/Brazil (1986)			X	
Total		2	3	6	4

(<sup>a</sup>)Preliminary affirmative on CVD but suspended after Canada agreed to stop subsidies. Final affirmative on dumping.

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