

# Soybean Farmers Applaud Retaliation

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — U.S. soybean farmers are encouraged that the U.S. government has finally announced action to retaliate against the European Community (EC) in the U.S./EC oilseeds trade dispute.

Rufus Yerxa, deputy U.S. trade representative, announced U.S. intent to withdraw concessions on the imports of goods from the EC since efforts to negotiate a commercial settlement with the EC have failed.

"This has been a long and difficult dispute in which the GATT twice ruled in favor of the U.S.

position," said American Soybean Association President Gary Riedel. "We are gratified that President Bush has taken this step to uphold U.S. rights under the GATT by enforcing the 1962 trade agreement which guaranteed duty-free entry of U.S. soybeans into the EC."

In December 1987, ASA filed a Section 301 Unfair Trade Petition, charging that the EC has nullified and impaired their duty-free commitment for soybeans and soybean meal by offering lucrative subsidies to growers and processors of EC origin oilseeds at the expense

of U.S. and other imported soybeans and soymeal.

Two years later, a GATT dispute panel ruled the EC program illegal. The ruling was formally adopted by the GATT council in January 1990, and EC authorities committed to implementing the report beginning with crops harvested in 1991. Although the EC finally took action late last year, their proposed plan continued to violate previous trade agreements.

As a result, the GATT panel has, for a second time, condemned the EC's oilseed program. Negotiations to settle the ongoing controversy have stalled because the EC has failed to make adequate changes in their GATT-illegal oilseeds regime.

"We continue to view the 12 European Community nations as a major market for soybeans," said United Soybean Board chairperson Sandy Ludeman, a farmer from Tracy, Minn. "This ruling will help maximize the promotional work from our national checkoff investments. We hope President Bush's strong action will get the Europeans to cut their subsidies so U.S. soybeans can compete fairly. This should be a great boost to U.S. soybean exports and to the future profits for U.S. soybean farmers."

Riedel says the proposed \$1 billion level of concessions that will be withdrawn represents less than half of the damages suffered by U.S. soybean farmers as a result of lucrative subsidies to growers and processors of EC origin oilseeds. "This in no way compensates U.S. soybean farmers for their losses in the five years since the oilseeds case was initiated or in the years since the original agreement was made in 1962," he said. "Soybean farmers had hoped to be able to reach a successful settlement to this dispute through negotiation but the EC has, so far, been intransigent," Riedel said. "This initiative is a vital step that shows the 12-nation European Community that the United States will stand firm in enforcing GATT agreements. We urge the U.S. government to vigorously and promptly move forward."

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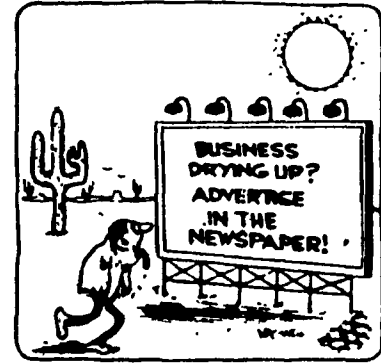
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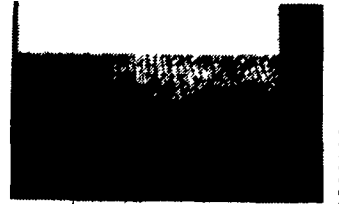


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