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Introduction: Relative Roles of States/Provinces in Regulating Agriculture and the Resulting Impact on Cross-Border Trade

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INTRODUCTION: RELATIVE ROLES OF STATES/PROVINCES IN REGULATING AGRICULTURE AND THE RESULTING IMPACT ON CROSS-BORDER TRADE.

Dirk R. Barrett, Jr.

The final topic before dinner is an agricultural issue. It is the ability of states and provinces to regulate agriculture and its effect on cross-border trade.

If I could be permitted just a couple of observations of my own, it seems there are at least three areas of similarity between the two countries in this area.

The first similarity is that it seems that every developed country is economically sensitive and politically sensitive about agriculture. Agriculture always receives substantial governmental support.

The second similarity is that the two federal systems give the upper hand to the federal government in the area of international trade.

The third similarity is that from a natural, economic standpoint, at least in a lot of the areas where there have been disputes, the basic economic, going-in conditions, between the countries are somewhat similar.

For example, consider wheat. Wheat farmers in Manitoba and North Dakota are really farming the same kinds of farmlands, just on the other sides of a historically imposed line. The same situation exists between the potato farmers in Maine and the potato farmers in New Brunswick.

We have two speakers who have had similar careers in government. They have had similar experiences with respect to negotiation and trade agreements in the agricultural area.

Mr. Brosch, on the U.S. side, started in private law practice and then joined the Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies. He represented the federal government in negotiations regarding North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the recent Uruguay round and some other bilateral agreements. He recently has returned to the private sector in a consulting area where he advises trade associations, corporations, and others in the field of international economic matters and agricultural matters.

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Mr. Gifford joins us from Canada. He has recently concluded a long career with the Department of Agriculture in Canada. He has been involved in the negotiations of significant trade agreements that have taken place, including the Tokyo round.