ROUND TABLE PANEL OVERVIEW AND WRAP-UP

John J. Murphy

I consider it an honour and a pleasure to have been invited to be a participant and an observer at this important international event. I make the following comments as a Canadian agricultural banker whose customers are highly dependent on international trade for their livelihood and the special interest they hold in the U.S. and Mexican marketplace which accounts for at least half of their exports of agricultural commodities and food products. While I am not sure as to the extent to which we have narrowed the gap at this meeting in harmonizing the agriculture and agri-food policies within our three countries, I am convinced that the dialogue and study that went into the presentations delivered at this meeting will contribute significantly to an improved marketing scenario.

One of the presenters raised the issue that perhaps the work was somewhat redundant. It was noted in the Canada-U.S. dairy dispute, rather than experts attending this meeting adjudicating on the issue, there were four lawyers, all of them from academic institutions that in fact deliberated the Canada-U.S. dairy dispute.

I would encourage the academic community as it relates to agriculture to continue its vigilance in assessing in a chronological and objective fashion the issues facing freer international trade in agriculture and food commodities. While rarely are your efforts seen as high profile, front-end issues, it is my strong opinion that the accomplishments made to date in liberalizing agriculture trade throughout the world is attributable to your efforts. I would encourage you to be as pro-active as you have been in the past, if not more so, in advancing the findings in your analysis in order that we may advance and encourage a greater degree of freer trade throughout the world.

I regard the deliberations at this meeting to be of first-class quality, highly complex and as such it is somewhat impossible to provide a critical review of each presentation. I would however suggest that the proceedings of this meeting receive wide distribution in order that others like myself can benefit from the extensive work and analysis of the issues that have been provided vis-à-vis the delivery of the papers presented at this meeting. All of us here should accept the challenge of distributing this information by whatever means possible in order that we may influence the political process in freeing up world trade in agriculture.