



**INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICY**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Minnesota Think Tank Going to Hong Kong for WTO Ministerial**

### **Group Will Promote Fair Trade and Better Agriculture Rules**

Minneapolis - The Minnesota non-profit, think tank, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) will send a delegation to Hong Kong next week to attend the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial. The delegation is organizing a Fair Trade Fair and Symposium and will lobby negotiators on agricultural trade rules.

IATP has been documenting the impacts of international trade rules on family farmers and rural communities in the U.S. and around the world for nearly 20 years. IATP staff have attended every WTO ministerial. IATP also has an office in Geneva, which reports on WTO negotiations to nongovernmental organizations around the world. IATP co-hosts an e-learning program on global trade literacy that trains stakeholders in poor countries on international trade agreements to promote sustainable development.

The WTO negotiations are currently deadlocked largely due to disagreements over agriculture trade rules. Last month, IATP released a new briefing report outlining the key agriculture issues facing WTO negotiators. The report, *Sailing Close to the Wind: Navigating the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial*, is available for free at [iatp.org](http://iatp.org).

“The WTO approach to agriculture has failed farmers in Minnesota and in poor countries,” said IATP President Mark Ritchie. “It’s time for a new approach that places the livelihoods of farmers at the forefront. The fair trade model offers some important lessons for the WTO on how to set up trade rules that actually promote rural economic development.”

Ten years ago, IATP helped establish the first U.S. fair trade certification system. In 2003, IATP, along with an international steering committee, organized the first international Fair Trade Fair and Symposium at the WTO ministerial in Cancún. In 2005, IATP and global partners will host another Fair Trade Fair and Symposium in Hong Kong across the street from the WTO Ministerial. More details can be found at [fairtradeexpo.org](http://fairtradeexpo.org).

IATP’s trade Web site—[tradeobservatory.org](http://tradeobservatory.org)—includes the latest news, reports and analysis on international trade issues. IATP’s Radio Hong Kong—[radiohongkong.org](http://radiohongkong.org)—includes reports on WTO-related stories available for download in MP3 format and through XML feeds (podcasts).

IATP’s Ben Lilliston will be available from Hong Kong during the Ministerial at: 011-852-9328-2739.

*The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works globally to promote resilient family farms, communities and ecosystems through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy. Find out more at - [iatp.org](http://iatp.org)*