

Issued: January 29, 2003.

Marilyn R. Abbott,
Secretary.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

[Investigation No. 332-449]

U.S. Market Conditions for Certain Wool Articles in 2002-04

AGENCY: International Trade Commission.

ACTION: Institution of investigation and request for public comments.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 24, 2003.

SUMMARY: Following receipt of a request from the United States Trade Representative (USTR) on December 30, 2002, the Commission instituted Investigation No. 332-449, U.S. Market Conditions for Certain Wool Articles in 2002-04, under section 332(g) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1332(g)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information, contact Lisa Ferens (202) 205-3486; lferens@usitc.gov; of the Office of Industries; for information on legal aspects, contact William Gearhart (202) 205-3091; wgearhart@usitc.gov; of the Office of the General Counsel. The media should contact Margaret O'Laughlin, Public Affairs Officer (202-205-1819). Hearing impaired individuals may obtain information on this matter by contacting the Commission's TDD terminal on (202) 205-1810. Persons with mobility impairments who will need special assistance in gaining access to the Commission should contact the Office of the Secretary at (202) 205-2000. General information about the Commission may be obtained by accessing its Internet server (<http://www.usitc.gov>). The public record for this investigation may be viewed on the Commission's electronic docket (EDIS) <http://edis.usitc.gov>.

Background

As requested by the USTR, the Commission will provide information on U.S. market conditions, including domestic demand, supply, and increases in domestic production for men's and boys' worsted wool suits, suit-type jackets, and trousers; worsted wool fabric and yarn used in the manufacture of such clothing; and wool fibers used to make such fabrics and yarn. As requested, the Commission will also provide, to the extent practicable, data on:

(1) Increases or decreases in sales and production of the subject domestically-produced worsted wool fabrics;

(2) Increases or decreases in domestic production and consumption of the subject apparel items;

(3) The ability of domestic producers of the subject worsted wool fabrics to meet the needs of domestic manufacturers of the subject apparel items in terms of quantity and ability to meet market demands for the apparel items;

(4) Sales of the subject worsted wool fabrics lost by domestic manufacturers to imports benefitting from the temporary duty reductions on certain worsted wool fabrics under HTS headings 9902.51.11 and 9902.51.12;

(5) Loss of sales by domestic manufacturers of the subject apparel items related to the inability to purchase adequate supplies of the subject worsted wool fabrics on a cost competitive basis; and

(6) The price per square meter of imports and domestic sales of the subject worsted wool fabrics. The USTR requested that the Commission provide two confidential reports. The first report will provide, to the extent information is publicly available or is available from discussions with representatives of trade and industry, an update on market conditions for the subject wool products and a summary of any major changes with respect to the above factors, for the year 2002 and year-to-date 2002-03. The Commission will transmit this report to the USTR by October 27, 2003. The Commission will transmit the second report, providing data for 2003 and year-to-date 2003-04, by October 25, 2004. The USTR requested that the Commission issue public versions of the reports as soon as possible thereafter, with any business confidential information deleted.

In the request letter, the USTR noted that section 5102 of the Trade Act of 2002, signed by the President on August 6, 2002, amends headings 9902.51.21 and 9902.51.12 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) to extend, through December 31, 2005, the temporary reductions of tariffs and the tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) in those headings for imports of certain worsted wool fabric, certified by the importer as suitable for use in men's or boys' suits, suit-type jackets, and trousers. The USTR also noted that, under section 504 of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, the President is required to monitor U.S. market conditions, including domestic demand, domestic supply, and increases in domestic production for men's and boys' worsted wool suits, suit-type jackets, and

trousers; worsted wool fabric and yarn used in the manufacture of such clothing; and wool fibers used in the manufacture of such fabrics and yarn. He noted that the President, in Proclamation 7383 (December 1, 2000), delegated to the USTR the authority to monitor these market conditions.

Written Submissions

The Commission intends to hold a public hearing in connection with the second report under this investigation, but not the first report. However, interested parties are invited to submit written statements (original and 14 copies) concerning the matters to be addressed by the Commission in its first report on this investigation at the earliest practical date, and such statements should be received no later than the close of business on June 9, 2003. Commercial or financial information that a person desires the Commission to treat as confidential must be submitted on separate sheets of paper, each marked "Confidential Business Information" at the top. All submissions requesting confidential treatment must conform with the requirements of section 201.6 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (19 CFR 201.6). The Commission's Rules do not authorize filing of submissions with the Secretary by facsimile or electronic means, except to the extent permitted by section 201.8 of the Commission's Rules, as amended, 67 FR 68036 (November 8, 2002). All written submissions, except for confidential business information, will be made available in the Office of the Secretary to the Commission for inspection by interested parties. The Commission may include confidential business information submitted in the course of this investigation in its reports to the USTR. In the public version of these reports, however, the Commission will not publish confidential business information in a manner that would reveal the individual operations of the firm supplying the information. All submissions should be addressed to the Secretary, U.S. International Trade Commission, 500 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20436.

List of Subjects: Tariffs, imports, wool, fabric, and suits.

By order of the Commission.

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