



**International Grains Council**  
**Conseil international des céréales**  
**Consejo Internacional de Cereales**  
**Международный совет по зерну**

## **INTERNATIONAL GRAINS COUNCIL: 60 YEARS OF SUCCESSIVE AGREEMENTS**

### **BEFORE 1949: THE EARLY YEARS**

1927	The International Economic Conference (Geneva) considers worldwide distress in agriculture.
1930-31	Sixteen international conferences devoted to wheat and other cereals, either exclusively or in connection with other agricultural and economic problems.
1931	First International Wheat Conference (Rome, March): plan to establish export quotas (not implemented).  Second International Wheat Conference (London, May): unsuccessful because of disagreements over export quotas and controls.
1933	Third International Wheat Conference (London, August): <b>Established First International Wheat Agreement</b> , with comprehensive export quotas and life of two years. Wheat Advisory Committee set up in London.
1934	Agreement proves ineffective in the face of over-shipments by one exporting country. Wheat Advisory Committee continues in being.
1939	Wheat Advisory Committee sets up Preparatory Committee (January) to draft a comprehensive wheat agreement, after a severe decline in world wheat prices following bumper 1938 crop. Basis of agreement reached in September but work stopped because of outbreak of war in Europe.
1941-42	Fourth International Wheat Conference (Washington) between Governments of Argentina, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and United States. Approves Memorandum of Agreement and attached draft Convention. The latter, which sets out a comprehensive international control agreement, is not, however, brought into effect.
1942	International Wheat Council (IWC), superseding Wheat Advisory Committee, comes into being with headquarters in Washington (August).
1947	Fifth International Wheat Conference (London, March and April) discusses draft agreement in the form of a multilateral purchase and sales contract, but fails to reach successful conclusion.
1948	Sixth International Wheat Conference (Washington, January-March) agrees terms of International Wheat Agreement. US Senate does not ratify and fails to come into force. New stimulus given at FAO Conference in November by President Truman who declares confidence in value of wheat agreement. Preparatory Committee (December) recommends US Government to convene new International Wheat Conference.

## LONDON, 1949: THE IGC AND 60 YEARS OF SUCCESSIVE AGREEMENTS

1949	Seventh International Wheat Conference (Washington, January-March). Successfully completes negotiations for multilateral contract type of agreement with price ranges and guaranteed sales. <b>International Wheat Agreement, 1949</b> enters into force in August. Council's seat moved to London.
1953	Conference in Washington (April) establishes broadly similar <b>International Wheat Agreement, 1953</b> , which comes into force in August.
1956	IWA 1953 replaced, in turn, by similar <b>International Wheat Agreement, 1959</b> with broader scope.
1962	IWA 1959 replaced by broadly similar <b>International Wheat Agreement, 1962</b> .
1963-67	GATT "Kennedy Round" Multilateral Trade Negotiations: include discussion of new and comprehensive grains agreement.
1965 & 66	IWA 1962 twice extended for one-year periods while GATT negotiations continue.
1967	GATT Memorandum of Agreement on basic elements of world grains arrangement (May). International Wheat Conference (Rome, August) establishes text of International Grains Arrangement, 1967, to operate for three years from 1 <sup>st</sup> July 1968. Meanwhile, IWA 1962 extended but price and other substantive economic provisions suspended after period of abundant supplies and severe pressure on prices.
1968	<b>International Grains Arrangement, 1968</b> (IGA) enters into force on 1 <sup>st</sup> July. Consists of two separate legal instruments: the <b>Wheat Trade Convention, 1967</b> (WTC) and the Food Aid Convention, 1967 (FAC) linked by a common Preamble. WTC provides for maximum and minimum prices and related rights and obligations. FAC provides for annual supply of over 4 m. tons of grain as food aid to developing countries
1971	Negotiating Conference at Geneva (UNCTAD) unable to find solutions to technical problems regarding economic provisions under Wheat Trade Convention. Agrees, however, to establish <b>International Wheat Agreement, 1971</b> which enters into force on 1 <sup>st</sup> July. <b>Wheat Trade Convention, 1971</b> has no substantive economic provisions but provides for constant review of wheat market conditions under Advisory Sub-Committee on Market Conditions.
1973	Tokyo declaration inaugurates new round of multilateral trade negotiations in GATT.
1974	IWA 1971 extended for one year by Protocol (July). World Food Conference (November) called by United Nations as result of mounting food crisis. Recommendations on food security and increased food aid. IWC agrees to set up Preparatory Group to examine bases of a new international agreement (November).
1975	In response to World Food Conference Resolution, US Government convenes <b>ad hoc</b> meeting in London (February) to discuss question of international grain reserves.
1975-77	Meetings of Preparatory Group evolve the provisional negotiating text of a new Wheat Trade Convention. This contemplates the establishment of an internationally-coordinated system of nationally-held reserve stocks, aimed at reducing excessive fluctuations in world market prices and enhancing world food security. IWA 1971 extended by Protocols.

1978	Special Session of IWC (January) agrees to request Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to convene negotiating conference in Geneva.
1978-79	UN Negotiating Conference holds three sessions, starting February 1978, but eventually adjourns in February 1979 without completing its work because of disagreements over some key issues (price levels trigger, volume of stocks and special provisions for developing countries). IWA extended again for one year (1978) and two years (1979). At session in November 1979 Council recognizes there is little prospect of successfully negotiating in the foreseeable future a new Wheat Trade Convention on the bases evolved at the Conference. Accordingly establishes a Special Committee to consider alternative proposals for the preparation of a new agreement.
1980	Food Aid Committee completes negotiation of new Food Aid Convention, 1980 with much-increased levels of food aid (a minimum of 7.6 m. tons annually).
1980-81	Council develops more flexible "alternative approach" for the negotiation of a new Wheat Trade Convention, still based on the idea of internationally coordinated stockholding. Found to be technically feasible but, in November 1981, the Council recognizes that it does not provide a negotiable basis for a new Convention because of serious conceptual difficulties on the part of some countries. Meanwhile IWA extended for a further two years (July 1981).
1982-84	Council implements measures to improve effectiveness of current WTC. Includes, in particular, strengthening the Council's role in disseminating information and in encouraging discussion of market factors, especially in times of market stress. Agrees to extend the IWA for a further three years to June 1986 but emphasizes need to pursue vigorously search for a new agreement.
1984	At the invitation of Canada, Council holds its 100 <sup>th</sup> Session and special seminar in Ottawa (June).
1986	New <b>Wheat Trade Convention, 1986</b> , expanding coverage to incorporate coarse grains (barley, maize (corn), sorghum, oats, rye, millet, triticale). FAC renewed.
1992	Launch of annual IGC Grains Conference
1995	New <b>Grains Trade Convention 1995</b> , recognising coverage of wheat and all coarse grains. Also new FAC (adding pulses), both under International Grains Agreement 1995.
1999	Expands web-based member information services to include daily market monitor (in addition to weekly and monthly reports).  New Food Aid Convention 1999, widened to fuller list of products, also provided for value contributions (in addition to tonnage).

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| 2000 | IGC extends market information system to include rice and soyabeans.   |
| 2007 | Council discusses tightening global grains and oilseeds market, especially wheat, and surging ocean freight rates, with substantial impact on developing countries.  |
| 2008 | IGC members exchange views on sharp rises in world prices, with greatly increased volatility, but note improved prospects for the next crop.<br><br>Agree to add rice to the GTC definition of grains (with effect from 1 July 2009) and adopt resolution to include oilseeds in its information services. |
| 2009 | GTC, when extended on 1 July 2009, to formally add rice to the definition of grains.<br><br>Launches weekly Rice Market Bulletin for members.  |