

Introduction to the Sugar Policy Series¹

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The sugar policy series discusses policy issues facing the U.S. sweetener industry in general and Florida's sweetener industry in particular. From both a domestic and an international perspective, the industry is at a crucial point. Although no major changes have been made to the sugar program in the last Farm Bills, sugar has continued to be one of the most controversial commodities during the debates in the U.S. Congress. The final results of the Uruguay Round of the Generalized Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), approved in December 1993, took effect in July 1995. The signed agreement contained reductions on tariff and non-tariff barriers as a starting point for trade liberalization. GATT's successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO), is working for freer trade. However, very little has been done in the area of subsidy reductions. In addition, the United States and most of the developed world have experienced a tremendous growth in competitive products, including both natural and artificial sweeteners. These complex domestic and international policy issues, combined with increased competition from other products, has transformed the

previous sugar market into a sweetener market. This series is intended to keep the interested reader informed and updated on major aspects of domestic and international changes in sweetener policy.

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