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## TRADE

# Brazil may fight O.J. tariffs

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**SAO PAULO** - Brazil may fight a U.S. government decision to maintain import tariffs on orange juice at the World Trade Organization, Brazil's Foreign Ministry said.

Brazil's government will hold off on making a decision until a ruling by the U.S. International Trade Commission, expected Feb. 21, on the orange juice tariffs before taking the complaint to the WTO, the ministry said in a statement released this week in Brasilia.

"The government reaffirms its preoccupation with the possibility that the decision harms the country's exports and that, additional to the very high tax of \$418 per metric ton, it makes it harder for our producers to enter the U.S. market," the ministry's statement said "We will verify if WTO rules are being carefully observed." by the U.S. government.

Brazil, the world's No. 1 orange juice producer, dropped a WTO challenge against a Florida state tax on imports in May 2004 after the state cut duty to about \$13 per ton from \$40.

The U.S. Commerce Department reduced import tariffs on orange juice from Brazil Jan. 9 after reviewing a second set of duties imposed in August. The United States cut most maximum tariffs to 19 percent from 31 percent, after the department found that Brazil's Sucocitrico Cutrale SA and Fischer SA Agroindustria were still dumping juice below cost.