

Thousands In Panama Protest Free Trade Talks

DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

July 15, 2004 11:10 p.m.

PANAMA CITY, Panama (AP)--Thousands of students, activists and farmers marched through downtown Panama City Thursday to protest U.S.-Panama free trade talks taking place in another part of the city.

The demonstrators demanded that the talks be halted, claiming that trade openings would devastate Panama's farm sector.

U.S. negotiators have already reportedly turned down Panama's request to keep sensitive agricultural products like basic grains, meat and milk out of the talks, whose current round is scheduled to conclude Friday.

Panama wants to gain greater openings for merchant shipping under the accord.

The demonstrators marched to the presidential residence, chanting slogans against free trade, as the talks went on without interruption at a local convention center miles away.

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