



Organization
Mandate
de la Santé
Animale

World
Organization
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Health

Organización
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de Sanidad
Animal

International Trade and the SPS Agreement (WTO)

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- Recognition of the OIE as a reference organisation for international standards (one of the "3 sisters")



Legal framework for international trade

- Historically the General agreement on tariffs and trade (GATT) had been working on the reduction and elimination of tariffs and subsidies in international trade.



WTO and SPS Agreement

- During the Uruguay Round of the 1980s and early 1990s, the GATT turned its attention to agriculture and particularly the sanitary aspects of agricultural trade.
- One of the most significant outcomes of the Uruguay Round was the transformation of the GATT into the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** and the signing in 1994 of the Agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (**SPS Agreement**).



SPS Agreement

- SPS Agreement sets out the legal framework for safe international trade regarding public health, and animal and plant health. Its underlying objective is to ensure that governments do not use food safety and animal and plant health requirements as unjustified trade barriers to protect their domestic agricultural industries from import competition.



SPS Agreement

- The SPS Agreement ensures that governments can give health protection priority over trade in that they have the sovereign right to impose restrictions on imports when these are necessary to protect human, animal or plant health from certain risks. However, governments need to be able to demonstrate that the trade restriction is indeed necessary to protect health; that is, that there is scientific evidence of unacceptable health risks in the absence of protective measure(s)



SPS Agreement

- Where there is not sufficient scientific evidence to demonstrate a health risk, a government can nonetheless take a precautionary approach and provisionally impose a measure. In these cases, further scientific evidence must be sought to enable the provisional measure to be reviewed within a reasonable period of time.



SPS Agreement

- The SPS Agreement also applies to the protection of animals health from contaminated feed, or from pests and diseases, and to protection of plant health from pests and diseases. Finally, measures to protect a country from damage by the spread of pests are covered in the SPS Agreement.



Standard-setting organisations

- As the WTO is not a technical organisation, it recognises and relies on three standard-setting organisations.
- For the purposes of animal health and zoonoses, it recognises the standards, guidelines and recommendations the **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)** as an appropriate basis for a country's sanitary measures.



Standard-setting organisations

- For food safety, it recognises the standards, guidelines and recommendations of the **Codex Alimentarius** ;and,
- for plant health, those developed under the auspices of the Secretariat of the **International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)**



The "3 sisters"

Standard-setting organisations



Codex = Codex Alimentarius Commission (FAO/WHO)
OIE = World Organisation for Animal Health
IPPC = International Plant Protection Convention (FAO)



New responsibility

- The WTO SPS Agreement has conferred new responsibility on these three international organizations by encouraging WTO members to harmonise their sanitary and phytosanitary measures with standards, guidelines and recommendations produced by those organisations.



Thank you for your attention



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