



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

The WTO SPS Agreement and the 'three sisters' concept of ISSOs; specific trade concerns (STC) with respect to poultry and poultry products

WOAH Standards Facilitating safe international trade Commodity: poultry meat

(Kenya, 29 July 2026, virtual)

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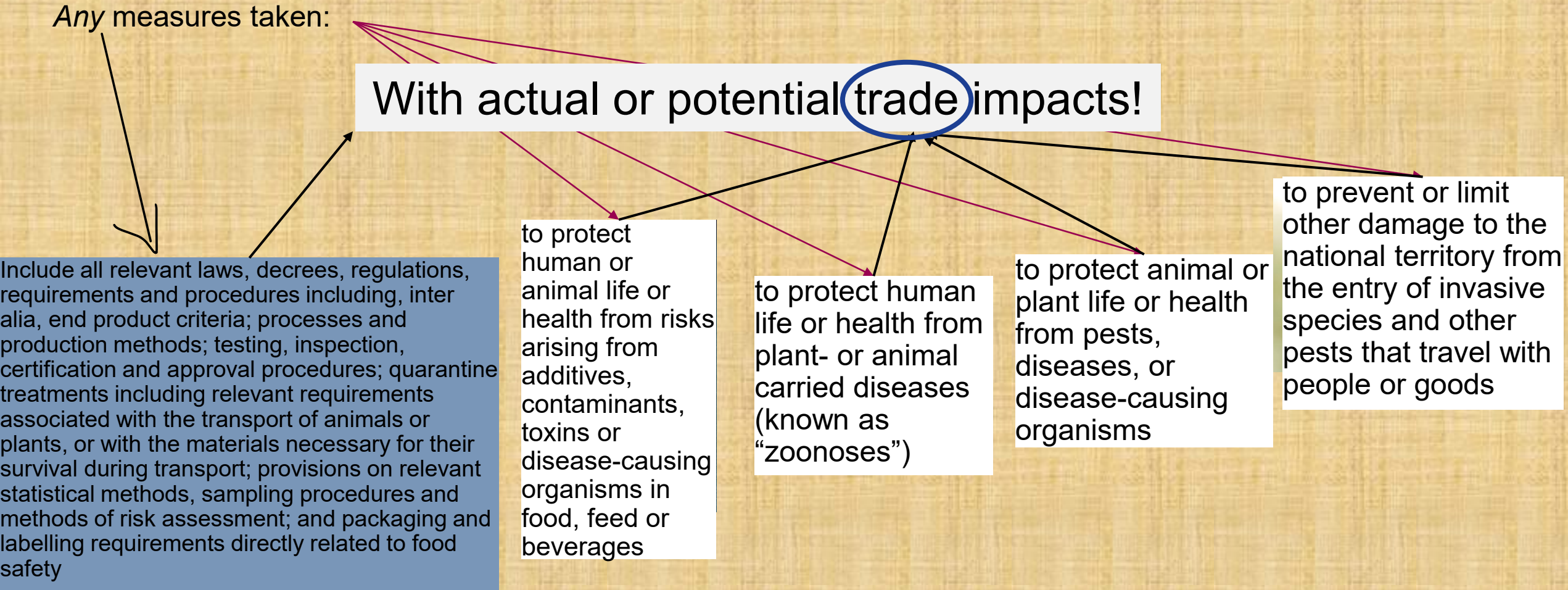
Balance: basic rights and obligations

Members **have the right** to take sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures necessary for the protection of human, animal or plant life or health, provided that such measures are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement

Under the GATT this right existed, but had to be defended as an exception: GATT Art. XX(b.):
“necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health” + chapeau



Types of SPS measures covered by the Agreement



Scientific justification & harmonization

Risk assessment: SPS measures should be based as far as possible on the analysis and assessment of objective scientific data and the determination of the existence of at least one of the risks covered by the Agreement.

Harmonization with international standards: the Agreement incentivizes Members to make sure their SPS measures conform with, or are based on, international standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by:

For food safety, the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (**Codex**);

For animal health, the World Organisation for Animal Health (**WOAH** - previously known as OIE); and

For plant health, the International Plant Protection Convention (**IPPC**), based in FAO.



Exception! (Art. 5.7): In cases where relevant scientific evidence is insufficient, a Member may provisionally adopt sanitary or phytosanitary measures on the basis of available pertinent information, including that from the relevant international organizations as well as from sanitary or phytosanitary measures applied by other Members. In such circumstances, Members shall seek to obtain the additional information necessary for a more objective assessment of risk and review the sanitary or phytosanitary measure accordingly within a reasonable period of time.

Transparency

Members shall notify changes in their SPS measures and shall provide information on their SPS measures

Avoiding bad surprises



Cementing trust between trading partners



Using [ePing](#) to make life easier



SPS Committee

The SPS Committee reviews how Members are complying with the Agreement, discusses issues that may impact on trade and maintains close cooperation with technical organizations in the field.

Solving problems

Reviewing the operation of the agreement

Info sharing on new developments

SPS Specific trade concerns on poultry meat (HS0207)

Highlights:

- A total of approximately **93 STCs** retrieved from the ePing platform
- **Most of them related to:**
 - HPAI, other diseases
 - delayed authorizations,
 - lack of recognition of regional conditions, etc.

Area	Title	Member(s) raising	Member(s) supporting	Member(s) responding	Last time raised ▾
> SPS	China's import restrictions due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (ID 406)	European Union; United States	European Union; United States	China	24/06/2026
> SPS	Colombia's import restrictions due to African swine fever (ID 580)	European Union		Colombia	24/06/2026
> SPS	South Africa's import restrictions on poultry due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (ID 431)	European Union	Argentina; United Kingdom; United States	South Africa	24/06/2026
> SPS	The Dominican Republic's undue delays in the authorization process for exports of animal products from Costa Rica (ID 581)	Costa Rica		Dominican Republic	24/06/2026
> SPS	The Philippines' trade restrictions on imports of meat (ID 466)	European Union; Russian Federation	Russian Federation	Philippines	11/03/2026
> SPS	Viet Nam's procedure for the listing of exporting establishments - Circular 04/2024 (ID 608)	European Union	United States	Viet Nam	05/11/2025
> SPS	Japan's restrictions on poultry meat (ID 601)	Argentina		Japan	19/03/2025
> SPS	Thailand's HPAI restrictions on live poultry and poultry meat (ID 573)	Brazil		Thailand	20/03/2024
> SPS	Korea's import restrictions on poultry due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (ID 456)	European Union	Russian Federation	Republic of Korea	12/07/2023
> SPS	Indonesias food safety measures affecting horticultural products and animal products (ID 414)	Philippines		Indonesia	25/03/2021
> SPS	Thailands approval procedures for imports of pork and other animal products (ID 465)	European Union; Brazil		Thailand	07/11/2019

SPS Specific trade concerns on poultry meat (HS0207) – some examples

South Africa's import restrictions on poultry due to highly pathogenic avian influenza ([ID 431](#))

The European Union reiterated its concerns regarding country-wide import bans imposed by South Africa on EU member States after HPAI outbreaks which, in the EU opinion, were against the EU regionalization system, lacked scientific justification and disregarded WOA's Terrestrial Code. Import bans persisted even though the European Union had provided extensive information on its veterinary services, policy, and regionalization systems, and despite South Africa's intention to review the procedure for resuming trade after regaining HPAI-free status and its commitments at the EU-South Africa summit in March 2025 to facilitate imports of poultry from disease-free areas in the European Union. South Africa had submitted the document "South African National Strategy on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Regionalization" which, in the EU opinion, was not compliant with WOA standards and South Africa's SPS obligations and further delayed the acceptance of WOA-self declaration from EU member States. Open to bilateral discussion, the European Union urged South Africa to comply with its commitments and recognize the EU regionalization system, as South Africa had done with other trading partners.

South Africa reaffirmed its adherence to WOA guidelines and approved options for the safe trade of animals and animal products, including zoning, compartmentalization, and safe commodities. After sharing its HPAI strategy document with the European Union in June 2025, South Africa had received Belgium's application for regionalization, which was under review. South Africa recalled that it undertook trade with EU member States individually, rather than with the European Union as a bloc. To conclude, South Africa further noted that in February 2026 both Members had agreed to hold a technical meeting regarding regionalization.

Australia - Undue delays in Australia's approval process for chicken meat ([ID 402](#))

Chile expressed concerns in relation to the Australian Government's delays in approving Chilean exports of poultry products. Chile had first expressed interest in gaining access to the Australian poultry meat market in 2008, subsequent to which a formal request was submitted in June 2013 to the Department of Agriculture. Since then, Chile had taken several actions in order to gain access to the Australian market, which included reaffirming its interest in April 2014, at the request of Australia. Chile noted that it had once again indicated its interest to export poultry meat to Australia at a bilateral meeting on the Free Trade Agreement held in October 2014, following which Chile had been requested to submit information on Australian importers that would import poultry from Chile, in order to start the assessment process. Noting its optimal animal health conditions and efficient sanitary health services, Chile requested Australia to comply with the obligations of the SPS Agreement, particularly in relation to Articles 2.2, 5.4, 6, and Annex C (1a).

Australia responded that its Generic Import Risk Analysis Report for Chicken Meat (chicken meat IRA) for the importation of chicken meat from all countries, including Chile, had been released in 2008. The IRA recommended that the importation of chicken meat be permitted, subject to import conditions for nine disease agents of biosecurity concerns such as notifiable avian influenza virus, among others. Australia invited Chile to provide a proposed health certificate for the export of chicken meat to Australia based on the import conditions in the chicken meat IRA.

In November 2022, information was received from Chile on the resolution of this STC ([G/SPS/GEN/2062/Rev.1](#), 8 November 2022).

Recent discussions & new developments

Sixth Review
(G/SPS/74),
March 2025

[Working Group](#) on Transparency

[Mentoring](#) system: extended!

[Thematic sessions](#) on SDT, AMR, MRLs, Regionalization, New Tools and Technologies, hitchhiker pests, transparency in sampling and testing, etc...

Thank you!

Any questions?

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SPS Gateway:

<http://www.wto.org/sps>

