INFORMATION RETRIEVAL ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (SPS)

Contents

International
Trade
Centre

This bulletin provides information on how exporters can obtain information on current and future sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), conformity assessment procedures as well as notifications to the WTO, for food and agricultural products in their export markets.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This bulletin provides information on how you – as an exporter – can obtain information on current and future sanitary and phytosanitary measures and control, inspection and approval procedures for food and agricultural products in your export markets.[1] This bulletin also indicates how you can keep abreast of developments of interest to you in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

The definitions given below are reproduced from the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)[2]. The WTO Agreement on SPS defines the rights and obligations of WTO Members in relation to their use of food safety standards, biosecurity controls and similar requirements.

The following definition is taken from Annex A of the SPS Agreement:
"*Sanitary or phytosanitary measure* - Any measure applied:

(a) to protect animal or plant life or health within the territory of the Member from risks arising from the entry, establishment or spread of pests, diseases, disease-carrying organisms or disease-causing organisms;

(b) to protect human or animal life or health within the territory of the Member from risks arising from additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms in foods, beverages or feedstuffs;

(c) to protect human life or health within the territory of the Member from risks arising from diseases carried by animals, plants or products thereof, or from the entry, establishment or spread of pests; or

(d) to prevent or limit other damage within the territory of the Member from the entry, establishment or spread of pests.

Sanitary or phytosanitary measures include all relevant laws, decrees, regulations, requirements and procedures including, *inter alia*, end product criteria; processes and production methods; testing, inspection, certification and approval procedures; quarantine treatments including relevant requirements associated with the transport of animals or plants, or with the materials necessary for their survival during transport; provisions on relevant statistical methods, sampling procedures and methods of risk assessment; and packaging and labelling requirements directly related to food safety".

Sanitary measures are used to cover regulations whose basic objective is to ensure food safety, or to prevent animal-borne pests and diseases from entering a country. Where the objective of the regulation is to ensure that imported plant varieties do not bring into a country plant-borne pests and diseases, they are referred to as *phytosanitary measures.*

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[1] See "Information Retrieval on Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment Procedures", International Trade Centre, EQB 72 (2002) for information related to standards and technical regulations of industrial and agricultural products in export markets (http://www.intracen.org/eqm)

[2] Source: WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures - Annex A – Definitions (http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/is-sps.doc)

SPS measures can take many forms. Examples of SPS measures include the following:

- Requiring animals and animal products to come from disease-free areas
- Testing of products for microbiological contaminants
- Mandating a specific fumigation treatment for products
- Setting maximum allowable levels of pesticide residues in food.

The following definition is taken from Annex A of the SPS Agreement:
"*International standards, guidelines and recommendations*:

(a)   for food safety, the standards, guidelines and recommendations established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission relating to food additives, veterinary drug and pesticide residues, contaminants, methods of analysis and sampling, and codes and guidelines of hygienic practice;

(b)   for animal health and zoonoses, the standards, guidelines and recommendations developed under the auspices of the International Office of Epizootics;

(c)   for plant health, the international standards, guidelines and recommendations developed under the auspices of the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention in cooperation with regional organizations operating within the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention; and

(d)   for matters not covered by the above organizations, appropriate standards, guidelines and recommendations promulgated by other relevant international organizations open for membership to all Members, as identified by the Committee".

2.   INFORMATION ON SPS MEASURES

2.1   Information on current SPS measures

A number of options are available for obtaining information on current SPS measures and these are given below:

- If your country is a WTO Member it has already set up or will set up a national SPS enquiry point. You can request your national enquiry point to put forward your request for information to its counterpart in the country to which you wish to export.

- If your country is not a WTO Member, you can contact the national SPS enquiry point in your target market. Even though national SPS enquiry points are not obliged to respond to enquiries coming from non-WTO Members, they will rarely refuse to do so.

- It becomes a little bit more difficult to obtain information if your target market does not have a national SPS enquiry point. You will have to deal with other official sources (such as embassies or the ministries

responsible for agriculture, health or commerce) either in your country or abroad.

- Should the above fail, then the only way open for you is to yourself conduct a search in your target market. It can be a frustrating task to find your way through the bureaucracies; obtaining the help of a local partner will ease your way through the maze.

All WTO members are required to establish and identify at least one enquiry point to respond to requests for information on SPS measures. The list of SPS national enquiry points can be obtained from the WTO website[3]. These lists are updated regularly. The national SPS enquiry points are listed in the G/SPS/ENQ document series of the WTO[4]. Information about the contact details of the SPS enquiry points in a selected country can also be obtained from the recently developed WTO SPS Information Management System[5].

2.2   Information on future SPS measures

Members are requested to set up a national notification authority at central government level for the notification of SPS measures that differ from the relevant international standards, guides or recommendations, and which may have a significant impact on trade. In this way, the WTO Agreement on SPS tries to ensure that the whole system of SPS measures is open and transparent.

The purpose of notification is to allow interested parties (usually trading partners whose trade will be affected by the SPS measures) to comment on the draft measure and for changes to be made. Members shall normally allow a period of at least 60 days from the date of the circulation of the notification to respond.

Notifications are sent to the WTO Secretariat in Geneva, which circulates them to all member countries. Notifications go to the diplomatic missions in Geneva, after which they are sent to relevant organizations, in their counties.

The WTO Secretariat posts individual notifications (document code G/SPS/N/*) and monthly list of notifications (document code G/SPS/GEN* and keyword "notifications") on the WTO website[6].

The received notifications are also accessible and easily researchable on the WTO Secretariat's SPS Information Management System (http://spsims.wto.org).

Individual enterprises or industry associations should contact their national enquiry point and request them to forward notifications of interest to them. They should send their comments back to the SPS enquiry point within the required time, to allow their governments to defend their interests by responding to the notifications at

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[3] http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_e.htm#enquiry
[4] Alternatively the same list can be obtained using the search engine on the WTO website: http://docsonline.wto.org/gen_home.asp and then click on *Simple Search* and type *G/SPS/ENQ* in the document symbol search field
[5] http://spsims.wto.org/web/pages/settings/country/Selection.aspx
[6] http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_e.htm

WTO. These notifications can also be received electronically by e-mail, by subscribing to the WTO mailing list. The WTO Secretariat sends notifications regularly and only in the original language (English, French and Spanish). The subscription to the mailing list can be done through the WTO website[7].

An example of a well-developed response system to notifications is the Australian national SPS Enquiry Point, known as the SPS Contact Point. This Enquiry Point sits within the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). It distributes SPS notifications to interested stakeholders within Australia, obtains full texts of notifications (i.e. details of measures), provides Australian SPS notifications to the WTO, and coordinates Australian comments on other members' notifications. See http://www.affa.gov.au for more information.

3.   CONTROL, INSPECTION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES[8]

The SPS Agreement requires that testing and inspection procedures used by governments to enforce SPS measures do not themselves act as unnecessary trade barriers. The basic requirement is that any such procedures should not be less favourable for imported products than they are for domestic goods, and should be no more than what is necessary to ensure compliance. This applies for time delays, information requirements, fees, sampling procedures, sitting of facilities, etc.[9]

Some countries have national approval procedures or "positive list" systems whereby only explicitly approved additives or tolerances for contaminants are permitted. In these cases, the SPS Agreement requires that the country consider the use of a relevant international standard as the basis for allowing import access until they have made a final safety determination.

Information about Control, Inspection and Approval Procedures can be obtained using the methodology for SPS Measures indicated in Section 2 above.

Many developed countries may maintain facilities to provide information on import entry requirements independently of their SPS enquiry points. An example is the Australian ICON (Import CONditions) database that is available through the website of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry[10]. Such sites can easily be accessed via the net, and also contain information about who to contact for more detailed information. By using these facilities intending exporters can short-circuit any deficiencies in their own local SPS Enquiry Point.

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[7]Subscription can be done by following the instructions available on http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_mailing_list_e.htm
[8] These procedures are included in SPS measures
[9] See Annex C of the SPS Agreement for further information
[10] See http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/import/icon-icd.

4. INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS DEALING WITH SPS MEASURES

4.1 International Standards

The SPS Agreement encourages, but does not require, countries to harmonize their SPS measures, to the greatest extent possible, by basing their health measures on the relevant international standards.[11] The SPS Agreement defines harmonization as: "the establishment, recognition, and application of common sanitary and phytosanitary measures by different countries." The objective is to reduce unnecessary variances between countries' health-related measures and technical standards and thereby prevent unnecessary trade conflicts and disruptions.

The SPS Agreement recognizes three main international standard-setting bodies (Codex Alimentarius Commission, International Office of Epizootics[12], International Plant Protection Convention) as the official entities for developing health-related standards, guidelines and recommendations[13]. The information listed below is taken from the websites of these international standard-setting bodies.

4.1.1 Codex Alimentarius Commission http://www.codexalimentarius.net

Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), commonly known as Codex, created in 1963 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to protect the health of consumers and assure fair practices in food trade. Codex sets standards on food quality and safety, establishes guidelines and/or codes of hygienic or technological practice. In addition, CAC sets maximum levels for food additives and veterinary drugs and maximum limits for pesticide residues in foodstuffs.

The Codex Alimentarius (the accumulated body of standards, guidelines, etc., made by the Codex Alimentarius Commission) has become the global reference point for consumers, food producers and processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade.

The Codex Alimentarius system presents a unique opportunity for all countries to join the international community in formulating and harmonizing food standards and ensuring their global implementation. It also allows them a role in the development of codes governing hygienic processing practices and recommendations relating to compliance with those standards.

All the Codex Official Standards are free and downloadable from the Codex website, http://www.codexalimentarius.net.

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[11] See Article 3 "*Harmonization*" of the SPS Agreement
[12] In French : Office International des Epizooties (OIE)
[13] See Annex A "*International standards, guidelines and recommendations*" of the SPS Agreement

4.1.2 International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
http://www.ippc.int

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is a multilateral treaty to secure action to prevent the spread and introduction of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control. It is governed by the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), which adopts International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). The Convention has been deposited with the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since its initial adoption by the Conference of FAO in 1951. The IPPC Secretariat coordinates the activities of the Convention. IPPC aims to provide a framework and forum for international cooperation, harmonization and technical exchange in collaboration with National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs). In the facilitation of global trade, IPPC endeavours to ensure that phytosanitary measures have a scientific basis, rather than being used as unjustified trade barriers, and to provide a mechanism for dispute settlement.

The application of the IPPC is much wider than the protection of cultivated plants. The Convention extends to the protection of natural flora and plant products. It includes both direct and indirect damage by pests (thus including weeds). The provisions extend to cover conveyances, containers, storage places, soil and other objects or material capable of harbouring or spreading pests.

International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures are distributed by the IPPC Secretariat to all FAO Members, plus the Executive/Technical Secretariats of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations[14].

Adopted ISPMs are also available on the IPPC website, http://www.ippc.int. As decided by the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures in 2005, the standards have also been published as a book. The 2005 edition of the book of ISPMs is available on the IPPC website in English, French and Spanish, and individual standards are available as extracts from the book. Chinese and Arabic standards are provided when electronic files are available.

4.1.3 World Organization for Animal Health or Office International des Epizooties (OIE)   http://www.oie.int

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE, from its French name, Office International des Epizooties) is an intergovernmental organization created by an international agreement in 1924. The mission of OIE is:

- To act as an international information point on the occurrence and cause of animal diseases and how to control them;

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[14] Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission, Caribbean Plant Protection Commission, Comité Regional de Sanidad Vegetal para el Cono Sur, European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization, Inter-African Phytosanitary Council, Junta del Acuerdo de Cartagena, North American Plant Protection Organization, Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria, Pacific Plant Protection Organization

- To coordinate internationally the development and dissemination of research on the surveillance and control of animal diseases; and

- To harmonize standards and regulations for trade in animals and animal products among member countries.

The OIE develops and publishes two types of international health standards for animal and animal products. These are: (i) trade standards – contained in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and the Aquatic Animal Health Code – aiming to assure the sanitary safety of international trade in terrestrial animal and aquatic animals and their products; and (ii) biological standards – contained in the Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals and the Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals – providing a harmonised approach to disease diagnosis by describing internationally agreed laboratory diagnostic techniques.

The current editions of the OIE standards are available on the OIE website http://www.oie.int.

5. INFORMATION ON PRIVATE STANDARDS[15]

In the context of global sourcing, retailers and supermarkets increasingly require compliance with private standards supported by private food certification to ensure that the products they import are safe and are otherwise in conformity with consumer expectations in relation to environmental, health and workers' health and safety aspects.

Suppliers are not required by law to meet private standards. Although not legally binding in a regulatory sense, voluntary private standards are, de facto, increasingly becoming mandatory because of the market power of certain large retailers and importers that operate globally.

The numerous private standard-setting systems often do not recognise one another as equivalent, meaning exporters may need to collect information about and prove compliance with several different schemes.

Consolidation in food retailing may be a key factor to consider in this context. Where a small number of food retailers account for a high proportion of food sales, the options for suppliers who do not participate in either an individual or collective retailer standard scheme can be considerably reduced. Furthermore, the retailer scheme may be de facto applied as the industry norm by all actors in the supply chain. Thus the choice of whether or not to comply with a voluntary standard becomes a choice between compliance or exit from the market. In this way, the distinction between private voluntary standards and mandatory "official" or "public" requirements can blur.

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[15] The main source of the information provided under this section is WTO Document G/SPS/GEN/746

UNCTAD estimates the number of private schemes at 400 and rising. The following table gives examples of private standards and serves to demonstrate the diversity of private standards.

Table 1: Examples of Private Standards[16]

Individual firm schemes	Collective national schemes	Collective international schemes
Tesco Nature's Choice *Carrefour Filière Qualité*	Assured Food Standards British Retail Consortium (BRC) Global Standard - Food QS Qualitat Sicherheit Label Rouge Food and Drink Federation/British Retail Consortium Technical Standard for the Supply of Identity Preserved Non-Genetically Modified Food Ingredients and Product	EurepGAP (now GLOBALGAP) International Food Standard Global Food Safety Initiative ISO 22000: Food safety management systems Safe Quality Food (SQF) 1000 and 2000 ISO 22005: Traceability in the feed and food chain

The categorization used in the table between individual firm schemes, collective national and collective international schemes is one of several possible categorizations. Distinctions can also be drawn between pre- and post-farm gate standards, or between business-to-business standards or standards tied to a particular labelling or logo scheme intended for consumers. Collective schemes may also tackle a particular supply chain issue or objective, at a national or international level[17].

The following sections provide information on a limited selection of private standards (i.e. EurepGAP now GLOBALGAP, BRC Global Food Standard, ISO 22000) and on a global food retail network (GFSI).

5.1 EurepGAP (now GLOBALGAP) <u>http://www.globalgap.org</u>

The Euro-Retailer Produce working group (Eurep) established its own standard for good agricultural practices, EurepGAP, in 1997, based on retailer needs to reassure consumers that food was being produced in a safe and sustainable manner within the context of a globalised food economy.

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[16] The list is an illustrative one and it is far from exhaustive. The thirteen schemes identified serve to demonstrate some of the diversity of the 400 plus schemes in operation

[17] The schemes listed in Table 1 cover all these categories. For example, while EurepGAP is primarily a pre-farm gate standard, the BRC Global Standard and International Food Standard are aimed at packing and processing facilities. Similarly, while the Assured Farm and Label Rouge schemes are linked to logos displayed on food packaging, the EurepGAP scheme is not. Likewise, the joint Food and Drink Federation/BRC Technical Standard and the ISO 22005 scheme tackle specific supply chain issues - at both a national and international level (Source: WTO Document G/SPS/GEN/746)

EurepGAP, now re-branded as GLOBALGAP, is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products around the globe[18]. Its aim is to establish one standard for Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) with different product applications capable of fitting to the whole of global agriculture. Established equivalent schemes such as ChileGAP, ChinaGAP, KenyaGAP, MexicoGAP, JGAP (Japan) and most recently ThaiGAP, are backed by national governments, retailers, producers and exporters[19].

The GLOBALGAP standard is primarily designed to preserve consumer confidence in food quality and food safety. Other important goals are to minimize detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations, reduce the use of chemical inputs and ensure a responsible approach to worker health and safety as well as animal welfare.

5.1.1 Certification to GLOBALGAP standard

GLOBALGAP does not conduct the certification process itself. Farmers or farmer groups can only be certified against the GLOBALGAP criteria by authorized Certification Bodies (CBs). A GLOBALGAP Certification Body is a company fulfilling the requirements to grant GLOBALGAP certification in the relevant product scope. Currently GLOBALGAP is working with over 100 CBs in more than 80 countries.

GLOBALGAP is a partnership of agricultural producers and retailers, which want to establish certification standards and procedures for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). It is a pre-farm gate standard that means the certificate covers the process of the certified product from before the seed is planted until it leaves the farm. GLOBALGAP is a set of normative documents, covering the GLOBALGAP General Regulations, the GLOBALGAP Control Points and Compliance Criteria and the GLOBALGAP Checklist. The GLOBALGAP standard[20] is subject to a three-year revision cycle of continuous improvement to take into account technological and market development.

As many other on-farm quality assurance systems have been in place for some time prior to the existence of GLOBALGAP, a way had to be found so as to encourage the development of regionally adjusted integrated crop management systems and to prevent farmers from expensive multiple audits. Existing national or regional quality assurance schemes that have successfully completed their benchmarking[21] process are recognized as being equivalent to GLOBALGAP.

It is important to note that benchmarking does not necessarily imply equivalence. In one example, GLOBALGAP and QS Qualitat Sicherheit benchmarked each other's schemes in 2006 and now recognize the schemes as equivalent. However, the BRC

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[18] OECD Document "AGR/CA/APM(2006)9/FINAL": Final report on Private Standards and the shaping of the afro-food system, (July 2006).
[19] http://www.globalgap.org/cms/front_content.php?idcat=9&idart=182
[20] It is published in "The Standard " section of the website, http://www.globalgap.org
[21] Owners of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) standards worldwide can seek to demonstrate equivalence with GLOBALGAP through an independent benchmarking process

and IFS[22] standards are not recognized as equivalent even though both are GFSI benchmarked.

5.1.2 Smallholder Involvement

Many food products come from small farming communities, including from developing countries. Due to structural reasons, small-scale farmers are often faced with more difficulties to fulfill the requirements at the same level with the risk of missing out export opportunities. GLOBALGAP has implemented three approaches to facilitate the implementation of standard[23]:

(i)   Group certification: smallholders can form a group and obtain a certification together. By doing this they can significantly reduce external certification costs such as inspection charges and overhead costs
(ii) Smallholder manual: a smallholder manual has been developed to help farmers to establish their internal control system[24]
(iii) Feedback opportunities: in the attempt to incorporate the needs of smallholders into the further development of the standard, smallholders can give systematic feedback[25].

5.2   British Retail Consortium (BRC)   **http://www.brc.org.uk**

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) developed and introduced the BRC Food Technical Standard to be used to evaluate manufacturers of retailers' own brand food products. It is used as a pillar to help retailers and brand owners with their 'due diligence' defence, should they be subject to a prosecution by the enforcement authorities.

It is regarded as one of the points of reference for best practice in the food industry. It is evolving into a Global Food Standard, used not just to assess retailer suppliers, but as a framework upon which many companies have based their supplier assessment programmes and manufacture of some branded products. The BRC Global Food Standard sets the benchmark for food safety management systems, laying down criteria against which companies can be assessed and so allowing purchasers to buy with confidence.

The majority of UK, and many European and Global retailers, and brand owners will consider business with suppliers who have gained certification to the appropriate BRC Global Standard.

The Food Standard is fully reviewed and thoroughly revised every two years to ensure continuing compliance with best industry practice. Information on the BRC Global Standards, including how to order the standards, how to get training on the standards

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[22] The International Food Standard (IFS) has been designed to be a harmonized method of monitoring the quality level of retailer-branded food products. The standard can apply to organizations at any step in the food processing chain after agricultural production
[23] http://www.globalgap.org/cms/front_content.php?idcat=70
[24] The manual has been developed in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and Department for International Development (DFID) and GLOBALGAP and it is available at http://www.globalgap.org/cms/upload/Documents/QMS_Manual-Final-1.pdf
[25] Further information can be obtained from http://www.africa-observer.info/

and how to get certified, is available on www.brcglobalstandards.com. The Standard can be ordered on line on www.tso.co.uk/bookshop/brc[26].

5.2.1 Certification to BRC standards

Retailers and brand owners have a legal responsibility for their brands. If they are faced with a legal challenge from the authorities, they have to prove a 'due diligence' defence – showing that they have taken every possible precaution to prevent the problem. Certification of your manufacturing facility gives retailers and brand owners relevant tools to help them with their legal obligations. The certification audit report will be one of the documents, which an enforcement authority would require from the retailer or brand owner, to demonstrate that their supplier was competent to produce a safe and legal product.

Retailers in many countries besides UK like Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, and some global retailers and brand owners, ask their suppliers to get BRC certification.

BRC certification is for product, and it is site specific; so if you are supplying your customer from more than one site, all the sites need separate BRC certification. If you are an agent or importer, you will not need to gain certification from BRC, but the companies you represent who will be supplying your retail customers will need BRC certification. If you are an importer that stores and distributes products to your customers, then you may be asked to get BRC certification against the BRC Global Standard - Storage and Distribution.

5.3   ISO 22000   http://www.iso.org

In September 2005, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published the international standard ISO 22000:2005, *Food safety management systems - Requirements for any organization in the food chain,* in an attempt to harmonize the requirements for food safety management systems.

ISO 22000:2005 specifies requirements for a food safety management system where an organization in the food chain needs to demonstrate its ability to control food safety hazards in order to ensure that food is safe at the time of human consumption.

ISO 22000 incorporates the requirements of the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) system developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

ISO 22000 is becoming more accepted internationally, with over 40 countries having adopted it as a national standard. All types of organization within the food supply chain, including feed producers - primary producers, food manufacturers, transport and storage operators and food service outlets - can use it to ensure that there is no weak link in the food supply chain.

Copies of ISO 22000 standard can be obtained from your National Standards Association (ISO Member Body). For people in countries whose National Standards

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[26] The new edition of the Standard, the Global Standard for Food Safety, was published on 4 January 2008.

Association is not an ISO Member Body, the standard can be obtained directly from ISO[27] or ordered from the ISO online store at http://www.iso.org/iso/store.htm[28].

5.3.1 Certification to ISO 22000 standard

As ISO 22000 is an auditable standard, certified companies can demonstrate their compliance to HACCP that has increasingly become a mandatory requirement in the markets of various countries, most notably for non-farm food businesses in the EU since January 2006. Certification to ISO 22000 could facilitate acceptance by global food retailers, as it also covers the requirements of key standards developed by various global food retailer systems.

In September 2007 ITC and ISO have jointly published *"ISO 22000 Food Safety Management Systems – An easy-to-use checklist for small business – Are you ready?",* a software-based checklist on ISO 22000 that helps to understand the regulatory requirements for food safety and an enterprise's readiness for a food safety management system. The tool is available from ITC and the ISO Central Secretariat.

5.4 Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)   http://www.ciesnet.com

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) forms part of the CIES, the Food Business Forum, itself a global food retail network. GFSI aims to establish a simple set of rules for standards, harmonized across countries, promoting efficiency and consistency in the supply chain by:

- Implementing and maintaining a voluntary scheme to recognize food safety standards (for retailer-label or private-label products) worldwide

- Facilitating mutual recognition between standard owners

- Working towards worldwide integrity and quality in the certification of standards and the accreditation of certifying bodies

GFSI does not develop its own standard scheme and does not undertake any accreditation or certification activities. Retailers accept certificates based on standards in order to be able to make an assessment of their suppliers of private-label products and fresh products and meat, to ensure that production is carried out in a safe manner.

For agricultural production, the GFSI has established a set of Good Agricultural Practices criteria against which a PVS[29] for primary production can be benchmarked. Thus far the GFSI has officially benchmarked with SQF (Safe Quality Food) 2000[30] and, recently SQF 1000[31], BRC (4th Edition), IFS (4th Edition) and Dutch HACCP and it is in the process of benchmarking others, notably GLOBALGAP[32].

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[27] ISO: 1, chemin de la Voie-Creuse, Case postale 56, 1211 Geneva 20

[29] Private Voluntary Standard
[30] The US retail food safety standard from the FMI (Food Marketing Initiative, the American equivalent of the BRC)
[31] An agricultural standard that is endorsed by the FMI
[32] http://www.foodinternational.net/articles/r-d/52/gfsi-expands-its-reach.html

6.   THE INTERNATIONAL PORTAL ON FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH   http://www.ipfsaph.org

The International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health (IPFSAPH) has been developed by FAO in association with the organizations responsible for international standards setting in sanitary and phytosanitary matters. It facilitates trade in food and agricultural products and supports the implementation of the SPS Agreement by providing a single access point for authorized official international and national information across the sectors of food safety, animal and plant health.

Sanitary and phytosanitary issues have generally been addressed on a sector-by-sector basis. However, with today's increasing economic inter-dependence, international trade and travel, and with the use of novel production and processing technologies, a new, multi-disciplinary approach is needed. The portal attempts to respond to this by providing a single access point for the wide range of official, dispersed information related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

The navigation and search capabilities are currently available in English, French, and Spanish[33]. The portal content will remain in its original language. The access to the portal is free of charge to all users.

The potential results of IPFSAPH use include increased transparency in SPS measures by providing information essential for the protection of human, animal and plant health. It also provides increased confidence of trading partners, therefore supporting enhanced international trade. It also results in improved national laws and regulations as those responsible for drafting such may use those in the portal as a model.[34] The portal may help, *inter alia*, both the Competent Authorities to protect human, animal and plant health, and increase the confidence of trading partners that traded goods are safe.

7.   SPS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM http://http://spsims.wto.org/

The WTO SPS Information Management System (SPS IMS) is a comprehensive system for searching information on WTO member governments' sanitary and phytosanitary measures — food safety and animal and plant health and safety. It is a comprehensive source allowing users to track and obtain information on measures that member governments have notified to the WTO (an obligation for WTO members), specific trade concerns that they have raised, documents of the WTO's Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, member governments' national enquiry points and their authorities handling notification.

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[33] Chinese and Arabic versions might eventually be made available
[34] Source: http://www.ipfsa.ph.org/En/Help/ipfsaph_about.htm

8.   THE EC EXPORT HELPDESK   **http://exporthelp.europa.eu/**

The Export Helpdesk is an online service, provided by the European Commission, to facilitate market access for developing countries to the European Union. This free and user-friendly service provides relevant information required by developing country exporters interested in supplying the EU market.

This on line service for exporters, importers, trade associations and governments, provides:

- Information on EU and Member States' import requirements as well as internal taxes applicable to products (see the *Requirements and Taxes* section);
- Information on EU preferential import regimes benefiting developing countries (see the *Import Tariffs*, *Customs Documents* and *Rules of Origin* sections);
- Trade data for the EU and its individual Member States (see the *Trade Statistics* section);
- A market place where exporters in developing countries can establish contacts with importers from the EU (see the *Market Place* and *Links* section);
- Links to other authorities and international organisations involved in trade operations and trade promotion (see the *Market Place* and *Links* section);
- The possibility to lodge detailed information requests about real-life situations encountered by exporters (see the *Contact* section).

The Exporter Helpdesk is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

ANNEX I

USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS

NAME		WEBSITE
Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	—	http://www.affa.gov.au
Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)	—	http://www.codexalimentarius.net
EurepGAP/GLOBALGAP	—	http://www.globalgap.org
Export Helpdesk of the EU	—	http://exporthelp.europa.eu/
International Organization for Standardization	—	http://www.iso.org
International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)	—	http://www.ippc.int
International Portal on Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health	—	http://www.ipfsaph.org
International Trade Centre (ITC)	—	http://www.intracen.org
Organization International des Epizooties (OIE)	—	http://www.oie.int
SPS Information Management System	—	http://spsims.wto.org
Standards Council of Canada	—	http://www.scc.ca
The Food and Business Forum	—	http:// www.ciesnet.com
World Trade Organization (WTO)	—	http://www.wto.org
United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	—	http://www.aphis.usda.gov/
United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service	—	http://www.fsis.usda.gov/
US Food and Drug Administration	—	http://www.fda.gov/
UN Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD)	—	http://www.unctad.org