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## Sanitary and phytosanitary measures



**Problem:** How do you ensure that your country's consumers are being supplied with food that is safe to eat – "safe" by the standards you consider appropriate? And at the same time, how can you ensure that strict health and safety regulations are not being used as an excuse for protecting domestic producers?

An agreement on how governments can apply food safety and animal and plant health measures (sanitary and phytosanitary or SPS measures) sets out the basic rules in the WTO.

> [SPS Information Management System](#): a database of WTO information on SPS (Notifications, concerns raised, other documents, enquiry points, etc)

### SEE ALSO

- > [Standards and Trade Development Facility \(STDF\)](#)
- > [Agriculture](#)
- > [Technical barriers to trade](#)

### Whose international standards?

Which are the relevant standard-setting organizations for the SPS Agreement? An annex to the agreement names:

- > [the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission](#): for food
- > [World Organization for Animal Health](#)
- > [the FAO's Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention](#): for plant health.
- > See also [FAO](#) and [WHO](#)

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Includes unofficial and less technical summaries of SPS Committee meetings

- **19 October 2011:** [SPS notifications hit 5 figures and committee wraps up China review](#)
  - **17 October 2011:** [Workshop on SPS Coordination at National and Regional Levels](#)
  - **1 July 2011:** [Follow-up course on sanitary and phytosanitary measures ends](#)
    - > [News item](#)
    - > Activity sheet for the course (coming soon)
- [More news on sanitary and phytosanitary measures](#)  
 > See also [Work on SPS in the WTO, below](#)

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- [Current issues in SPS](#)  
Explanations of current issues and links to follow latest developments
- [Introduction to WTO rules on sanitary and phytosanitary measures](#)  
Links to part of the standards and safety section of the WTO guide "Understanding the WTO"  
(Click your browser's "back" button to return to this page.)
- ["Understanding the SPS Agreement" \(text only\)](#)  
A more technical introduction
- Interactive course: [Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures \(SPS\)](#)

### The mandate [back to top](#)

- Browse or download the text of the SPS Agreement from the [legal texts gateway](#)
- [WTO Agreements series: SPS](#) – booklet containing the text of the SPS Agreement and an explanation designed to help the user understand the text.
- Compilation of [all major decisions and documents](#) on the SPS Agreement's implementation
- Find decisions of WTO bodies concerning the SPS Agreement in the [Analytical Index](#) – Guide to WTO Law and Practice
- Review of the operation and implementation of the Agreement of the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. [Committee Report of the Third Review adopted in 2010](#).



The Doha mandate: SPS in the [2001 ministerial decision on implementation](#)

### Work on SPS in the WTO, and official documents [back to top](#)

Work on this subject is handled by the SPS Committee, which reports to the Goods Council. The work is officially recorded in the committee's annual reports to the General Council and in summary reports (equivalent to minutes) of the committee's meetings. See [here](#) for the current

### DISPUTES

- > [List of disputes citing the SPS agreement](#)

### WHAT'S NEW - SPS MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTS

Presentations made by Members at the June 2011 SPS Committee meeting

- > [The Great East Japan Earthquake and Efforts to ensure the Safety of Food](#)
- > [Introduction to China's Regionalization System on Food Safety](#)

- > [SPS Technical Assistance Activities for 2011](#)
- > [Specific Trade Concerns 1995-2010 report](#)
- > [Dates of meetings of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures for 2011](#)
- > [SPS TA courses](#)

### VIDEOS



- [Trading safely: Protecting health, promoting development \(21/07/2009\)](#)
- [Trading safely: Belize \(21/07/2009\)](#)
- [Trading safely: Benin \(21/07/2009\)](#)
- [Trading safely: Southeast Asia \(21/07/2009\)](#)

Chairperson of the SPS Committee.

[> Search here for SPS documents](#)

Subscribe [here](#) to receive all unrestricted SPS documents by e-mail, usually twice a week, normally only in the original language (English, French or Spanish).

**[Members' transparency toolkit](#)** [back to top](#)

Notification formats, handbooks, links to members' SPS websites and other aids for members' transparency work in SPS.

**[Events, workshops and training](#)** [back to top](#)

Find information on planned and recently held activities.

**[Standards and Trade Development Facility \(STDF\)](#)** [back to top](#)

A joint initiative of the World Trade Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, World Organization for Animal Health and Food and Agriculture Organization for enhancing developing countries' capacity to meet SPS standards. Work includes sharing information on technical cooperation, and finance for projects.

**[External links](#)** [back to top](#)

Find links to relevant standard setting bodies, FAO's SPS Portal, observer organizations, etc.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) deals with the global rules of trade between nations. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.

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- Who we are
- What we do
- How we are structured
- Our global membership
- Annual report
- Legal texts

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