

health. A risk assessment determines the probability that a particular product might either carry and transmit a pest or disease or, if consumed, constitute a danger to human or animal health. Included in the Agreement on SPS (paragraphs 17 and 18) is a broad range of economic and scientific factors (e.g. relevant processes and production methods and ecological and environmental conditions) that are to be taken into account in assessing risk.

Requiring that SPS measures be based on an assessment of risk is consistent with current Canadian practice.

vi) Trade-Restrictiveness

Explicit in the Agreement on SPS (paragraph 21) is an obligation that sanitary and phytosanitary measures not be more trade-restrictive than required to achieve their intended level of protection. The purpose of this discipline is to ensure that measures do not affect trade to a greater extent than is necessary; it does not compromise a country's right to achieve its chosen levels of protection.

The alternative to this discipline would be to allow measures that could affect trade more than required. Such measures would not increase a country's ability to achieve its desired levels of sanitary and phytosanitary protection. Nevertheless, they would both jeopardize the opportunity for export-dependent countries, such as Canada, to realize their economic potential and be inconsistent with the environmental objective of ensuring the most efficient use of the planet's resources.

vii) Processes and Production Methods

Foods and beverages may, intentionally or not, include or carry additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms that, when consumed, could endanger human health in an importing country. Although these concerns relate to the characteristics of the product, it is neither technically feasible nor practical to rely solely on tests carried out at the time of importation. In order to maximize their confidence in the safety of imported food products, countries maintain regulations that may affect the processes and production methods (PPMs) used in exporting countries.

Annex A of the Agreement on SPS provides for the continued application of product-specific process and production method regulations in foreign countries by explicitly including PPMs in the scope of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Therefore, under the Agreement on SPS, Canada can continue to ensure the safety of its food supply by requiring that imported foods and beverages be obtained only from approved processing plants.