



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Agri-food Trade and Regional Integration

An FAO Regional Initiative for Europe and Central Asia

Agricultural systems in Europe and Central Asia are still affected by the process of political and economic transition that has coincided with globalization and deepening regional and global trade integration.

The purpose of the Regional Initiative on Agri-Food Trade and Regional Integration is to increase regional and national capacities to deal effectively with the challenges posed by greater trade integration. It does this by developing better evidence on trade implications, improving the capacity of countries to use this evidence, facilitating neutral fora and dialogues on trade agreements, and supporting the design and implementation of appropriate policies at country level.

The Regional Initiative has three main components:

Food safety: International food standards contribute to the safety, quality and fairness of international food trade. The aim is to strengthen food safety systems in the region in line with international standards to allow deeper regional and global trade integration.

Trade agreements: The countries in the region are often engaged in multiple trade negotiation processes at the same time, each with its own challenges and benefits. The objective is to strengthen national capacities for dealing effectively with the challenges posed by greater trade integration.

Wheat trade for food security: Wheat production and trade play an important role in ensuring food security in the region. The focus here is on the production and market prospects of wheat in selected countries of the region.

Focus countries: Moldova, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan



Food safety

Moldova: Technical assistance and policy support are provided to the newly created National Food Safety Agency and Ministry of Agriculture for improving food safety legislation and regulatory and institutional frameworks. Enhancing national capacity for practical application of risk analysis, and for more effective participation in the Codex Alimentarius standard-setting work is on the project agenda. A legal gap analysis was performed to identify areas requiring further alignment with international standards that will be addressed within the project.

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: Technical assistance supports national authorities and the private sector with training and consultations on applying good hygiene practices and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)-based food safety management systems. Development of national guides on good hygiene practices and HACCP plans for major food products supports the spread of international standards, systems and practices in these countries.



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International workshops

- Food Safety in Georgia: Challenges and Opportunities, FAO/EBRD conference (Tbilisi, Georgia, 23 January 2014)
- Enhancing Risk Communication Capacities in Food Safety, FAO/WHO regional workshop (Budapest, Hungary, 3-6 June 2014)
- Training workshops on food safety risk analysis, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (Ankara, Turkey, 17-20 September and 2-4 December 2014)
- Strengthening capacities for effective participation in Codex Alimentarius with emphasis on chemical food safety, FAO/WHO regional workshop (The Hague, The Netherlands, 29 September 2014)



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Work in 2015

- Continue with technical projects in focus countries
- Joint FAO/WHO workshop on inter-sectoral collaboration for food safety (Uzbekistan, May)
- Regional workshop on building capability for food safety intelligence and early warning for improved decision making (Budapest, Hungary, June)
- Joint FAO/WHO regional training on strengthening food control systems and enhancing capacities for Codex Alimentarius work (St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, September)
- Developing the concept note for a regional web-based platform to support information, knowledge sharing and communication on Codex Alimentarius work in Russian language
- Regional comparative study on food safety control, monitoring systems and risk assessment capacity.



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Trade agreements

E-learning courses on WTO Agreements

Some 200 participants from government, academia and the private sector completed two five-week e-learning courses on "WTO accession and implications for agriculture in CIS countries". Held during spring and autumn 2014, the courses were organized and facilitated by FAO in cooperation with UNITAR.

Debate on trade agreements in the region

A panel debate on "The Future of Trade Agreements in the CIS" was organized in the context of the IAMO Forum (Halle, Germany, 25 June 2014). The session examined the implications of greater trade openness for agriculture and analysed agricultural sector reforms triggered by trade agreements.

Workshop on market access issues

A national workshop on agricultural market access issues was organized in Moldova (2-3 December 2014). The workshop facilitated greater understanding among government officials of WTO and CIS trade rules for agriculture relevant to Moldovan agricultural exports.

Regional Network of Agricultural Trade Experts

The Agricultural Trade Expert Network of the region was launched and organized its first meeting on 15-16 December 2014. The network brings together experts from government, the private sector and academia who work on agricultural trade. The network aims to promote exchange of knowledge and experience on trade policy issues, and to support broader capacity development in this area.

Workshop on trade policies conducive to food security

The workshop, organized by the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition, stimulated debate on trade and food security and nutrition policies, particularly on how trade policies can be made more conducive to food security. The Regional Initiative joined the dialogue and provided presentations at the workshop (Rome, Italy, 16-17 December 2014)



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Report on agri-policy issues in the context of WTO

Since the majority of CIS countries and Georgia are either members or candidates of the WTO, this publication looks at the accession experience, and the agricultural policy issues that arise as individual countries work to meet WTO rules and commitments in agriculture.

Initial assessment of Russia's import restrictions on agri-food products

The note examines implications for the domestic market of Russian Federation import restrictions, particularly the possible effects on consumers, producers and importers. It also discusses implications for exporters and global markets as well as factors that will influence the dynamics of supply and demand in response to the ban.

Work in 2015

- Agri-Trade Experts Network Conference (Kaliningrad, Russian Federation, March)
- Presentation of paper on regional trade issues at the AgroForum Balticum (Tartu, Estonia, April)
- As part of the South-South component of the Initiative, a workshop will be organized to facilitate greater understanding of trade and economic integration processes in Central Asia and China (Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, May)
- New online training course on raising trade concerns and resolving trade disputes, June
- Seminar in the Eurasian Economic Commission on WTO alignment and the Eurasian Economic Union
- Selected national studies on the impact of WTO accession on agriculture and agricultural trade policies
- Study on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) and technical regulation system in the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union
- Study on Single Market Legislation in the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union
- Study on "Improving Market Access for Food: the Main Provisions of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements between the European Union and Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine"



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Wheat trade for food security

'The New Wheat Exporters of Eurasia and Volatility'

The paper provides an overview of wheat production and price volatility in three major wheat producers of the region; the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, and will become a chapter in a book to be released mid-2015. Findings of the paper contributed to a workshop organized by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in May 2014.

Work in 2015

Wheat production potential is assessed in Belarus, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and the results will be presented at a food security conference.

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More information, related news and publications are available at the Initiative's website:

<http://www.fao.org/europe/regional-perspectives/agri-food-trade/en/>

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