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International Standards: Threats or Chances for Livestock Producers of Developing Countries? The EU as Example

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Abstract

Globalisation is leading to a different perspective on animal farming, production and livestock products. The focus of this agriculture transformation in the developed countries is not on fostering production per se but on inclusion of considerations of public health (zoonoses), sustainable development and productivity of agriculture (environment), animal welfare, safe trade in animals and their products and food safety (farm to table approach). Rule-based trade and food safety under WTO's SPS agreement in particular exert a 'pull-push effect' also for producers in developing countries where they challenge costs, administrative, technical and other capacities to comply with international standards or with providing conditions recognized as equivalent with these standards.

The European Union (EU) attracts imports; the EU, being the world's biggest importer of foodstuff, mostly from developing countries, and also being the world's second largest exporter of value-added foodstuff has established complex policy (Common Agricultural Policy, CAP), structures and extensive legislation which extend to developing countries. With changes in CAP, this complexity of standard setting for high-value foods will increase to a package of safety, quality, environmental, social and ethical and will also involve non-trade concerns.

For developing countries, rather than seeing international standards as trade barriers, they can serve as change catalyst for overall competitiveness strategies: supply-chain modernization will use investment, national consumers will benefit from adoption of better safety and quality control practices and the appropriate and necessary roles of government and the private sector will be clarified. Countries, by thinking globally, will have to act locally.

Keywords: Globalisation, food safety, public health, animal health