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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Fostering Africa’s Compliance to Food Safety Standards: the Role of Institution and Domestic Factors

FATIMA KAREEM

University of Kassel, Germany, Department of Globalization and Policy, Germany

Abstract

African exports have been rejected a number of times at the European Union (EU) borders because of their non-compliance with EU product standards. Major contributory factors for the continent’s trade performance have been linked to their domestic supply constraints resulting from their limited productive capacity to produce (Xiong and Beghin 2011) and the lack of the institution needed to ensure compliance with importing countries’ standards (Kim and Reinert 2009). However, others have attributed it to Africa’s poorly developed infrastructure, customs and border procedures, as well as transportation and communication.

This study therefore investigates the causes of rejections of African exports at the EU borders. Our objective is to investigate the extent to which domestic factors in each African country are inhibiting their ability to comply with EU food safety standards. To achieve this objective, this study proceeds by investigating the role of institutions and domestic conditions such as infrastructure, trade procedures play in driving their inability to comply with the EU’s food safety standards. The literature has however, overlooked the role of domestic factors such as institution, trade related infrastructure and trade procedures in explaining non-compliance with importing countries’ standards. However, this present study differs significant from these as investigates the extent to which these factors are contributing to compliance to EU food safety regulations by African countries.

This study makes two unprecedented contributions to the literature. First, this represents the first study to link the factors responsible for the EU’s rejection of African exports to trade facilitation measures and existing domestic institutions such as country level corruption and domestic regulatory policies. Secondly, to the best of my knowledge, this work remains the first among its kind to empirically investigate the factors responsible for the non-compliance to EU standards and border rejection of African exports by the EU. Thus, its importance in aiding informed policies in enhancing increased food safety practices and market access for the continent cannot be overlooked.

Keywords: Institutional quality, Conformity assessment, food safety standards, Trade and border procedures