

## **The Russian Federation practice of AG notifications**

Since the accession to the WTO in 2012 Russia regularly provides the notifications according to its commitments and taking into account the execution of the budget processes at federal and regional levels.

The notifications provided included the notifications on Market Access, Tariff Quotas Administration, Tariff Quotas use, Export Subsidies, Domestic Support, and the notifications on the fighting potentially negative effects of the reform program to Net-Food Importing Developing Countries and the Least Developed countries.

Russian Federation supports good practice in transparency commitments fulfilment to provide notifications not to feel ourselves in the dark.

We highly appreciate all the possibilities to provide exact and precise information on our agriculture reform and every question counts.

But there come times, when we have to ask ourselves: What's wrong? The answer to which is only, that we have submitted a notification.

This feeling arise when the notification starts being discussed.

Sometimes, when we get the questions on the notifications from Members firstly, we think that something not very good has happened.

There we start the process of double-checking or triple-checking the information in the notification in question.

We have discussions with numerous agencies providing data, necessary not only to send the notification, but also to find out where the truth is, if the definitions we use are the same, were there any updates in the information received and sent.

And after when we find that everything is fine we prepare the answers to our colleagues. And here we should say that the questions we get are very important to us, they afford us to have a second chance to look at the material we provide, to learn our obligations by heart and to find the ways how to avoid misunderstanding in future.

Actually, there are four federal bodies that are involved in the process of notifications forming: two departments of the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, and Federal Agency for State Statistics. In

forming the notifications for food aid, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also involved.

Some data collection is assisted by the Eurasian Economic Union.

The commitments of the Russian Federation to the WTO became a part of the Russian Federation legal system immediately after the Protocol of Accession ratification (Federal Law no. 126-FZ as of July 21, 2012), that provisions the fulfilment of the notification commitments *mutatis mutandis* (means taking into account latest changes in the notification process).

The work on notifications preparation is coordinated by the Trade Negotiations Department of the Ministry of Economic Development and is under the control of the Government of the Russian Federation.

It means that the data necessary to form notifications is accumulated in the Ministry of Economic Development, checked and summarized by the specialists of Agriculture and Fisheries Division.

And in addition, we don't forget to send reminders for all the participant of the process in order not to miss appropriate dates and events.

The responsibility on the data provisions by the different agencies is obvious when you, for example, see the representatives of Ministry of Agriculture at the meetings of Committee on Agriculture.

The question of the institutional memory in the conditions of high staff turnover in our opinion is resolved by three elements:

1. Training of staff (and here we cannot underestimate the part of assistance provided by the WTO Secretariat, the STDF, and UNITAR, as well as other educational establishments, including our domestic educational facilities, where specialist get acquainted with the notifications systems).
2. Thorough filing of the data in the Ministries information systems.
3. Specific instructions for the staff, that become responsible for the notifications.

The important aid of the external institutional memory is our favorite AGIMS system that affords us not only to monitor other countries data, but also to compare the data we have sent to the organization with our domestic sources.

If we are to discuss the challenges we face in preparing the notifications, we should mention different approaches of collecting the data and interpreting it, that we can see analyzing the notifications of different countries that starts with different digits format, as well as different styles of free text descriptions. We suppose, that in future negotiations more precise formats will be developed. However, we hope them not to be more prescriptive than necessary, of course.

In addition, there are some difficulties in getting the whole image of international agricultural trade, when we do not receive the information from all the countries. Moreover, we hope, that this issue will be addressed, for we consider that very important to be earnest.