AGRICULTURE POLICY LANDSCAPE

SYMPOSIUM*

13-14 June 2018

World Trade Organization
Centre William Rappard

Overview

The food and agriculture landscape has dramatically evolved in the past fifteen years and faces new challenges in the future. Developing countries play an increasingly important role in world agricultural markets, with five out of the six top producers being developing countries. Population growth in many countries, particularly developing countries, has been accompanied by growth in the middle class. With growing incomes, consumers increasingly demand high value products, including animal products. Consumer preferences for quality attributes, such as food safety and sustainably produced food, have also increased. Yield increases and expansion in cropped land area have led to increased production for many agriculture commodities. Trading patterns in agriculture have also changed - exports remain concentrated in a few supplying countries, while imports are more dispersed. In addition, the growth in trade of intermediate agro-food products reflects the increased importance of agro-food global value chains.

The mix of policies implemented by countries that affect the agriculture and food sector has also evolved over the past decade. Policy makers have a variety of tools at their disposal to ensure that their population has adequate food and to ensure that the enabling conditions for their agriculture and food sector are in place. Policy makers are increasingly prioritizing objectives and policies related to the environment, health and animal welfare. Policy decisions taken at the country level will impact the sustainability and health of the global food and agriculture system. While WTO's agriculture rules have minimised distortions in production and trade, there is considerable room for improvement so as to enable the multilateral trading system to respond effectively to the transformation of the agriculture sector.

In the future, the stresses on the agro-food system will increase. As global population grows, the pressure on scarce natural resources, including arable land, are expected to mount. While the share of the world's population that is hungry and poor is falling, the absolute numbers are still unacceptable. Land and water constraints faced by countries vary. An increased likelihood of extreme weather events and the related changes in local water supplies, will alter the choices available to farmers. A global dialogue on how to collectively meet these challenges is essential. The WTO Agreement on Agriculture foresees an improvement in its rules through negotiations among its Members so as to level the playing field, while allowing countries to pursue their food security and other non-trade concerns.

This symposium is open to stakeholders from all WTO Members. It will provide an opportunity to hear from experts in agriculture policy and trade from both developed and developing countries on the trends and future expectations of the global food and agriculture economy, and the implications for farmers and agribusiness. Discussions will also highlight contemporary issues of importance to developing countries. Speakers will include experts from academia, think-tanks and international organizations. The symposium will be structured to maximize the interaction among speakers and participants.

* Symposium webpage: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/symposium_ag_policy_landscape_e.htm

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 13 June 2018

10:30: Opening remarks

Deputy Director-General, Alan Wolff

SESSION 1

(10:45-13:00)

Economic significance of agricultural trade – now and in the future

Agricultural trade is expected to grow more slowly than other sectors. At the same time, agricultural trade seems to be less sensitive to weak economic conditions than other sectors. While the rate of growth in agricultural consumption is expected to decrease over the next decade, the world's agriculture and food system will need to address growing demand from the increasing global population, which is estimated to reach 9 billion by 2050. The location of demand is changing due to growing and increasingly urbanized population, particularly in large developing countries. At the same time increasing incomes have led to higher consumption of animal products and demands for feedstock commodities for energy and other non-food uses. Agricultural production is facing new pressure from extreme weather and temperature is also likely to shift location. In addition, rural populations in many regions are aging, creating new challenges in terms of sustaining adequate agricultural labour. The pace of these changes will differ across regions. Agricultural trade can provide a means of ensuring that agricultural production can move from areas of surplus to areas of deficit. Producers can increase their income from having access to markets outside their local area.

- How does trade contribute to feeding the world?
- How are patterns of production and consumption likely to change?
- What are the impacts of agricultural trade on farm income?
- How can trade contribute to the mitigation of economic risk?

Panellists

- **Martin Piñeiro,** Director, Committee on Agriculture, Argentine Council for Foreign Relations (CARI) and member of the GPS Network;
- **Kofi Nouve,** Program Leader Nigeria, Sustainable Development Practice Group, World Bank;
- **Dr Jing Zhu,** College of Economics and Management, Nanjing Agricultural University, China.

Discussants

- **Santiago Bertoni**, President of the Paraguayan Institute of Agriculture Technology;
- **Aisha Moriani**, Joint Secretary Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan.

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SESSION 2

(16:00-18:00)

Evolving trading patterns in agriculture products

Trading patterns have shifted over the past decade. Exports remain concentrated in a few supplying countries while imports are more widely dispersed. Some countries depend upon trade to satisfy growing demand because they have insufficient natural resources for growing food domestically. In other cases, countries may depend upon agricultural imports because, despite their natural endowments, population growth has not been matched by growth in agricultural production. The types of agricultural products that are being traded have also changed. Agricultural exports have moved away from bulk crops to focus more on processed food products and horticultural products.

- Who is trading with whom and how is this likely to change in the future?
- What are the effects of global value chains on trading patterns?
- How will extreme weather events affect trading patterns?
- Where are the bottlenecks in international trading systems and what can be done to alleviate these constraints?

Panellists

- **Joe Glauber,** Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute;
- **Miriam Omolo,** Director of Programmes at the African Policy Research Institute (APRI);
- **Alessandro Nicita,** Economist at the United Nation Conference for Trade and Development, (UNCTAD).

Discussants

- **Peter Gooday**, Assistant Secretary and Chief Commodity Analyst, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences.

Thursday 14 June, 2018

SESSION 3

(10:00-13:00)

Products, prices, and market participation

The expected continued rapid increase in demand for higher value agricultural products in both developed and developing countries means that there are potential benefits from diversification. At the same time given the perishability of many of these products, improving access to and efficiency of markets and agricultural value chains is critical. Targeted policies, regulations, and investments can address constraints to market participation.

- How do policy responses affect decisions from farm to table?
- What types of policies support efficient agro-food value chains?
- What are the impacts of policy responses on farmers, consumers, and firms?
- What types of policies and investments increase the capacity of the agricultural sector to respond to shocks effectively? How do these differ among commodities?
- In this context, what are some of the most relevant policies specifically affecting cotton?

Invited speaker

- **Qu Dongyu**, Vice Minister for Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, P.R. China.

Panellists

- **George Rapsomanikis,** Food and Agriculture Organization;
- **Marion Jansen,** Chief Economist, International Trade Centre;
- **Terry Townsend,** Chair of the Discover Natural Fibres Initiative;
- **Matthias Knappe,** Programme Manager, Fibres, Textiles and Clothing, Division of Enterprises and Institutions, ITC**.**

Thursday 14 June, 2018

SESSION 4

(15:00-18:00)

Agricultural trade policy landscape

In the past decade, agricultural production, prices and trade flows have been transformed and countries have altered their agricultural trade and domestic support policies. Nevertheless, many countries continue to provide direct support to producers in ways that distort production, markets and trade. While countries are investing in agricultural infrastructure and innovation systems, and inspection and control systems, typically the levels of investment are not adequate to ensure that the agro-food system will be able to respond to future challenges. In addition, at the global level the proliferation of regional trade agreements has created a complex system of agricultural tariffs and regulatory rules.

- What is the current pattern of domestic policies affecting agriculture?
- How has the landscape of tariffs been transformed by FTAs?
- How do regulatory policies, such as SPS and TBT measures affect agricultural trade?

Panellists

- **Carmel Cahill,** Deputy Director, Directorate for Trade and Agriculture, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
- **Lars Brink,** Independent Advisor;
- **Siraj Hussain,** Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations;
- **Martha Byanyima,** COMESA.

Discussants

- **Flavio Coturni,** Head of the Policy Perspectives Unit, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission;
- **Jason Hafemeister,** Trade Counsel to the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA);
- **Abhijit Das**, Head of Centre for WTO Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade;
- **Doug Forsyth**, DG Trade Agreements and Negotiations Directorate at Agriculture and Agri-food.

Wrap up and Closing remarks – Director of the Agriculture and Commodities Division, Edwini Kessie

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