AFRICA DIALOGUE ON MANAGING TRADE CONCERNS

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

DIRECTORATE: FOOD IMPORT AND EXPORT STANDARDS

SJ Manyuwa
Date: 30 September 2014
WTO SPS notification process

Institutional arrangement

- DFIES within DAFF is designated as the official NNA and NEP
  - Receives notifications and distributes to stakeholders
  - Requests information from the notifying WTO Member where necessary
  - Facilitates translation of non-English notified content
  - Submit SA’s notifications through online NSS

Commenting on notification received

- NNA coordinate comment with stakeholders, consolidate and submit comment to notifying WTO Member
WTO SPS notification process (cont’d)

Routing the outgoing notification

• Technical competent authorities draft notifications using online NSS
• NNA verifies the completeness of draft notification
• NNA submit the notification through the online NSS

Handling of incoming comments

• Competent authorities receive comments
  ✓ Acknowledge the receipt of comment
  ✓ Informs the commenting WTO Member how the comment will be handled
SPS Coordination between govt. departments

How Coordination is done:

• National SPS Committee (NSPSC)

Scope and aim of the NSPSC

• The Committee focus on coordination between different branches, directorates, government departments, and standard agencies.
• Platform for identifying and considering SPS matters, addressing trade-related SPS issues
• Enhancement of national implementation of the WTO SPS Agreement
• Promote SA’s regulatory ability
• The Committee’s Secretariat liaise with the SADC Secretariat on regional SPS matters
Operations of the NSPSC

Composition/membership of the NSPSC

• Management and technical officials from the DAFF units responsible for implementation of SPS and TBT measures and related trade matters
• Other relevant role players and stakeholders, including the following:
  ° National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS)
  ° Department of Health (Codex national contact point)
  ° Department of Trade and Industry (the dti - national TBT focal point)
  ° South African Revenue Service (SARS)
  ° Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)

Representatives from other relevant stakeholders are invited to attend when necessary.
Operations of the NSPSC (cont’d)

Description of the information sharing mechanism

• Telephonically
• Via e-mail
• SPS Newsletter
  ✓ External communication tool
  ✓ Sharing information on issues discussed at the meetings
  ✓ The committee endorse the content of the newsletter before publishing
  ✓ It is published on the DAFF website

• Industry platforms
  ✓ SPS Committee members attend and share the information (ATF, MAWG etc.)
Existence of budget line for NSPSC

- Operational responsibility for the SPS Committee resides within a dedicated SPS Coordination unit within DFIES which has its own budget
- Costs associated with subsistence and travel to attend SPS Committee meetings are borne by individual directorates or departments.
Operations of the NSPSC (cont’d)

• Three meetings are held per annum just before the WTO SPS Committee meetings.
• The meetings advise and make recommendations to SA delegations participating in the WTO-SPS Committee platform and other bilateral engagements.
Items discussed at NSPSC

- Updates on market access issues
- Reporting on SPS engagements
- Reporting on diseases and/or pests outbreaks
- Crosscutting SPS/ TBT issues (fisheries, the dti, SARS)
- Private standards
- Regional coordination on SPS matters (SADC and Tripartite FTA)
- Capacity building
- WTO notifications (SPS and TBT)
Coordination with Geneva based missions

- The NNA and DIT liaise with SA representative at the WTO.
  ✓ Recommendation to request for bilateral meetings in Geneva where necessary.
  ✓ Engages Geneva based missions of trading partner’s on matters affecting trade and provides updates to capital
  ✓ Sharing information from the trade partner’s Geneva based missions
  ✓ Provides the capital with progress update on trade negotiations at the WTO
Specific Trade Concerns (STCs) pertaining to SPS

• During the WTO SPS Committee meeting held in October 2012 South Africa registered a trade concern against Thailand with regard to Thailand’s restrictions on table Grapes, Apples, and Pears.

• During the WTO SPS Committee meeting held in June 2013 South Africa registered a trade concern against the EU with regard to the phytosanitary import measures of the EU for fresh Citrus fruit in respect of CBS.
Way forward

• The institutional arrangement for NNA and NEP is well capacitated to enable handling notifications and coordination of comments
• The coordination mechanism with other govt. departments and Geneva missions is effective
• The coverage of information sharing mechanism is satisfactory
• Addressing trade concerns either bilaterally or through STCs have challenges however we maintain the momentum of looking forward to get issues resolved
THANK YOU