

Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures



Problem:

How do you ensure that your country's consumers are being supplied with food that is safe to eat – 'safe' by the standards you consider appropriate?

And at the same time, how can you ensure that strict health and safety regulations are not being used as an excuse for protecting domestic producers?



Solution:

PACER Plus aims to increase the capacity of Pacific Island members to survey, manage and treat biosecurity threats. PACER Plus balances the rights of member countries to adopt sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures (which are measures that promote and protect human, animal and plant health) against requirements not to restrict trade unreasonably between members.



What is an SPS measure?

The word 'measure' can refer to almost any action taken by Government, but it usually refers to a law, regulation, or some other official requirement. An 'SPS measure' is defined by reference to the risk it seeks to prevent. In short, an SPS measure is any measure applied:

- to protect human or animal life from risks arising from additives, contaminants (including pesticide and veterinary drug residues and extraneous matter), toxins or disease-causing organisms in their food,
- to protect human life from plant- or animal-carried diseases,
- to protect animal or plant life from pests, diseases, or disease-causing organisms, or
- to prevent or limit other damage to a country from the entry, establishment or spread of pests (including weeds).

Examples of SPS measures:

- A requirement for inspections of products for microbiological contaminants.
- Maximum allowable levels of pesticide and other residues in food.
- A requirement that products originate from specific disease-free areas.
- An import ban on certain fruits that carry diseases or pests.