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Abstract

**Public and Private Standards for Food Safety
and Quality: International Trade Implications**

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This article examines the implications for the international trade environment of public and private standards for food safety and food quality. Public (mandatory) standards are a response to a perceived market failure and include mandatory risk assessment procedures, restrictions on harmful products, and labelling requirements. Disparate public standards create challenges for international trading partners and are dealt with through the WTO SPS and TBT Agreements. Private standards for food safety and quality are becoming a prominent feature of international food markets and include proprietary, consensus and third-party standards. The WTO has no jurisdiction over private standards. Key questions include whether private standards divert or reduce trade or whether they can be trade enhancing, and under what conditions. The implications for the WTO are discussed, and future trade policy research needs pertaining to the co-existence of public and private standards for food safety and quality are identified.

Keywords: food safety, GLOBALGAP, HACCP, mandatory standards, private standards