



18 November 2020

(20-8285)

Page: 1/1

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

**CHINA'S COVID-19 RELATED TRADE ACTIONS
AGAINST FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS –
NEW SPECIFIC TRADE CONCERN**

SUBMISSION BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The following document, received on 13 November 2020, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the United States of America.

1.1. The United States understands the concerns of consumers around the world who want food producers, processors, and regulators to act to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We all must work together to clearly and effectively communicate to consumers the safety of food and agricultural products.

1.2. We are concerned by several measures China has taken since June, including requiring exporter statements, suspension of imports from facilities where local media report worker cases of COVID-19, testing requirements for imported foods, and port-of-entry rejections of imported products when positive nucleic acid test results are reported.

1.3. We remain concerned that China has not provided the science-based justification to support the need for, or efficacy of, these measures. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) document titled "COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for Food Businesses", cited by China as the basis for its actions, states clearly that there "is no evidence to date of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses being transmitted via food or food packaging".

1.4. Members are experiencing an increasing number of COVID-19 related restrictions to export a variety of food and agricultural commodities to China. We are concerned with this development and the possibility that other trading partners may begin to emulate these measures, again, in the absence of scientific justification.

1.5. Unjustified trade restrictions adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic threaten the integrity of global food supply chains at a time when many WTO Members are already struggling to maintain food security. Through its most recent notification, [G/SPS/N/CHN/1173](#), China indicated that it is implementing its measures on an emergency basis. In order to maintain this measure, China must seek to obtain enough evidence to do so.

1.6. As Members of the WTO, we encourage China to withdraw these measures and work with its global partners to support the guidance of international organizations by building the body of scientific evidence on COVID-19. Collaborative engagement is essential as we collectively work to navigate this crisis, avoid unnecessary barriers to trade on food and agricultural products, and maintain food security for all.
