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Committee on Agriculture

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**UPDATE ON OECD ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST TO THE WTO COMMITTEE  
ON AGRICULTURE – WORK RELATED TO COVID-19**

**"COVID-19 AND AGRICULTURE"**

*Submission by the OECD*

The following submission, dated 23 February 2022, is being circulated at the request of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

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**1 OECD AGRICULTURAL POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION 2021**

1.1. In June 2021, the OECD published its latest *Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation* report, including a thematic focus on "Addressing the Challenges Facing Food Systems". Global food systems are facing a formidable "triple challenge" of delivering food security and nutrition for a growing world population, providing incomes and livelihoods for those involved in farming and other segments of the food chain, and doing so in a sustainable manner by reducing pressures on natural resources while contributing to reductions in GHG emissions. The report finds that, while significant progress has been made in the past decades across all of these dimensions, on balance agricultural policies are not serving the wider needs of food systems and do not address these three dimensions effectively.

1.2. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 led to containment measures that resulted in a profound economic shock. Nonetheless, as noted in the report, governments moved swiftly to keep agricultural supply chains functioning, including by designating agriculture and food as an essential sector and implementing nearly 800 measures across 54 countries in response to the pandemic. Substantial resources were earmarked for COVID-19 sectoral support, including USD 75 billion in OECD countries and USD 82 billion in emerging economies, even though actual disbursements have so far been much lower. As a result of these interventions, policies were generally successful in maintaining the overall functioning of food supply chains, albeit within an overall structure of agricultural support programmes that showed little change.

1.3. A significant number of COVID-19 responses, close to 20% of the total, were urgent measures, adopted in order to contain the pandemic while keeping food and agriculture supply chains working. Just under 70% of measures took the form of temporary relief, seeking to contain the impact of the crisis on agriculture and food sector actors, and should be phased out as the crisis recedes. Most of the remaining measures (10%) were "no regrets" policies with the potential to improve the long-term resilience of the agro-food sector, and which have the potential to be scaled up further. At the same time, 11% of measures had the potential to distort markets or be harmful to the environment. In particular, several countries imposed export restrictions in order to direct supplies to domestic markets.

1.4. The full report can be accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1787/2d810e01-en> while a related policy brief can be found at: [https://issuu.com/oecd.publishing/docs/agricultural\\_policy\\_monitoring\\_and\\_evaluation\\_2021](https://issuu.com/oecd.publishing/docs/agricultural_policy_monitoring_and_evaluation_2021).

1.5. A separate policy brief looks specifically at the way policy makers have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep agro-food markets functioning. It can be found at:

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/keep-calm-and-carry-on-feeding-agriculture-and-food-policy-responses-to-the-covid-19-crisis-db1bf302/>.

1.6. The next edition of the OECD *Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation* report will be published in June 2022 and will focus on the role of agricultural policies for achieving climate change mitigation targets, as set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

1.7. Contact: Martin von Lampe (Email: [martin.vonlampe@oecd.org](mailto:martin.vonlampe@oecd.org))

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