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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**CHINA'S COVID-19 RELATED TRADE ACTIONS AGAINST FOOD  
AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS – [SPECIFIC TRADE CONCERN 487](#)**

SUBMISSION BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The following submission, received on 20 July 2021, is the statement made by the United States of America at the 14-16 July 2021 WTO SPS Committee, and is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the United States of America.

1. The United States would like to reiterate the concerns we have shared during the last two SPS Committee meetings regarding several measures China continues to implement, including testing requirements for imported foods and port-of-entry rejections of imported products when positive nucleic acid test results are reported, and suspension of imports from specific facilities.
2. The United States and several other Members of this Committee have repeatedly requested China to withdraw these trade-disruptive and non-science based restrictions. Through notification [G/SPS/N/CHN/1173](#), China indicated that it is implementing these measures on an emergency basis. To maintain these provisional measures, China must seek to obtain enough evidence to justify them.
3. China has not provided any science-based justification or testing results to support the need for, or efficacy of, these measures. After more than a year since the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the Director-General of the WHO, the US Department of Agriculture, the US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Food and Drug Administration and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention emphasize that there is no credible evidence of food or food packaging associated with, or as a source of, viral transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus causing COVID-19.
4. It is particularly important to note that COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that is spread from person to person, unlike foodborne or gastrointestinal viruses that often make people ill through contaminated food. While there are relatively few reports of the virus being detected on food and packaging, most studies focus primarily on the detection of the virus' genetic fingerprint rather than evidence of transmission of virus resulting in human infection.
5. Our understanding, that the risk is exceedingly low for transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to humans via food and food packaging, is based upon the best available information from scientific bodies across the globe, including a continued international consensus.
6. As the world slowly begins the process of building back better, the unjustified trade restrictions adopted by China during the COVID-19 pandemic threaten global food supply chains, slow global recovery efforts, and further challenge global food security.
7. 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 seek to combat the pandemic, avoid unnecessary barriers to trade on food and agricultural products, and maintain food security for all.