European Commission

EU-MERCOSUR
Partnership Agreement

MERCOSUR

RESPECTING EUROPE'S HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

The EU-Mercosur partnership agreement

- Upholds, for imports into the EU, the EU's strict standards on food safety, and animal and plant health (SPS[1] standards).
- Aims to enhance the protection of human, animal, and plant life and health in the context of agriculture and fishery trade between the EU and Mercosur.
- Helps remove unnecessary barriers for animal and plant products to be exported to Mercosur.

EU SPS STANDARDS ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE

The EU has very stringent standards to protect human, animal and plant health. Any product sold in the EU (domestically produced or imported) must comply with the EU's SPS standards. These remain unaltered regardless of trade agreements concluded by the EU, such as the EU-Mercosur Agreement.

The EU:

- Keeps a robust SPS import system based on science, risk assessments, audits to third countries, border controls, and controls in the EU market, ensuring effective compliance with the EU rules and taking account of international standards.
- Remains fully independent in adopting safety criteria for products reaching the EU market, including the setting of maximum residue levels for pesticides that are of global environmental concern, such as neonicotinoids.
- Keeps a science-based approach on genetically modified organisms and any other food matters.
- Reaffirms the precautionary principle within the agreement, permitting the adoption of provisional SPS measures, including in cases where scientific information is insufficient.
- Conducts Impact Assessments to analyse potential alignment of production standards between domestic and imported products, notably on pesticides and animal welfare.
- Has announced an increase on the number of audits to third countries reinforced measures to strengthen border controls on imported food, animal and plant products.

EU animal and plant health and food safety import controls include:

- Audits and approval of the official control systems of the competent authorities of the third countries interested in exporting to the EU.
- Control of documents, identity checks (commodities' identification marks, stamps and other necessary product or package information) and physical checks (taking a sample of the product to look for pathogenic micro-organisms or illegal contaminants, controls of the means of transport and fitness of the animals being transported) carried out at the EU borders by national authorities.
- Meat imported into the EU must come from animals that were slaughtered or killed under animal welfare conditions equivalent to those of the EU.
- Sampling of products already at sale in the EU market (originating in the EU or imported).



[1] Sanitary and Phytosanitary

TARIFF CONDITIONALITY TO EXPORT EGGS TO THE EU

- To benefit from duty-free access to the EU market, the Mercosur countries will have to certify that the eggs they produce and export to the EU respect the EU rules for laying hen welfare.

REINFORCED COOPERATION TO BETTER TACKLING COMMON CHALLENGES

The EU-Mercosur partnership agreement:

- Promotes cooperation on animal welfare by establishing a structured dialogue and exchange of information between the EU and Mercosur.
- Reinforces transparency by improving the exchange of information between the EU and Mercosur that prevents unsafe products from entering our market.
- Contributes to the fight against antimicrobial resistance affecting humans and animals, including by coordinating action in food systems and improving cooperation in international organisations.

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO EU FOOD EXPORTS

- EU products exported to Mercosur will have to continue meeting the import requirements of the Mercosur countries, in the same way that the Mercosur products exported to the EU will have to continue meeting the import requirements of the EU.
- With the agreement, European exporters will benefit from faster, simpler, more predictable import approval procedures and clear and transparent rules, including for audits.
- The agreement includes detailed procedures, for example to facilitate the recognition of animal diseases and pest-free areas in the EU, allowing exports to Mercosur of plants, animals, and their products from such unaffected areas ('regionalisation').



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