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EU-GEORGIA TRADE

Agricultural products explained

Factsheet on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)

Trade in agricultural products between the EU and Georgia has remained limited in recent years. The main reasons for this were the EU's relatively high import duties and the fact that the EU and Georgia had different approaches to food safety.

Under the DCFTA, the EU and Georgia will remove all their import duties on agricultural products. The Agreement also provides a plan for reforming Georgia's rules on animal and plant health and hygiene. The reform process will be an opportunity to make Georgian food products safer and, together, these measures will boost Georgia's exports of agricultural products.

WHAT ARE THESE HYGIENE RULES? WHY DOES GEORGIA NEED THEM?



Although Georgia belongs to the relevant international bodies that regulate food safety, not all its agricultural products comply with the EU's food safety regulations or those of other countries.

Food safety rules exist to protect consumer health and public health in general. Whether we live in Georgia or the EU, we are all consumers of agricultural products. Food safety rules apply to all foods be they of plant or animal origin. The rules have to be respected along the entire food chain.

Under the DCFTA, the reform of Georgia's food safety regulations will aim at ensuring that its food products meet international standards. By doing so, it will improve the safety of Georgian consumers and increase exports of Georgian food products.

SHOULD SMALL PRODUCERS BE CONCERNED?

The hygiene rules do not apply to production for private consumption or to small quantities supplied by a producer to a consumer or a local shop. Such exceptions are important not only for small famers in Georgia: they are equally important for many small farmers in the EU. That is why EU rules contain such exceptions and why they should be reflected in Georgia's reforms.

AS A BUSINESSMAN, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT:

- ✓ Georgia's reforms will include some general rules that apply to all agricultural sectors, such as those covering the institutions in charge, obligatory food inspections, and the hygiene standards along the entire food chain, i.e. during production, storage and distribution.
- ✓ Within six months of the DCFTA coming into effect, in addition to the above rules Georgia will also be able to decide which specific agricultural products it wants to make a priority for its reforms.
- ✓ Once agreed, the process of adopting the required standards will be spread over time. Georgia will decide how long the process should the take for each specific product



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✓ The reforms will apply both to agricultural products for domestic consumption and to those destined for export. As part of the export procedures, Georgian food products, in particular meat, will need to be checked at the Georgian border. Likewise, products imported into Georgia will be checked by officials before reaching consumers.

✓ Once all reforms are completed, the EU will verify Georgia's food safety system and, if approved, will recognise it as equivalent to its own. This means that the Georgian agricultural products covered by the reforms will be able to enter the EU market. Higher quality Georgian products will also be easier to export to other countries.

AS A CONSUMER YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT:

✓ You will be a direct beneficiary of this process – health risks, such as food poisoning, will be less likely. Products in the shops will not only be safer but better quality too.

✓ Your rights as a consumer will be better protected.

✓ Not all products will be subject to reform.

✓ Some people worry that changes will mean price increases. In fact, food production will become more efficient and new market opportunities will bring prices down. There will also be a safer and wider selection of products, which means a healthier and better choice for consumers.

✓ The rules for small-scale farmers or for one's own consumption will be more flexible. In the EU, exceptions are allowed specifically to take into account the needs of small farmers.



Did you know that...

... the EU is the single largest donor supporting the improvement of food safety in Georgia.

...the EU and Georgia belong to the international organisations that develop food safety rules. These are the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

...in the EU, the approach to food safety is based on the principle "from farm to fork". Hygiene needs to be ensured at all stages, from farm to the shop.

...in Georgia, the National Food Agency is responsible for food safety and for reforming Georgia's rules. Georgia's basic regulation on the hygiene of foodstuffs is called the Food Safety Code.

...In 2013, Georgia imported more agricultural products (EUR 0.97 million) than it exported (EUR 0.58 million). About 15% of the imports came from the EU. About 23% of Georgia's exports went to the EU.

...in 2013, the EU was the second biggest export market for Georgian agricultural products, after Azerbaijan.

...in 2013, Georgia's most important agricultural exports were beverages and spirits, edible fruits and nuts (about EUR 40 million in total).

... most of Georgia's exports of animals and animal products go to its neighbours. Azerbaijan is the main market for live animals exported from Georgia, while in 2013 Armenia bought half of Georgia's dairy and fish exports. Kazakhstan is also an important market for Georgian dairy products.

More on the topic...

- Read **Articles 50-65** (Chapter 4 of Title IV) of the Association Agreement/DCFTA to know exactly what Georgia and the EU agreed on food safety. In the future, **Annex XI** will list the agricultural sectors under reform.
- You can find the Association Agreement on the website of the EU Delegation to Georgia http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/index_en.htm (in English) or of the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfa.gov.ge> (in Georgian).
- If you would like to know more about how the EU's regulates agricultural products, check the website of the [European Commission](#) and of the [European Food Safety Authority](#).
- Exporters to the EU can check out the requirements on the [Export Helpdesk website](#).
- For any further questions, contact us: Delegation-Georgia@eeas.europa.eu.