

May FAEA Report for Bangladesh

(05/29/2020)

Executive Summary

Summary of Food Trade Situation

Both food imports and exports have declined. Government responses include:

- Tariffs on feed for fisheries, livestock and poultry have been reduced.
- Letter of Credit (LC) margins have been eased for essential commodities.
- Instructions issued on prioritized customs clearance and movement of food, feed and allied products from port, and temporary storage facilities at port side have been created.
- No restrictions have been placed on the transport of food, feed, and agricultural processing accessories across the country.

Despite these proactive measures to facilitate easy imports of food, feed and agricultural commodities and inputs, the challenges are substantial as may be seen below.

- Over a dozen land ports have banned exports and imports since 21 January 2020.
- Chittagong seaport operations are severely hampered due to non-clearance of incoming cargo.
- The opening and settlement of LC has reduced drastically in 2020 Quarter 1 compared to last year due to the closure of imports from China and India; most farm machineries and spare parts are imported from these two countries and their availability may become scarce in 4-6 months.
- Due to the lockdown, C&F and shipping agents have ceased their operations.
- Food processing/ related units are also closed which in turn has impacted the demand for the shipments to be transported out of the ports.

Summary of Sanitary/Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Developments

1. Md. Abdul Kayowm Sarker, Additional Secretary (Ministry of Public Administration) has been appointed as the new Chairman of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority beginning 4th May 2020.
2. Food Safety (Food Contact Material) Regulations, 2019 was published recently. BFSA will also publish another regulation on Food Safety (Obligation of Food Business Operator) Regulations, 2020. (Follow-up: Will there be any potential impact on imports of FAEA products?)
3. BFSA is also working to amend the Food safety act 2013 by incorporating some of the food safety and quality issues and strengthening executive power of BFSA. (Follow-up: Will there be any potential impact on imports of FAEA products?)
4. A new policy order for importing parent stock (PS) and Grand Parent (GP) of day-old chicks has been drafted. The final draft policy order is uploaded in the webpage for public comments. (Follow-up: Please provide link to webpage.)

Summary of Other Issues

1. Local businesses are not fully aware of the different SPS measures and functions of the relevant Government regulatory bodies.
2. It is difficult to get comprehensive information on SPS and TBT in Bangladesh through a single window. There is no body or umbrella organization nor even any electronic platform. Only Bangladesh Trade Portal provides two separate links of the SPS and TBT enquiry points. (Follow-up: Please provide the links.)

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Requests for Assistance

1. Mr. Rezaul Karim, Member, BFSA requested assistance to draft two new regulations on Hotel/Restaurant Hygiene and Product recall. (Follow-up: Please provide details on what type of assistance is needed.)
2. Md. Abdul Kayowm Sarker, BFSA Chairman requested support to conduct in-house basic foundation or refresher training for newly recruited officers of BFSA. (Follow-up: Specifically, what type of training is requested?)
3. BFSA and BSTI officials are interested in participating in Codex committee meetings scheduled to be held in Canada, USA, Germany and Korea on:
 - 3.1. Codex Committee Food Labelling (CCFL)
 - 3.2. Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)¹
 - 3.3. Codex Committee Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU)
 - 3.4. Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance (TFAMR)²(Follow-up: What are their topics of interest? Are their positions supportive or inagreement with U.S. positions?)
4. BFSA officials are interested in attending the International Food Safety Conference. (Follow-up: Please provide more information about the Intn'l Food Safety Conference.)

¹ Follow up with FAEA Board

² Follow up with FAEA Board

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SPS, TBT and Codex Developments

- **Food Safety**

Md. Abdul Kayowm Sarker, Additional Secretary (Ministry of Public Administration) has been appointed as the new Chairman of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) beginning 4th May 2020.

Food Safety (Food Contact Material) Regulations, 2019 were recently published. BFSA will also publish another regulation on Food Safety (Obligation of Food Business Operator) Regulations, 2020. It is expected to publish as soon as the office resumes with normal activities.

BFSA is also working to amend the Food safety act 2013 by incorporating some of the food safety and quality issues and strengthening executive power of BFSA. Mr. Rezaul Karim, Member, BFSA has requested help to draft two new regulations on Hotel/restaurant Hygiene and Product recall. The Chairman of BFSA also requested support to conduct inhouse basic foundation or refresher training for newly recruited officers of BFSA.

BFSA officials are interested in participating in Codex meetings and in attending the FAO International Food Safety Conference.

BSTI is mandated to certify the quality of commodities, materials, produces, products and other things including food materials, whether for local consumption, export or import as per Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Act, 2018 and Standards of Weight and Measurement Act, 2018. Moreover, the institution is also entrusted to grade and mark agricultural produce in a manner provided in the Agricultural Produce Grading and Marking Act, 1937 and the rules framed thereunder for the purpose of export; and deals with the prohibition of improper use of mark. BSTI has 76 food Standards under Mandatory Certification Mark Scheme and 23 imported food products under Mandatory Certification Mark.

- **Feed Safety**

There are no new developments regarding animal Feed safety Laws and regulations. The Fish Feed and Animal Feed Act, 2010 and Animal Feed Rules, 2013 remain applicable for ensuring safety and quality of animal feed in Bangladesh.

- **Animal Health and Production**

The import policy order for importing Parent Stock (PS) and Grand Parent (GP) of day old chicks has been drafted. The final draft policy order is uploaded in the webpage for public comments. Import policy order also includes hatching eggs. It was mentioned that this policy should be in compliance with the requirement of Bangladesh Import policy order 2018-21, OIE, Animal Disease Act, 2005, Amendment of Animal Diseases Rules, 2008, Animal Welfare Act 2019 and Bangladesh Livestock and Livestock Products, Quarantine Act, 2005.

- **Codex**

BSTI is the National Codex Contact Point (NCCP) of Codex Alimentarius Commission in Bangladesh since 1975. The BSTI has already harmonized more than 252 Codex Standards as Bangladesh Standards. All standards developed by BSTI is issued through Statutory Regulatory Orders (SRO) under the provision laid down in clause 24 of the previous BSTI Ordinance 1985 (Currently known as BSTI Act; 2018). The institution is responsible for operating its own Certification Mark Scheme for both mandatory certification for 76 food items and voluntary certification for food items.

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Both BSTI and BFSA officials are interested in attending Codex committee and Task Force meetings on Food Labelling, Food Hygiene, Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, and Antimicrobial Resistance scheduled to be held in Canada, USA, Germany and Korea.

- **Other Issues**

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is aware of international SPS standards; however the country has few policies or regulatory infrastructure to adequately implement sound SPS systems. Currently there are 12 ministries and 18 agencies in the government who are directly involved in controlling affairs of food and food safety.

Different ministries, bodies and organizations are responsible for implementing or enforcing these rules and policies. The related bodies, however, lack coordination.

The WTO cell in the Ministry of Commerce is currently the national notification authority of SPS measures and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institutions (BSTI) is focal point for TBT. SPS measures are more comprehensive than TBT measures. Ministries of agriculture, Bangladesh Food safety Authority, Ministry of Food, Health, Fisheries and Environment and their respective departments or divisions are involved in SPS related matters. Local businesses are not fully aware of the different SPS measures and functions of the related government bodies.

Moreover, it is difficult to get comprehensive information on SPS and TBT in Bangladesh through a single window. There is no such body or umbrella organization nor even any electronic platform. Only Bangladesh Trade Portal provides two separate links of the SPS and TBT enquiry points. One can send a request to the points seeking information on any SPS or TBT measure.

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