

International Trade Barriers in Entry and Exit Animal Quarantine and China's Countermeasures

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Abstract: With the deepening of international exchanges, international trade has become an increasingly common economic phenomenon. Animals and animal products are also important commodities in international trade. China is a major producer of meat products, but at present, China's meat products export is at a very low level. This aspect is related to domestic consumption demand, but it is also subject to the trade barriers of developed countries to a large extent. Western developed countries often use sanitary standards and even animal welfare as excuses to more covertly restrict China's meat exports. Therefore, China needs to take corresponding countermeasures. Hainan Province, as the frontier of China's exploration and construction of a free trade port, and as a province with a relatively high proportion of agriculture in the industrial structure, the import and export of meat products are particularly faced with huge challenges. In view of the above problems, this paper puts forward some thoughts and suggestions.

1. Introduction

With the development of commodity economy, international trade is almost everywhere. Animals and animal products, as commodities that are often contacted and even indispensable in human daily activities, also frequently generate cross-border flows. However, due to the natural risk factors of animals and animal products (such as the problem of pathogenic microorganisms, the risk of species invasion during the introduction of living animals, and the problem of animal welfare), the requirements for inspection and quarantine in cross-border trade are relatively high, which objectively forms the trade barriers of some importing countries to exporting countries. Some emerging market economies with obvious comparative advantages in livestock and poultry products are the deep victims of invisible trade barriers. China is also one of them.

2. About quarantine of entry-exit animals

The quarantine of entry-exit animals (especially entry) and animal products is very important for any country. It helps to prevent some epidemic diseases from entering the country or region through trade, and ensure the quality of entry products and the health and safety of the country. Therefore, there are strict procedures for inspection and quarantine of animals and animal products at the ports of entry of goods in various countries and regions.

At present, the objects involved in entry-exit inspection and quarantine in various countries and regions in the world mainly include: (1) import and export inspection; (2) Quarantine of passengers' belongings; (3) International postal packet quarantine; (4) Transit quarantine; (5) Quarantine of transportation vehicles, etc. Among them, the quarantine of animals and animal products mainly includes the existence and content of pathogenic microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, parasites, etc.), animal welfare, and so on.

3. On International trade and international trade barriers

Due to the interests of various national subjects, international trade has never been truly free. Each country has various types of trade protection and restrictions more or less, openly or covertly. It is generally believed that international trade barriers are mainly divided into tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers. Tariff barriers are generally considered as explicit and direct forms of trade barriers.[1] This is generally regarded as a protectionist act that restricts the freedom of trade, which will be opposed by market participants, and is also detrimental to the image and credibility of the country in international trade practice. Therefore, some countries, especially developed countries, are increasingly turning to non-tariff barriers to restrict the import of goods or services from other countries.

Non-tariff barriers mainly take the following forms: (1) barriers to customs clearance; (2) Intellectual property barriers; (3) Import ban and import license; (4) Technical barriers; (5) Hygiene and health measures; (6) Trade remedy measures; (7) Discrimination against health products; (8) Export restrictions; (9) Export subsidies and dumping, etc. In the trade of animals and animal products, the underdeveloped countries are mainly faced with (4) (5), namely technical barriers and health barriers, especially the latter.

It should be pointed out that tariff barriers are easily evaded through price compensation; However, non-tariff barriers, despite their hidden forms, have a wide range of applications, and their effects are often far stronger than tariff barriers, making the shielded subjects more insurmountable.

4. Main problems faced by China in the export of animals and animal products

China's total meat output accounts for about 30% of the world's total level, but its meat exports only account for 1/30 of the world's total meat exports, which is very incompatible with the actual situation of the world's largest meat producer. This is largely due to the restrictions of the above-mentioned invisible trade barriers, which hinder the export of Chinese meat products. As the makers of trade rules, developed countries often use sanitary standards, animal welfare and other reasons to achieve the purpose of substantially restricting the import of animals and animal products from China, and even have the behavior of restricting the import of shrimp products from China on the grounds of "shrimp nets without turtle escape devices".[2] These are actually the manifestation of trade hegemony under the guise of health and welfare. These include:

4.1. Technical and health aspects

Although China is a large agricultural country, at least at present, it is not a strong agricultural country. In terms of economic animal breeding, large-scale and intensive breeding is not common in many major agricultural production areas, and small-scale free-range breeding by farmers is widespread. There are often many problems with livestock and poultry raised by farmers in free range, mainly including:

- (1) Lack of necessary immunization;
- (2) Do not have or basically do not have the professional knowledge and skills to raise livestock

and poultry, and have poor anti-risk ability;

(3) Lack of effective control and treatment of the epidemic of infectious diseases;

(4) The laws and regulations of export quarantine are not perfect, the coverage is narrow, and the technical means of quarantine are limited.

Due to the above reasons, some animal products produced in China do have certain risks, which has caused certain obstacles to export circulation.

4.2. Standard issues

Although China is already the second largest country in the world in terms of economic aggregate, in fact, as a country with a late start, a low starting point, and a relatively backward structure and quality, China is still in the position of passive recipient of rules in many aspects of international exchanges, and there is not much room for bargaining.

4.3. Animal welfare issues

The issue of animal welfare has become an excellent reason for Western hegemonic countries to use it as a trade barrier. Western countries often refuse to import chicken products from China on the grounds of "chicken houses are not spacious and comfortable enough". It is acceptable to say that skinning animals alive is indeed harmful to animal welfare; However, the issue of breeding population density is undoubtedly a trade hegemony imposed on the standard recipient countries. Even the developed countries themselves cannot achieve it, but they are imposed on emerging market economies in disguised form and covertly to achieve their own purpose of resisting China's import of livestock and poultry products.

Although the above barriers are often substantial trade bully (for example, the West, which claims to attach great importance to animal welfare, has also been controversial by public opinion on issues such as the consumption of foie gras, but developed countries have selectively screened out their own problems), under the current institutional framework, emerging market economies have no strong ability to counter this.

5. China's Countermeasures against the above-mentioned trade hegemony

It is a long-term national policy of China to unswervingly expand its opening to the outside world. The pace of China's opening up can only be expanded, not reduced. In the face of the above-mentioned explicit and hidden barriers, China, as a large agricultural output country, cannot wait to die. According to the above problems, this paper tries to put forward some countermeasures.

5.1. Improving your own technical level

Although the current international trading system and system have many unreasonable factors of hegemonic nature, as a major producer and exporter of agricultural primary products, we should also strive to improve the technical level of our own industries and products:

(1) We should improve the technical content of farmers' free-range livestock and poultry, implement mandatory group immunization, improve the anti-risk ability of small and medium-sized agricultural producers, as well as the quality of livestock and poultry products in China;

(2) We should perfect the laws and regulations on exit quarantine of livestock and poultry products in China;

(3) We should realize agricultural modernization and increase the added value of agricultural products.

5.2. Establishing necessary early warning mechanism

(1) We should establish an early warning mechanism for animal welfare barriers as soon as possible, collect, sort out and track foreign animal welfare barriers and measures in a timely manner, in order to strengthen the study of relevant laws and regulations and standards of developed countries and China's major trading partners, and appeal to international institutions for the abuse of trade barriers.

(2) The establishment of information sharing and information communication and coordination mechanism mainly refers to the establishment of a timely and effective communication mechanism between enterprises and governments as well as between enterprises and enterprises.

5.3. Actively expanding domestic trade

While China is a major producer of agricultural primary products, we are also a major consumer of meat products. After more than 40 years of reform and opening up, China has already completed the transition from a shortage economy to a surplus economy. The Chinese people's dining table is increasingly abundant, and the nutrition structure is also increasingly optimized. To this end, China's meat producers should actively promote the domestic trade circulation while improving the quality of their own products, realize the enrichment and diversification of meat products, and increase the added value of animal products, so that the majority of Chinese people can eat more assured meat and high-quality meat.

5.4. Establishing its voice in international trade technical standards

True fairness never exists. Like the principle that "weak countries have no diplomacy", technical standards and health standards are always in the hands of a few developed countries, and even international organizations such as the WTO and IMF are also controlled by a few countries. Developing countries are often in a passive acceptance position. However, the manipulation of big countries does not mean that the standard system of developed countries must be advanced and complete. The outbreak of mad cow disease in Britain around 2000 and the discharge of nuclear waste water in Japan in recent years are excellent examples. The above-mentioned countries are undoubtedly among the developed countries, but serious public health events have broken out in themselves. At the time of the above events, the countries represented by the United States almost immediately announced that they would stop importing beef products from the United Kingdom and seafood from Japan. The "rollover" of public health in developed countries has also become an opportunity for emerging market economy countries, and emerging market economy countries should also take this opportunity to improve their technical level and international discourse.

At present, China has increasingly frequent trade exchanges with major market economy countries and neighboring countries in the world, and has already become or is becoming the largest trading partner or the leading major trading partner of many economic entities in the world. The trade demand of countries for China has deepened year by year, and China needs each other with other countries and regions in the world. Therefore, the change of unreasonable international trade rules is imminent. We should make continuous efforts to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and improve China's position in the international community and its voice in international exchanges.

6. Relevant practice exploration of Hainan free trade port

In 2018, the CPC Central Committee announced its support for the construction of a free trade zone in Hainan Province and explored the construction of a free trade port; In June 2020, the Overall

Plan for Hainan Free Trade Port was issued; In June 2021, the National People's Congress passed the Hainan Free Trade Port Law, pushing Hainan Province to an unprecedented height of opening-up. Hainan is a province with high agricultural output value. At the same time, due to the superior natural conditions, the quality of meat products in Hainan Province is generally excellent, such as the famous Wenchang chicken, Ding'an Yellow Cattle, Wanning Dongshan Sheep, Baoting Shiling Chicken, etc., which are characteristic and high-quality industries in Hainan. However, at present, the production of the above products, especially the quantity and amount of exports, are at a very low level. However, this also shows that Hainan Province has great potential in the export of animals and animal products. At present, the scale and industrial evolution level of the livestock and poultry industry in Hainan Province is still relatively low, with farmers mainly raising livestock and poultry in free range. However, there is no doubt that the anti-risk ability of the livestock and poultry industry in free range is low, and it is not as good as large-scale and intensive breeding enterprises in terms of health standards, animal welfare, etc., and it is more difficult to meet the export standards set by western developed countries. Therefore, Hainan Province still has a long way to go in livestock and poultry breeding and export, and has broad prospects for progress.

At the same time, as a pilot free trade port zone with "first line liberalization and second line control", Hainan Province also faces a large number of direct import of livestock and poultry products, which also brings great challenges to port quarantine. Therefore, this issue is particularly significant for Hainan Province. Hainan has become more and more open to the outside world. The free trade port implements "negative list" management on most imported goods, and the tangible trade barriers are greatly reduced; But at the same time, because animals and animal products do carry risk factors, this has brought greater requirements for Hainan free trade port; Especially for our import (entry) quarantine department, there is more pressure. On the one hand, Hainan Province should face the mission of improving the living standard of residents; On the other hand, it is also necessary to ensure the health and even biological safety of the island and even the whole country, which requires Hainan Province to pay more attention to improving its own risk prevention ability while improving its openness to the outside world.

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