

## โครงการย่อยที่ 11

ปัจจัยกำหนดความสามารถในการปฏิบัติตามมาตรการทางด้านสุขอนามัย<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract**

The main objective of this paper is to examine the factors determining the import refusals imposed by developed countries in the food sector during the period 2002-14. Our study shows that external factors, especially suspicions about the demand for trade protection from producers in the US, are significant in determining import refusals. This could emerge because food safety measures tend to be less transparent than tariffs or quotas. Thus, there is ample room for developed countries to tweak the standards to be stronger than necessary for achieving optimal levels of social protection, and to tweak the related testing and certification procedures to make their local imports more competitive. In developing countries, the evidence is found only in two key food exporting regions, which are East Asia and Latin America. Thailand is among other developing East Asian countries, which we find some suspicious evidence of using food safety as trade protection. At a product level, our study reveals evidence driving suspicion in the case of fruits and vegetables (both traditional and processed), coffee, tea, preparation of cereal and other edible products. Meanwhile, concerning fish and crustaceans and the preparation of fish and crustaceans, suspicious evidence is found only in connection with key exporters of these products to the US, including Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, India and Ecuador. In addition, our study shows that US FDA tends to use information from other sources, including past refusals from a region in imposing detentions on exporting firms in that region.

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With regard to internal factors, income level is found to be crucial in determining import refusals. Conditions related to the agriculture sector, production technology and local infrastructure tend to improve exponentially in line with rising income levels, thereby reducing the totality of refusals. However, in Thailand, our study finds an unexpected sign of coefficient corresponding to income level. The coefficient corresponding to income per capita becomes insignificant and even turns out to be positive in fish and crustaceans and preparation of fish and crustaceans. This implies that factors, which are essential path to improve quality, taste, hygiene and productivity in agriculture and food sectors, tends to improve at the slower speed than growing income. We find evidence of learning curve in Thailand, but only for large firms. This suggests that technology improvement in complying with US food safety standards tend to be concentrated on large firms.

There are three policy inferences that can be drawn from our study. First, with suspicious about using food safety standard as trade protectionist tool by the US, trade representative in developing countries, including Thailand, needs to play more active role in identifying and eliminating unfair measures for their food exporting firms. Second, the task of complying with SPS should be viewed not just as a barrier, but also an opportunity to upgrade quality standards and market sophistication in the food export sector. In Thailand, not only to speed up an improvement in agriculture and food sectors to match well with the income growing up, but the attention should be paid more also on how to allocate knowledge and technology improvement to small/medium size firms. Third, while our study shows that US FDA tends to use information from other sources, including past refusals from a region, regional cooperation in food safety is needed to ensure the improvement of food safety standards in all countries in the region, which would eventually help those countries, including Thailand, reduce detained shipments from the US.

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