



A new version of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), which could overcome supply management in Canada and mechanisms reflecting the specificity of food products.

Since the early seventies, (the) supply management is the mechanism used by producers of milk, poultry and eggs from Canada so that their production meets the demand of Canadian consumers while avoiding overproduction and ensuring an adequate income to farmers. The system of supply management is of considerable economic importance – particularly for agricultural production in Quebec and Ontario.

Many Canadian farmers put up with for several years to the pressure brought about by the liberalization of trade in agriculture. They now fear that the new version of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) could be harmful – not only to the supply management system of the offer but it also puts at risk the various measures to promote specificity of foods and their composition standards.

Concluded in 1995 and made in the mold of agreements overseen by the World Trade Organization (WTO), Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) is an intergovernmental agreement between the Canadian provinces and territories, and the Canadian federal government. It aims to liberalize trade between the provinces and territories. Currently subject to the ratification process, the new version of this agreement could actually open the door to challenging laws that support the Canadian system of supply management and the other measures mentioned above. According to the mechanism of dispute settlement in the AIT and allegedly changes of the chapter on agricultural trade, agribusiness can handle this type of complaint. And it can now use major retaliatory economic measures to force changes or the repeal of these texts.

This situation reminds us that the Lascaux program is an opportunity to question – in terms of food security – international and national pressures faced by mechanisms such as the supply management. Ultimately, in this case, domestic pressures may overcome these systems.

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