

# US-EU and WTO Agricultural Trade Policy: A Contextual Study

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## Abstract

The US and the EU have been the main architects and players of the GATT-WTO trading system. Indeed, there is no shortage of opportunities for US-EU trade cooperation under the GATT-WTO regime. However, agriculture has become the leading area of disputes in the US-EU trade relations. This paper reviews trade policy areas in the US and the EU agricultural sector and their impacts on the GATT-WTO system. In carrying out these objectives, the paper emphasizes the use of appropriate combinations of historical, economic, political and legal analyses. In most cases, each general subject is discussed from both American and European perspectives.

Many US-EU trade disputes in agriculture cover matters on which there is widespread controversy and tension within the entire international trading system. Therefore, the legal approach applied in this paper is also relevant for studying trade policy in general, particularly from the GATT-WTO terms. The main features of this paper lie in the following. First, it brings together and makes use of a very wide range of primary and secondary sources. Second, it pays attention to the economic and political realities within which international trade operates, and to the role of bargaining muscle in securing trading regimes. Third, it justifies these views in a very complex issue of international trade: agriculture. Alternative policy options to reduce tensions and lessen the risks of a breakdown of the GATT-WTO system were considered in the conclusion of this paper.