

South Africa seeks panels review of EU measures, affecting fruits imports

South Africa submitted two requests for panels in disputes it initiated concerning European Union regulations governing the importation of citrus fruits, which impact imports from South Africa. The measures in question concern import restrictions imposed by the EU to control spread of the insect *Thaumatotibia leucotreta*, or False Codling Moth, and the fungus *P. citricarpa*, known as "citrus black spot." Consultations with the EU aimed at resolving the dispute took place but did not resolve in a mutually agreed solution.

South Africa said that in both cases, the EU measures were not based on scientific principles, are maintained without sufficient scientific evidence, and are more trade-restrictive than necessary to achieve the EU's appropriate level of protection. South Africa also said the EU failed to account for regional differences with regards to pest risk in the application of the measures. The measures are having a severe impact on South Africa's citrus exports, which provide jobs to more than 140,000 people in the country, it added. Moreover, the measures affect other countries in the region that depend on South Africa's infrastructure for their citrus fruit exports.

South Africa said it needed to ensure that its rights are safeguarded through WTO dispute settlement procedures but that it is open to continued talks with the EU in order to secure a mutually agreed solution.

The European Union said it regretted South Africa's decision to pursue panel proceedings in the two cases but maintained that its pest control measures are entirely justified and that it would succeed in any dispute proceedings. The EU added that it was not ready at this meeting to agree to the requests for panels from South Africa.

The DSB took note of the statements and agreed to revert to these matters, should a requesting member wish to do so.

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