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The export effects of the transatlantic countries' food safety regulations in Africa

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The contemporariness of the issues of food safety regulations in global trade and for consumer's behavior cannot be overemphasized. This category of non-tariff measures stands out among other non-price trade measures, especially as it concerns developing countries, particularly Africa's market access to developed countries' markets. This is because it relates/borders on human and animal health as well as the protection and safety of the environment. Moreover, these food regulations could be used as measures of trade policies, which could be either trade liberalizing or protective. These regulations for some commodities at times can almost double the trade restrictive impact imposed by tariffs. The preponderance of food regulations in international trade and the stringency in standards application has trade effects for Africa. The proliferation of preferential tariffs among trading partners has brought to fore the importance and increasing use of technical regulations in global trade. These regulations have their pros and cons for different economic agents. Hence, Africa's exporters perceived these regulations as important market access conditions and determinants of accessing the market of their trading partners, particularly the European Union (EU) and United States of America (USA). The increasing incidences of the food regulations has been seen as eroding their exports competitiveness in these markets because of the additional burden of costs associated with their compliance. It is on this basis that this study investigated the export effects of the EU and the US vegetables standard regulations for Africa in a gravity model that explore disentangle, these effects at both the extensive and intensive margins of exports. To explore the decision to export, the study considers zero trade flows and covers 52 African countries from 1995 to 2015. The findings suggest that the US market is more accessible than the EU market for Africa's vegetables' export. Africa's exporters need to upgrade their commodity standards to improve their EU market access.

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