

The economic crisis and agricultural protectionism

Juan Nava
njv@mrecic.gob.ar
Carlos Galperín
gci@mrecic.gob.ar
Verónica Fossati*
vfo@mrecic.gob.ar

Abstract

As a result of the economic crisis, the agricultural sector benefited from a variety of both border and domestic measures of different kinds. In such a highly protected sector as farming, an intensification of protectionist measures and support amid an economic crisis like that initiated in 2008 would have come as no surprise. Nevertheless, not only have the measures applied in relation to this sector been very few, but several of them have been temporary and those that still remain do not appear to be, at least *a priori*, significant in magnitude.

This could lead us to think that the impact of the crisis on agricultural protectionism has not been significant, neither from a qualitative perspective—the instruments used were the same as those prevailing before the crisis—nor from a quantitative one—the crisis did not entail an intensification of trade-defence measures, the reintroduction of export subsidies by some developed countries was temporary and limited to certain products, tariffs were not increased except only temporarily in some countries and specific products, and not all countries raised producer support (as estimated by the OECD).

Consequently, if agricultural protection policies are considered, it seems that the crisis has had a greater impact on sectors other than farming. A possible explanation for this is that the farming sector already enjoys a higher level of protection than other sectors, even when there is no crisis, and that many of these measures are usually designed to increase their protective effect at times of price, production and income falls.

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