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products, frozen vegetables, fruit/vegetable juice, and frozen convenience food containing meat or aquatic products) to pass a HACCP system examination for hygiene certification before producing, processing, or storing exported food. Use of HACCP systems is expected to improve greatly the sanitary situation of those exported foods.

Organic food production is getting more and more attention because of increasingly strong demand from the world market. World trade in organic foods totaled U.S.$21 billion in 2002 and the market continues to grow rapidly. Many Chinese producers choose organic food production to take advantage of relatively higher product market prices and a production technology that may favor smaller producers and those with relatively low labor costs.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHINA IN RESPONSE TO CURRENT SPS MEASURES

Although SPS condition levels as a whole in China are low, the coastal and open provinces and regions have reached SPS conditions consistent with international standards as a result of their relatively open markets and exports to developed countries. These markets are now mostly controlled by the “invisible hand” of international market forces, and producers can quickly adjust production to market signals. However, large regional differences limit prospects in international markets, and it will take some time to make the necessary adjustments to improve the overall SPS conditions in China. During the transition, the potential for exports of China’s agricultural production will vary, depending on the level and changes in SPS requirements by major importing countries, Chinese producers’ adjustment, and the competition from other exporting countries.

As China works to respond to the SPS regulations of other countries, concerns have arisen that some countries will use SPS barriers to keep out lower-cost Chinese products in order to protect domestic markets by setting relatively high standards or strict inspections. As China faces more SPS conflicts, the government will participate in bilateral negotiations to resist unfair trade restrictions and discrimination and is likely to utilize the WTO to coordinate and resolve trade disputes. As a member of the WTO, China can participate in the negotiation and establishment of international regulations and standards to obtain a more equal position for its agricultural exports.

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