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# Navigating Global Palates: A Librarian's Guide to International Food Law for Researchers

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# Overview

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Key frameworks

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Essential resources

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Pitfalls & quick tips

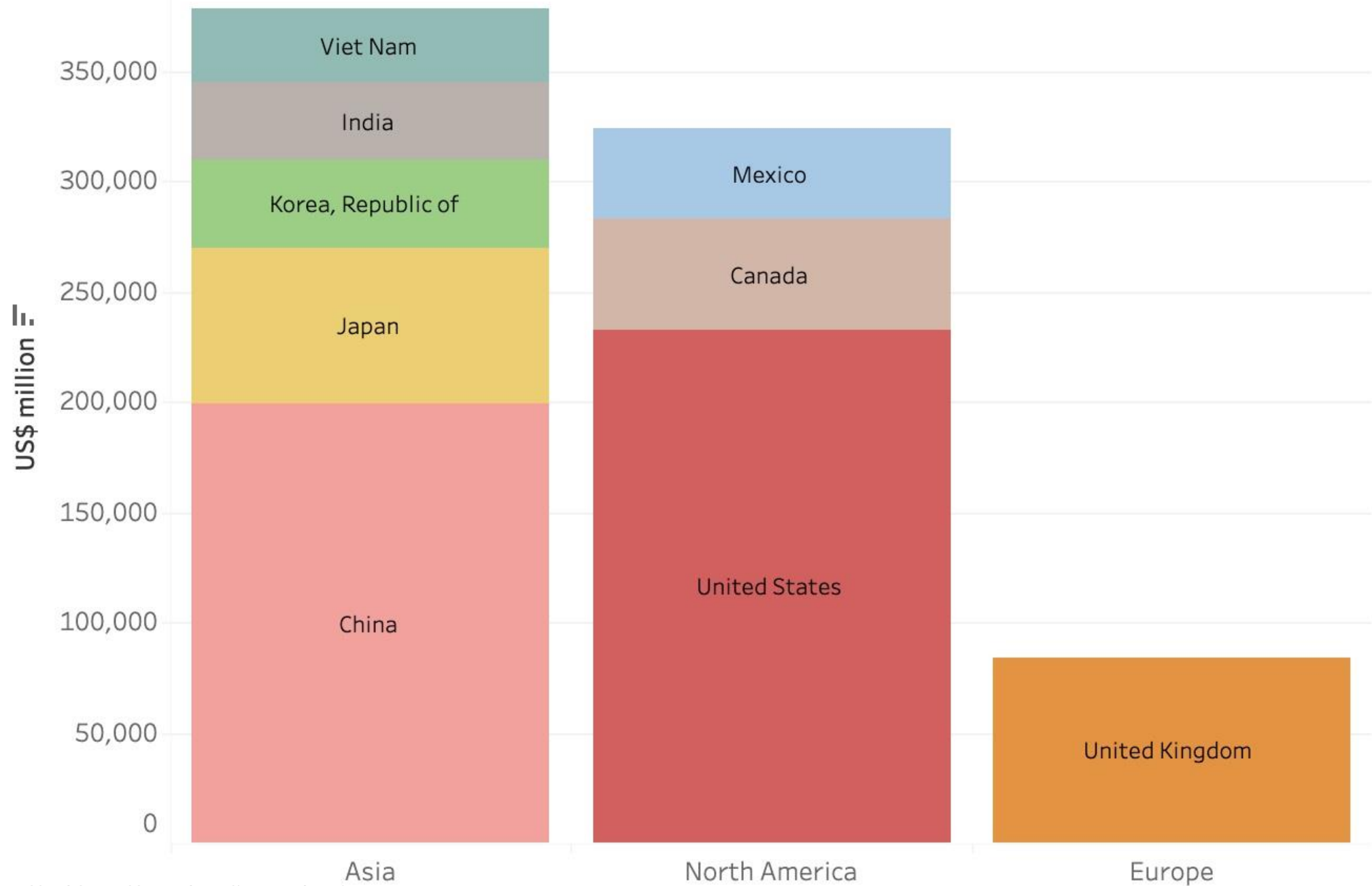
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Actionable workflow

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Examples

# Global Food Imports 2024



# Global Food Exports, 2024



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# Understanding the Frameworks of International Food Law

A top-down view of a diverse array of fresh ingredients. In the center is a halved avocado. Surrounding it are various items: a bowl of red cherry tomatoes, a bowl of yellow corn kernels, a bowl of blueberries, a bowl of sliced kiwi, a bowl of sliced pineapple, a bowl of almonds, a bowl of quinoa, a bowl of mixed peppercorns, a bunch of green celery, a bunch of ginger, a bunch of garlic, a bunch of onions, a bunch of carrots, a bunch of bell peppers, a bunch of oranges, a bunch of lemons, a bunch of limes, a bunch of mushrooms, a bunch of herbs, and a bunch of nuts. The items are arranged in a circular pattern, creating a rich and colorful composition.

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# Types of Global Trade Agreements

**Multilateral Agreements:** Involve many countries and set worldwide standards. The WTO oversees several foundational ones, making them truly global in reach.

**Bilateral Agreements:** Between two countries, but some have global implications when major economies are involved (e.g., influencing supply chains worldwide).

**Plurilateral Agreements:** Subsets of multilateral deals where not all WTO members participate, but they still aim for broader adoption.

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# Examples of Global Trade Agreements Related to Food

- Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement)
  - Protects the health of humans, plants, and animals
- Agreement on Agriculture (AoA)
  - Subsidies and market access

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# Examples of Global Trade Agreements Related to Food

- Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade( TBT Agreement)
  - Addresses standards that could act as trade barriers
- Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)
  - Streamlines customs procedures to make trade easier

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# Regional Standards

- European Union (EU)
  - General Food Law (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002)
  - EU's Novel Foods Regulation (EU No 2015/2283)
- North American Regional Trade Agreements
  - USMCA Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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# Regional Standards

- Canadian Provinces and Territories
  - Ontario Food Premises Regulation (O. Reg. 493/17)
  - Yukon Food Retail and Food Services Code
  - British Columbia Food Premises Regulation (B.C. Reg. 210/99)
- Indigenous and Northern Regional Considerations
  - Nunavut Food Security Strategy

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# International Guidelines

- Codex Alimentarius: Standards for labeling, additives, hygiene by FAO and WHO.
- *Understanding the Codex Alimentarius* (2016, FAO).
  - Access: <https://www.fao.org/fsnforum/resources/trainings-tools-and-databases/understanding-codex-alimentarius>



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# Essential Resources for Research



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# **Freely Available Resources**

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# FAOLEX

- Contains legal and policy documents from over 200 countries, territories and regional economic integration organizations in over 40 languages
- Key elements are summarized in English, French, and Spanish
- Caveat: not all translations in FAOLEX are official, so for situations that require official copies of documents, users need to consult the original text
- Access at: <https://www.fao.org/faolex/en/>

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# Codex Alimentarius

- A collection of internationally adopted food standards and related texts presented uniformly.
- Aims to protect consumers' health; ensure fair food trade practices; guide harmonization of food definitions/requirements to facilitate international trade.
- Caveat: it is not a substitute for national legislation.
- Access at: <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/en/>

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# WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures Gateway

Offers the full text of the SPS Agreement, introductions to its principles (e.g., science-based standards), committee details, tools for notifications and alerts, dispute lists, publications, videos, and links to standard-setting bodies (e.g., Codex, WOAHA, IPPC).

Access at: [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/sps\\_e/sps\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/sps_e.htm)

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# USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Reports

Provides free reports on foreign countries' food and agriculture legislation, aimed at supporting trade but useful for research. Covers 100+ countries with high-quality overviews.

Access at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/search>

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# Food Law & Policy e-Journal (via SSRN)

- Open-access repository of pre-print articles and early-stage research.
- A free "one-stop shop" for global food-related law and regulation papers.
- Access at:  
[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/JELJOUR\\_Results.cfm?form\\_name=journalbrowse&journal\\_id=2199578](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/JELJOUR_Results.cfm?form_name=journalbrowse&journal_id=2199578).

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# Country-Specific Government Websites

Many national sites offer free access to local food laws, e.g., Uganda's UNBS for standards, Argentina's ANMAT and CAA, Brazil's legislation database, and Venezuela's SENCAMER and COVENIN standards.

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# **FULL (Food Use for Legal Learning) Discovery Tool**

A free tool from Georgetown University for searching global food laws and decisions aimed at reducing diet-related non-communicable diseases. It covers topics like food advertising, school meals, and labeling, with advanced search, analysis, and side-by-side country comparisons for over 100 laws and decisions.

Access at: <https://globalfoodlaws.georgetown.edu/>

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# Subscription Resources

- HeinOnline (International Law Module): Treaties, agreements, periodicals (especially law review articles).
- International Standards (ISO, EN, UNE, IEC)
- Index to Legal Periodicals & Books Full Text: Jurisprudence.
- Gale OneFile: LegalTrac: Regulations and case studies.
- Knovel (Food Science Collection): access to the Food Chemicals Codex (FCC), which is a compendium of internationally recognized standards for the purity and identity of food ingredients

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# Emerging Open-Source AI Platforms

- SFPPy: A Python framework for compliance testing of food contact materials and recycled plastics, implementing migration modeling and risk assessment. It integrates regulatory databases (FDA FCN, EU Annex I, Chinese GB) with PubChem/ToxTree for properties and alerts. Access at: <https://github.com/ovitrac/SFPPy>
- LLM-basedLegalCompliance/Food-Safety: A replication package for classifying requirements-related provisions in food-safety regulations using Large Language Models (LLMs). Access at: <https://github.com/LLM-basedLegalCompliance/Food-Safety>



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# Common Pitfalls

- Jurisdictional Overlaps
- Language Barriers
- Language/term differences
- Outdated Information


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# Quick Tips for Efficient Searches

- Boolean Operators: Tailored for multilingual queries (e.g., "food safety" OR "sécurité alimentaire" AND Codex).
- Set Up Alerts: Real-time notifications in HeinOnline or FAOLEX.
- Interdisciplinary Approaches: Combine with reviewing secondary literature and policy documents.

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# Actionable Workflow for Streamlined Research



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# Suggested Workflow

1. Identify Scope and timeframe
  - Global (Codex/WTO), regional (EU), national (FAOLEX)
  - Current, past, a mix?
2. Select resources
  - Open-access overviews; subscriptions for depth
3. Refine the search
  - Boolean/multilingual; alternative phrasing
4. Cross-Reference
5. Synthesize

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# Bite-Sized Examples

A top-down view of a variety of fresh ingredients. In the center is a halved avocado. Surrounding it are several small white bowls containing: red cherry tomatoes, blueberries, sliced kiwi, yellow corn kernels, red quinoa, and sliced pineapple. Other items include almonds, ginger, celery sticks, garlic, onions, bell peppers, and various herbs like thyme and rosemary. The background is a dark, textured surface.

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# U.S.-Canada Dairy Disputes under USMCA

USMCA (2020) expands US dairy access via tariff-rate quotas; disputes over Canada's administration favoring domestic processors.

- **Key Issues:** Quotas, tariffs, supply management; potential trade disruptions amid US threats.
- **Research Workflow:**
- Start with HeinOnline (search "USMCA dairy" OR "CUSMA dairy" AND (dispute OR quota OR tariff)).
- Use FAOLEX for national laws; WTO SPS for context.
- Cross-reference Codex Alimentarius dairy standards.
- Check government websites for updates.

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# EC Hormones Ban (Canadian Involvement)

Canada/US vs. EU on hormone-treated beef import ban (WTO DS48/DS26, 1996-1998); EU cited precautionary risks, but ruled inconsistent with SPS Agreement.

- **Key Issues:** Science-based measures, risk assessment; 6 hormones led to retaliatory tariffs
- **Research Workflow:**
- Start with WTO site
- Use HeinOnline for panel/Appellate reports (search "WTO DS48 hormones").
- Cross-reference Codex Alimentarius hormone guidelines, such as veterinary drugs.
- Check FAOLEX for EU directives & national responses.



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# Questions?

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