

Continuity and Modernization of the USMCA

Summary

Following its mandatory six-year joint review on July 1, 2026, the United States declined to extend the [United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement \(USMCA\)](#) for an additional 16 years, choosing instead to trigger an annual review process running through 2036. The agreement remains fully in force with active tariffs and rules, while bilateral trade talks continue.

Background

Canada and Mexico are the United States' two largest agricultural trading partners, with more than \$148 billion in agricultural goods moving between the three countries annually. These commodities include meat, dairy, frozen foods, fresh produce, and processed food products — all of which depend on reliable temperature-controlled storage, handling, and transportation.

The United States, Canada, and Mexico have each significantly invested in digital SPS and trade certification systems designed to strengthen food safety oversight and facilitate trade. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) operates the Public Health Information System (PHIS), which allows exporters to submit export certification applications electronically and enables regulators to review, approve, and digitally issue SPS export certificates. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) operates similar systems for plant products, including the Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking (PCIT) system. These integrate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), the primary single window for trade data submission. Canada's MyCFIA platform and Mexico's Ventanilla Única de Comercio Exterior Mexicana (VUCEM) similarly allow exporters and importers to submit SPS documentation and obtain certification electronically.

These systems represent significant progress, but they were largely developed as national systems, and interoperability between them remains incomplete. This can result in duplicative processes, inconsistent documentation requirements, and avoidable delays at borders. For cold chain operators moving highly perishable goods, even small delays can disrupt supply chains and increase costs.

Policy Recommendation

GCCA urges Congress to exert its influence to ensure the negotiations around the USMCA, and all trade deals, support the modernization of sanitary and phytosanitary certification. This means replacing paper-based systems with digital and enabling pre-clearance at approved cold chain facilities — making trade faster, safer, and more resilient.

Specific recommendations include:

- Make digital SPS certification systems fully interoperable.
- Complete the transition to fully digital pre-clearance and pre-arrival processing.
- Expand mutual recognition of equivalent food safety systems.
- Build trusted operator and risk-based inspection programs to allow regulators to focus resources on higher-risk shipments while facilitating compliant trade.
- Improve coordination between customs and SPS agencies.