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**Improving Transparency as a Tool for the Implementation of the WTO
Agreement on Agriculture**

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Since the Doha negotiations, the WTO's Committee on Agriculture has continually worked to improve transparency measures, but what are they learning? According to Article 18 of the Agreement on Agriculture, member nations will notify the Secretariat on their levels of domestic support to the agricultural sector. For the details of domestic support information to be instructive for members, greater transparency would be beneficial, and this can be achieved through improvements to the notifications process. The improved monitoring and surveillance possible through better notification would reveal the extent of the Agreement's actual implementation.

In researching the possibilities of improved transparency, we have examined the review function of the Committee on Agriculture and the limitations imposed by inadequate notification. The WTO agreements on Technical Barriers to Trade and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, have more developed transparency mechanisms through online notification and information management systems. Conceptually, the use of Specific Trade Concerns language allows for a more robust approach to addressing member policies, regulations or activities that are inconsistent with the terms of the agreement.

International organizations such as the OECD and UN have their own purposes for data collection on domestic support, and this may be useful for members and nations themselves to see their information 'notified' in another context, where the details of domestic support are presented through an external agency or lobbyist who has used publicly available data to display support levels according to WTO methodology. These institutional approaches for improved transparency measures have significant potential for the Agreement on Agriculture, by providing increased information, leading to greater accountability and therefore further implementation.