

# NUTRITIONAL REGULATION AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN APEC ECONOMIES: THE NEW CHILEAN FOOD LABELING LAW

*Sofía Boza, Rodrigo Polanco & Macarena Espinoza\**

## ABSTRACT

*In many countries, economic growth has induced a general change in eating patterns, from high rates of malnutrition, to recurrent obesity problems and other health related issues in the population. Changes to nutritional labeling regulations that are aimed at providing more information to the consumer have been part of the strategy to fight obesity. Mandatory labeling schemes constitute a technical barrier to trade (hereinafter “TBT”), which must respect the principles of the WTO TBT Agreement. This article examines the new Chilean Food Labeling Law and the accompanying regulation in effect since 2016 which together form one of the earliest methods to mandate front-of-pack food labeling, while focusing on its compatibility with WTO law and its implications for other APEC economies. We present a review of the origin and content of the Chilean regulation and the discussion of the WTO TBT Committee, complemented with the analysis of related WTO jurisprudence and the response from the food industry.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Chile, TBT Agreement, food labeling, overweight, obesity, NCDs, international trade, TBT Committee, WTO, APEC*

---

\* Sofía Boza is an assistant professor at the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Chile in the area of agricultural policy and in the Institute of International Studies at the same University. Email: [sofiaboza@u.uchile.cl](mailto:sofiaboza@u.uchile.cl).

Rodrigo Polanco is a senior researcher at the World Trade Institute of the University of Bern. Email: [rodrigo.polanco@wti.org](mailto:rodrigo.polanco@wti.org).

Macarena Espinoza is a junior researcher at the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Chile and operations manager of Cultiva Uchile Center. Email: [macaer@ug.uchile.cl](mailto:macaer@ug.uchile.cl).