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Sommario	<p>Global efforts for trade liberalization faced, since the late 1970s, the phenomenon of non-tariff barriers to trade. Nowadays they represent the most relevant stumbling block to free trade. In the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, States#8217; efforts to address this issue at the international level brought, in 1994, to the adoption of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS Agreement), within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Against this background, the thesis analyses SPS Agreement provisions devoted to standards, namely harmonization, the SPS Committee and those related to private standards. Moreover, as the SPS Agreement does not contain any international standards, and the power to develop international standards is explicitly delegated to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), even the activities of such international body are investigated. The research questions addressed are the following: how and to what extent international standards are binding according to the SPS Agreement? (Chapter I). Which is the role of States, the SPS Committee, Panels and the Appellate Body and, in particular, which is the relationship between the CAC and the WTO? (Chapter II). Which are the possibilities and the criticisms when paving the way for private actors in the domain of food safety?</p>

(Chapter III).

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