

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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Agenda Item 11

CRD28

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES

48th Session

Chongqing, P.R. China, 25-30 April 2016

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

Import MRL Guideline for Pesticides

(prepared by Australia)

1. Australia would like to update the Committee on some regional work that we believe may be of interest to delegations.
2. Australia has been leading work under the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF), on the regulatory cooperation of pesticide Maximum Residue Limits (MRL).
3. Australia led two expert workshops in 2015, in Sydney, Australia and Cebu, the Philippines respectively, and has developed a guideline entitled: *Import MRL Guideline for Pesticides* (the *Guideline*).
4. *This Guideline* provides a framework by which countries can consider requests for import MRLs which are science based.
5. The *Guideline* document has been widely consulted through the APEC FSCF and has been forward for adoption as an official APEC text.
6. The *Guideline* is meant to be used on a voluntary basis, as an aid for APEC economies when considering the alignment of domestic pesticide MRLs with relevant international or regional standards (e.g., Codex, ASEAN MRLs) or with exporting countries MRLs.
7. The *Guideline* provides a coherent framework within which APEC economies can identify the minimum dataset upon which to assess a request for pesticide import MRLs where health based guidance values (ADI and ARfD), GAP and MRLs have been established, either internationally or in the exporting economy.
8. Australia is now working on initiatives to facilitate the implementation of the *Guideline* by APEC economies. Nevertheless, we believe the *Guideline* could also be utilised by non-APEC countries.
9. Australia would be happy to provide copies of the *Guideline* to interested delegations and to provide further details.

Background

2015 outcomes:

1. The major objective of this project is to develop a *Guideline*, in which the project team, led by Australia have worked throughout 2015 to develop.
2. The 1st Expert workshop that was held in Sydney, the core objectives were to: identify trade barriers and key factors contributing to differing MRLs among APEC member economies for the same pesticide/commodity combinations that are traded; develop principles and recommend processes to harmonise pesticide MRLs for imported foods; and develop a draft guideline on the harmonisation of pesticide MRLs for imported foods in APEC member economies.

3. The 1st expert workshop identified the major trade barriers to establishing import MRLs in the region; recommended principles and processes to harmonise pesticide MRLs; identified key elements that each economy would require in the draft guideline on the harmonisation of pesticide MRLs, and how this guideline will benefit their economy; and identified impediments to using import tolerances, and the issues of implementation within or between economies.
4. The 2nd Expert Workshop was attended by 44 participants from 18 APEC member economies, where progress made since the 1st Expert Workshop was reviewed; trade barriers and key factors contributing to differing MRLs among APEC member economies; developed principles and recommended processes to harmonise pesticide MRLs; and developed a draft outline for the *Guideline on the harmonisation of pesticide MRLs for imported foods* (the *Guideline*). Participants of the 2nd Expert Workshop reviewed the development of principles and recommended processes to harmonise pesticide MRLs for imported foods; and considered and agreed on a draft of the *Guideline*. The 2nd Expert Workshop also considered approaches to implementing the *Guideline*.

2016 – 2017: way forward

1. Australia will be facilitating an APEC workshop focusing on the implementation of the *Guideline* in Australia, late-2016.
2. This workshop will focus on building technical expertise to effectively implement the purpose of the *Guideline*, such as risk assessment training with a particular focus on dietary exposure assessments.
3. Australia will also work towards building capacity to facilitate APEC economies to implement the *Guideline* through using worked examples and testing of particular scenarios, as well as in-country training in 2017. Early consideration is to hold the workshop in Viet Nam in the margins of the 6th APEC FSCF.
4. Australia will also work towards raising awareness and to build support for the *Guideline* through outreach and stakeholder engagement, including the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR).
5. Australia proposes to promote the *Guideline* in the margins of the 2017 meeting to build support amongst APEC economies participating and other Codex members.
6. In summary, in the context of APEC member economies, it has been identified that they will benefit from utilising the *Guideline* to assist them in the harmonisation of pesticide MRLs in their country and region for trade. The content of the *Guideline* will build each economy's knowledge and principles of the processes that were agreed to, to facilitate the trade of food within the region, particularly for economies with differing MRLs. The implementation workshop, will build capacity across economies on how to facilitate this approach and enable discussion on the principles provided in the *Guideline* for the development of pesticide MRLs, particularly for those economies with obligations to recognise international and trading partners standards where appropriate, based on WTO recognised risk assessment principles. Participants will also build capacity on the application of risk analysis for the development of import MRLs through the risk assessment/management process, utilising dietary exposure assessment methodology.