



Good Agricultural Practices

Training Session by FAO at Wageningen University, The Netherlands, Tuesday 31 May 2005 - Wednesday 1 June 2005

Training course: "Transition to Sustainable Agriculture" 23 May- 4 June 2005

Background

The concept of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) has evolved in recent years in the context of a rapidly changing and globalizing food economy and as a result of the concerns and commitments of a wide range of stakeholders about food production, food safety and quality, and the environmental sustainability of agriculture. These stakeholders include governments, food processing and retailing industries, farmers, and consumers, who are promoting increasingly elaborated GAP standards to meet specific objectives of food security, food quality, production efficiency, livelihoods and environmental benefits in both the medium and long term. For FAO, GAP applies available knowledge to addressing environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm production and post-production processes resulting in safe and healthy food and non-food agricultural products. Many farmers in developed and developing countries already apply GAP through sustainable agricultural methods such as integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management and conservation agriculture. These methods are applied in a range of farming systems and scales of production units, including as a contribution to food security, facilitated by supportive government policies and programmes. However, there are as many definitions of the concept of GAP as there are GAP standards.

There is a need to better understand the opportunities for new markets and improved sustainability of agriculture which different GAP standards constitute, but also the challenges and constraints for developing country farmers in terms of market exclusion, high costs of compliance or risky asset-specific investments. FAO has initiated the development of a GAP approach to take stock of recent developments on GAP in order to make developing countries aware of the opportunities and issues related to GAP and its adoption by farmers. FAO's role is to support these developments with comprehensive and objective, professional expertise and to advise governments on their scientific validity and policy implications.

Pedagogic objectives

Knowledge acquired (need to know):

- what lies behind the GAP concept
- what are related challenges and opportunities
- what is FAO doing about it - what assistance it can offer
- where to find more information resources
- what are policy issues for developing countries

Skills acquired (need to do):

- analyze 'GAP' standards critically
- differentiate between different types of 'GAP' standards
- map policy issues for developing countries
- trainee can identify relevance of GAP and next steps for him/her

(how much of this can be achieved depends on time allotted on 1/06)

Tentative Outline

Tuesday 31st May 2005

- 10.30-11.15 Setting the scene: what is GAP, history, what is FAO doing about it (Loretta Sonn, FAO)
- 11.15-11.45 Trainees experience with GAP: what, where, why – facilitated exercise (Anne-Sophie Poisot, FAO)
- 11.45-12.15 GAP: why care? Constraints, opportunities (Anne-Sophie Poisot, FAO)
- 14.00 As part of Seminar on Certification- Good Agricultural Practices and Sustainable Agriculture (Loretta Sonn, FAO)

Wednesday 1st June 2005

- 8.30-9.45 Debriefing on Certification seminar and the future of GAP: standards analysis, policy issues - facilitated working group exercises (Anne-Sophie Poisot, FAO)
- 9.45-10.00 Closing: next steps (Loretta Sonn, FAO)

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