

MINUTES
AIT/CCNAA AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP CONSULTATIONS
November 21 - 22, 1991

In light of the establishment of the Agricultural Technical Working Group at the March 1991 Trade Talks, both sides agreed to the following points:

- we recognize the growing importance of bilateral agricultural trade;

- we recognize the need to address scientifically our mutual concerns regarding sanitary and phytosanitary issues in a way that enhances smooth trade flows; and,

- we recognize the progress which was made during this charter meeting and agree that this working group should continue to be the forum for communication on technical matters which could affect our bilateral agricultural trade.

- we agree that for the future, this working group should be called the AIT-CCNAA Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Agricultural Standards Working Group.

FOOD SAFETY ISSUES, FRUITS & VEGETABLES

The CCNAA delegation indicated Taiwan's decision to adopt an agricultural chemical residue inspection system for imported fresh fruits and vegetables similar to FDA's, in which samples would be inspected at the port of entry and after import in the market, using internationally accepted evaluation methods.

The AIT delegation described the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's (FDA) system of random import sampling and increased surveillance of shipments showing violations. On the export side, unlike the Federal Grain Inspection Service of USDA, FDA does not certify U.S. products for export.

FDA offered to provide information to CCNAA through AIT and formally consult with the Taiwan authorities in the development of their import inspection system. The AIT delegation suggested that the Taiwan authorities coordinate and consult with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the establishment of chemical registration procedures and tolerance levels. EPA consultants to AIT offered to share information on how that agency cancels chemical registrations and revokes tolerances.

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EPA advised the CCNAA consultants to make a careful distinction between the timing of regulatory changes involving chemical registration and those involving tolerance levels. In addition, the EPA consultants stated that tolerances are not revoked when registrations are cancelled. Instead, tolerance revocations are timed to allow product still available at the time of cancellation to be used and crops legally treated to be sold.

The CCNAA delegation agreed to the U.S. request to make an effort in the establishment of new import inspection procedures to not interfere with import shipment flows and to avoid any negative impact on existing trade patterns. The CCNAA delegation also offered to expeditiously review data submitted to it requesting establishment of pesticide tolerances.

MANGO (MANGIFERA INDICA) FRUIT

The CCNAA delegation stated Taiwan's desire to export fresh mango fruit to the United States market.

The AIT delegation reported that USDA-APHIS will permit the entry of mangoes from Taiwan with the required treatment under two conditions.

1. The entry decision must first be published in the Federal Register. After general discussion of the Federal Register process it was explained that in the best case a decision may be published in March, 1992.
2. Upon publication a pre-clearance program will have to be established which provides for USDA supervision and certification of Taiwan mangoes at the expense of Taiwan mango exporters.

USDA/APHIS consultants to AIT expressed their commitment to do everything possible to expedite the Federal Register review process.

The CCNAA delegation expressed their appreciation to USDA/APHIS consultants for all of their efforts regarding Taiwan's mango export to the U.S. market.

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LYCHEE (LITCHI CHINENSIS) FRUIT

The CCNAA delegation stated Taiwan's desire to export fresh lychee fruit to the United States.

Further discussion relative to insect pests of quarantine concern and their control will occur in Hyattsville, Maryland and a visit to Taiwan by USDA/APHIS specialists will be scheduled (June 1 - July 15, 1992).

STAR FRUIT (AVERRHOA CARAMBOLA) FRUIT

The CCNAA delegation stated Taiwan's desire to export fresh starfruit to the United States.

CCNAA will provide USDA-APHIS with data on cold treatment control of fruit flies. In addition, the USDA phytosanitary technical group will conduct on-site reviews of starfruit in Taiwan at the same time they review lychee (preferably June 1 - July 15, 1992). CCNAA technical specialists will further discuss pests of quarantine concern at APHIS/PPQ offices in Hyattsville, Maryland on November 25, 1991.

APPLE FRUIT

The CCNAA delegation indicated general satisfaction with the level of quality control as witnessed on their Washington State apple industry orientation but felt that the areas of field pest management and phytosanitary inspection should be strengthened for the quarantine control of the codling moth pest.

The CCNAA delegation stated that Taiwan will amend its quarantine regulations on the entry of apples to safeguard against codling moth and other quarantine pests. It was agreed that prior to the shipment of apples starting from the next production season, USDA/APHIS through AIT would submit field pest management and quarantine control information and would increase phytosanitary inspection. AIT further agreed to the CCNAA proposal for on-site inspections by Taiwan plant quarantine inspectors as necessary with costs paid by the U.S. industry starting in the next production season.

The CCNAA delegation stated that a 5% sample is required to meet its regulation for quarantine purposes but the AIT delegation asked that Taiwan consider a 2% sample based on data to be presented by USDA.

Based on the above, the CCNAA delegation stated that the export of U.S. apples with its enhanced phytosanitary inspections will not be disrupted.

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U.S. POTATOES

The AIT delegation stated the United States desire to export fresh potatoes to the Taiwan market.

The AIT delegation will provide COA through CCNAA with data on tobacco blue mold as it affects fresh potatoes. AIT will provide a summary of tobacco blue mold surveys in the United States and will provide literature data on tobacco blue mold as it affects potatoes. The CCNAA delegation noted the AIT statement that Golden Nematode is limited to a small area of upstate New York and that domestic quarantine has been effective in keeping the nematode from spreading. Based on the data provided, CCNAA will conduct an overall review of the issue of fresh potato imports with a view to consider possible quarantine changes.

MICROBIOLOGICAL STANDARDS

The AIT delegation stated that there are no internationally agreed upon standards for microbiological criteria on raw meat and poultry, and further stated according to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (FAO/WHO), that microbiological criteria on raw meat and poultry products do not serve a purpose for improving public health or quality. FSIS relies on good sanitary practices, organoleptic inspection and proper handling to produce safe and wholesome raw meat. The USDA/FSIS consultants to AIT stressed that additional costs related to inspection requirements for microorganisms is not justified when extra benefits are not clearly demonstrated. The AIT delegation requested that pork imports be treated the same as imports of turkey meat.

The CCNAA delegation stated that Taiwan inspects raw meat for chemical residue and microorganisms and that raw pork testing procedures are similar to that for beef and proposed an import system similar to that for beef imports.

The CCNAA delegation held to its statements on the subject of pork imports made at the March 1991 trade talks. It was agreed that each side would provide information documenting its position on this topic and the matter will be further discussed during the next sub-group meeting.

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FSIS RESIDUE TESTING PROGRAM

USDA/FSIS consultants to AIT presented a brief description of the U.S. Meat and Poultry Residue Testing Program noting that FSIS does not hold imported product when residue samples are taken. Only after a residue violation is encountered does FSIS hold and test imported lots.

TAIWAN ELIGIBILITY TO EXPORT MEAT TO THE UNITED STATES

USDA/FSIS consultants to AIT presented to the CCNAA delegation an FSIS brochure entitled "Importing Meat and Poultry into the United States". (Note: The procedure for Taiwan regaining its eligibility to export meat to the United States was described in detail to the CCNAA delegation in a separate meeting on November, 25 1991).

BRUCELLOSIS VACCINATION OF DAIRY HEIFERS

APHIS veterinary consultants to AIT presented a status report on Brucellosis in the U.S. showing 26 states that are Brucellosis free and most other states as close to becoming free. APHIS also described the Brucellosis eradication program. Unvaccinated livestock are found only in small herds that are not likely to market their calves. Calves in Brucellosis free states must be vaccinated if they are to be marketed into states not free of Brucellosis.

The AIT delegation provided documents on the safety of the Brucellosis vaccine to assist COA's Quarantine Committee in re-evaluating import regulations regarding Brucellosis vaccinated animals. The CCNAA delegation said that the Committee would discuss this issue within the next three months.

BLUE EAR ("MYSTERIOUS SWINE DISEASE") IN HOGS

APHIS veterinary consultants to AIT presented a history of the discovery of Blue Ear (or "Mysterious Swine") Disease in the U.S. and Europe. This disease is now called the "Swine Infertility and Respiratory Syndrome" or SIRS. The APHIS presentation showed that the SIRS occurrence in the U.S. is lower than that in Europe and its infection rate in the U.S. is decreasing. The next step is for APHIS to complete a study of serum samples and sampling methods in order to ensure that animals or semen for export are free of the disease.

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APHIS veterinary consultants offered to submit to COA information relative to testing procedures for this disease when it is developed. Further consultations between both sides will take place in the future following the COA's review.

APHIS veterinary consultants also offered to develop a protocol on export certification to export swine to Taiwan. CCNAA agreed that this protocol would also be reviewed by the Quarantine Committee within three months upon its submission.

PEEDAN EGGS

The CCNAA delegation presented the documents of the detailed processing procedures for producing peedan eggs, including both the pH values in the processing solution and in the egg white of peedan eggs.

Importers in the United States must obtain a USDA veterinary permit prior to the shipment of the eggs from Taiwan. All shipments of peedan eggs must be accompanied by a copy of the permit and certification from Taiwan authorities stating that the eggs have been subjected to pH levels of 10.0 or higher during processing and that the flock of origin was free of clinical signs of velogenic viscerotropic Newcastle disease (VVND).

Based on the above, peedan eggs are accepted to be exported to the U.S.

APHIS consultants to AIT noted that salted eggs are different from peedan eggs and are subject to different import requirements.

SHREDDED PORK AND BEEF JERKY PRODUCTS

From a livestock health standpoint, APHIS consultants to AIT noted that Taiwan must be recognized as being free of Foot and Mouth Disease before beef imports originating from Taiwan can be considered by APHIS/veterinary services unless the meat is cooked first. Due to the presence of hog cholera, pork products would need to be cooked before importation into the U.S.

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To determine the importability of processed beef and pork products, APHIS would need to review data from Taiwan describing the cooking process, especially the temperature and duration of cooking, and the final moisture/protein ratio.

After APHIS livestock health requirements are satisfied, processed meats imported from Taiwan must also meet FSIS standards in the area of food safety. FSIS requires processed meat imports from Taiwan to meet appropriate USDA product standards. Also, product labels must be approved. Finally, the Taiwan meat inspection system needs to be accepted by FSIS.

TAIWAN ANIMAL DISEASE STATUS

The AIT delegation provided questionnaires to the CCNAA delegation to initiate the process by which Taiwan might be recognized by the United States as being free of Foot and Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever, Swine Vesicular Disease and Rinderpest.

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