

MINUTES  
THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE  
AIT-TECRO SANITARY/PHYTOSANITARY  
AND AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS  
WORKING GROUP CONSULTATIONS

SEPTEMBER 6-7, 1995

## PLANT ISSUES

### 1. Taiwan Litchi

TECRO requested and AIT agreed to work with ARS regarding reconsideration of 12-day treatment as opposed to 15-day treatment. If additional work needs to be done before the 12-day treatment can be implemented, AIT will find out what this entails.

AIT clarified that under current regulations, shipments may be landed prior to completion of the cold treatment at east coast ports from Baltimore north. Changes are already being made to include Seattle, WA; Gulfport, MS; and Atlanta, GA (for air shipments).

TECRO requested and AIT agreed to work with the California State authorities to make sure shipments of litchi and carambola will not be subject to additional quarantine inspection once they have been inspected at the port of entry.

### 2. Taiwan Carambola

Similar agreement as litchi was made regarding carambola except it already has a 10-day treatment.

### 3. Taiwan Orchids

AIT received TECRO's formal request to export orchids established in sphagnum and added it to other requests. APHIS is in the process of amending the regulation regarding plants established in growing media.

TECRO understands the situation and asked that APHIS to again consider their request.

### 4. U.S. Apples

TECRO acknowledged the briefing provided by AIT on the guidelines to be used by U.S. authorities and industry to implement the codling moth regulations.

TECRO noted AIT's request for a minor modification of the quarantine requirements for apples.

AIT will submit relevant information for review by TECRO.

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5. U.S. Seed Potatoes from Alaska

TECRO is in the process of reviewing comments and information from the inspection visit and the Chairman of the Quarantine Committee will call a meeting after the review has been completed.

TECRO stated the rule will probably be published in about 2 months.

6. Tablestock Potatoes

Three additional States (Colorado, Massachusetts, and Montana) have expressed interest in exporting potatoes to Taiwan. TECRO explained the information received to date is inadequate.

AIT would appreciate if TECRO has any direct contacts, please ask them to go through USDA/APHIS.

TECRO agreed to send cc's of any information TECRO mails out to these contacts.

AIT agreed to provide TECRO information regarding Phytophthora infestans A2 Mating Type so they may better understand the situation.

APHIS was not aware of a letter from the Washington State Potato Commission regarding A2, but APHIS will continue to work with Washington State to monitor the status of the disease.

7. Weed Seeds in U.S. Grain Exports

TECRO expressed concern regarding weed seed contamination in grain. AIT said it would pass these concerns on to the U.S. grain industry with data from Taiwan regarding the problem. TECRO said it would provide new data they have collected. AIT also suggested that Taiwan may want to send authorities to the United States to work together jointly to see what would be an economically viable procedure that would minimize the presence of weed seeds in grain shipments.

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## ANIMAL ISSUES

### 1. & 2. U.S. Hygienic Standards for Taiwan Meat and Poultry

TECRO stated that it is having difficulty completing the questionnaire required by FSIS and noted concerns that significant changes would need to be made to Taiwan's regulations in order to meet the United States' import requirements. TECRO requested that FSIS send inspectors to certify sanitary conditions in plants wishing to export to the United States. AIT responded that FSIS requires that the quarantine officials of its trading partners be responsible for certifying individual plants after the entire systems have been approved.

It was agreed that AIT will help TECRO to identify areas for needed changes in its inspection system in order to reach a level of equivalence with U.S. standards.

### 3. & 5. U.S. and Taiwan Meat Inspection Requirements

TECRO stated that the members of the Food Sanitation and Safety Advisory Committee had not come to a consensus to drop the standards. Some wanted to wait to see the results of a U.S. testing program implemented in the fall of 1994. AIT explained that the testing program was established to check for the presence of E. coli O157:H7 in raw ground beef. It was noted that the test was for this particular strain in selected items only as a consequence of several food poisoning cases, and should have no bearing on the question of maintaining general E. coli standards. AIT noted that FSIS continues to maintain its policy that it is not appropriate to set E. coli standards for raw products, and passed TECRO a copy of the 1993 Proceedings of the World Congress on Meat and Poultry Inspection which indicates that the establishment of E. coli standards on raw meat products serves no food safety purpose. TECRO stated that E. Coli examination is intended to verify that good hygienic practices have been performed. TECRO also agreed to provide the information from the World Congress on Meat and Poultry Inspection to the Committee for review.

### 4. Allowance Level of Lead in Pi-Dan (century) Eggs to be Exported from Taiwan

TECRO noted concern that the U.S. "action level" for lead in Pi-Dan eggs (preserved duck eggs) was ambiguous and appeared to be very low, perhaps as low as a few parts per billion (ppb). AIT explained that, currently, no specific regulatory enforcement

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level such as a formal tolerance or informal action level exists for lead in eggs. Instead, FDA, the agency responsible for monitoring such contaminants in this commodity, takes enforcement action on a case-by-case basis based on the level of lead found in a particular shipment and the assumption that the lead present in the eggs could be avoided by control of lead contamination in the processing procedures. Recently, FDA has taken enforcement action for preserved duck eggs containing lead at several hundred ppb.

TECRO noted that background (unavoidable) levels of lead in fresh duck eggs on Taiwan might be higher than background levels of lead in U.S. eggs and that these background levels should be considered by FDA in any enforcement action. TECRO suggested that background levels of lead determined a number of years ago ranged as high as 1.8 parts per million (ppm) and that the current Taiwan tolerance is 2ppm to account for these background levels. For comparative purposes, TECRO cited recent FDA monitoring data for lead in 294 selected seafood samples which showed lead levels ranging to 800 ppb and pointed out that FDA's evaluation of the data concluded that the environmentally incurred lead levels found in the seafood did not appear to present a significant public health concern. TECRO also stressed that the total dietary intake of lead should be considered in risk assessments for an individual commodity. AIT indicated that the 2ppm level was too high, but that more recent data from TECRO on background levels could be provided to AIT for review by FDA. AIT further noted that FDA would be unlikely to initiate enforcement action against Pi-Dan eggs containing low ppb levels of lead. AIT agreed to obtain additional information on the issue from FDA and provide it to TECRO.

#### 6. Taiwan's Restrictions on Brucellosis Calfhood-Vaccinated Cattle

TECRO noted that the Animal Quarantine Committee had met and reviewed the information provided by AIT. TECRO stated that they have found no reason to change the requirements on accepting vaccinated animals because buyers have been able to locate a sufficient number of non-vaccinated animals and do not want possible risk of introducing animals with persistent titers. Therefore the Committee did not agree to change the requirement. AIT noted that there is no health threat from the vaccinated animals. AIT also noted that of the 2,000 dairy cattle imported in 1993/94, 1,200 had originally come from Canada because the supply of non-vaccinated cattle in the United States is very limited. AIT noted that as a result of this requirement, Taiwan's buyers have not had access to the best available genetics. AIT also presented a summary of the Brucellosis Eradication program in the United States and also provided

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printed material. AIT informed TECRO that the plan is to eradicate brucellosis by 1998. TECRO agreed to take the new information back to the Committee to review the possibility of removing the ban.

7. Taiwan's Restrictions on U.S. Poultry Meat From Four States

TECRO noted that the Animal Quarantine Committee had met and recommended that COA officially recognize the United States as free of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. This process is expected to be completed within three months.

8. Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS)

TECRO noted that the Animal Quarantine Committee had reviewed the restrictions on imports of live swine and finalized draft quarantine requirements. However, the requirements have not been officially announced because Taiwan is still trying to achieve diagnostic capability for PRRS. They are getting conflicting test results by using two antigens to test serum from domestic animals. AIT noted that using two antigens to test the same serum may yield conflicting test results. AIT also provided TECRO with current protocols of Japan and Korea for shipments of swine from the United States. TECRO noted its desire to import U.S. breeding stock, and stated that it would take the new information provided by AIT to the Committee for further review. TECRO also noted that the import restrictions could be lifted once the Committee made a decision on the requirements.

9. Taiwan Testing Requirements for Donors of Bovine Embryos

AIT expressed its interest in having the current protocol revised to better reflect international guidelines and hope that they will complete it soon. TECRO noted that they have already set up a special task force to review this issue. AIT gave TECRO washing and processing procedures of embryos according to the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS) manual for reference. TECRO agreed to pass this information to the task force and offered to pass to AIT a copy of the task force's draft protocol for comment before it is finalized. AIT also provided TECRO with a number of research articles and the IETS manual.

10. Taiwan's Requirements for Treatment of Leptospirosis

TECRO agreed to accept treatment for leptospirosis with long-acting oxytetracycline in order to facilitate the export of livestock from the United States.

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AIT provided TECRO with a summary of research conducted on the use of oxytetracycline by Dr. Carol Bolin, Research Leader for leptospirosis at the National Animal Disease Center, Ames, Iowa. AIT will also provide TECRO any future research conducted on this subject.

11. Ear Tagging and Branding of Cattle from the United States

AIT noted its interest in addressing the concerns of Taiwan's farmers, but expressed concern with the logistics of an ear tagging and branding requirements. It also noted that U.S. cattle already carry 2-3 identification tags, and that no other trading partner has requested such additional identification procedures. TECRO agreed to discuss the matter with the concerned importer and provide a more detailed proposal if they felt that it is still needed.

12. Pork Cuts and Suckling Pigs

TECRO noted that it would ask the Ministry of Economic Affairs to establish a customs classification code so that suckling pigs can be imported.

TECRO also presented its primal cutting system for imports and exports of hog carcasses and cuts, and noted that unskinned carcasses could not be imported under this system. AIT asked for further clarification on which pork cuts could be imported into Taiwan. It was agreed that the AIT Agricultural Section Chief would follow up on this question with the appropriate officials of the Council of Agriculture upon her return to Taipei.

13. Testing Requirements for Imports of Swine Genetics

AIT expressed continued concern over Taiwan's requirements for performance-based testing of swine imports. TECRO noted that the testing requirement was for the purpose of determining the productivity of the swine, and was not related to animal or human health concerns. It was agreed that this is not a quarantine issue, and that it should be discussed elsewhere.

14. Evisceration of Fish Imports to Taiwan

TECRO clarified that use of the term "eviscerated" in regards to quarantine requirements for imports of frozen and chilled fish products indicates the removal of fish visceral organs and gills. There is no request or requirement to remove the head from the fish body for exports from the United States to Taiwan.

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