

MINUTES

THE THIRD SESSION OF

AIT-CCNAA SANITARY/PHYTOSANITARY

AND AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS

WORKING GROUP CONSULTATIONS

NOVEMBER 2 - NOVEMBER 4, 1993

PHYTOSANITARY ISSUES

1. TAIWAN MANGOES

The AIT delegation noted that the process for the movement of Taiwan mangoes to the United States had been approved and utilized in 1992. AIT asked if CCNAA had any problems or concerns with this process. CCNAA responded that only a small shipment was sent in 1992, but that the quality of the mangoes was reported to be very good. CCNAA thanked AIT for the assistance provided on this issue.

2. TAIWAN LITCHI

CCNAA stated that they understood AIT's concern regarding Oriental fruit fly and litchi fruit borer, but questioned the quarantine importance of the litchi rust mite. CCNAA noted that the mite is host specific and that there is little host production in the United States. CCNAA further noted that Taiwan's precautions against rust mite had satisfied Japan quarantine requirements. Taiwan has shipped litchi to Japan for four years without these mites ever being found by Japanese inspectors.

CCNAA presented the results of their research project to demonstrate the effectiveness of cold treatment against litchi fruit borer.

AIT pointed out that litchi production in the United States is increasing. However, because of climate, commercial production is only in Hawaii and Florida. AIT asked if CCNAA was interested in requesting a regulation be considered allowing imports of Taiwan litchi to states other than Florida and Hawaii. CCNAA responded positively.

AIT agreed to review the litchi fruit borer treatment data and respond to CCNAA within 45 days. If the data is approved, this response will also refer to the proposal for limited imports of Taiwan litchi to the United States. If AIT determines that CCNAA's ice water treatment is effective for eliminating rust mite, the limitations on import and distribution of Taiwan litchis could be further lifted.

JMK
11/4/93

JS
11/7/93

3. TAIWAN CARAMBOLA (STAR FRUIT)

CCNAA stated that the United States requirement for research on Oriental fruit fly treatments are more stringent than those imposed by Japan, and inquired whether it was possible for AIT to accept the same studies it had completed for Japan.

AIT responded that due to needs identified in the United States, the Agricultural Research Service has completed research on Oriental fruit fly treatments to allow the movement of carambola from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland. If it can be confirmed by Dr. Drew in Australia that the Oriental fruit fly in Taiwan and Hawaii is the same sub-species, no further research need be done on this topic in Taiwan, and Taiwan may adopt the same treatment used in Hawaii.

CCNAA agreed to send voucher specimens to Dr. Drew. AIT agreed to alert Dr. Drew to the request coming from CCNAA. AIT also agreed to provide the technical information on Hawaii's cold treatment for Oriental fruit flies to CCNAA.

4. TAIWAN GRAPES

CCNAA said that because all of Taiwan's exportable supplies of grapes are limited, and the expense of developing a treatment for Kanzawa mites, CCNAA is withdrawing this issue for the time being.

AIT provided CCNAA with a list of reported pests on grapes in Taiwan it had gleaned from the literature which were not on the original list of pests CCNAA had provided.

JMK
John
11/4/93

JAS
11/4/93

5. CODLING MOTH

AIT summarized the consensus reached in the previous day's meeting between CCNAA and Under Secretary Moos. CCNAA and AIT agreed to a slight change in the CCNAA quarantine guidelines for codling moth on apples, and approved a Memorandum of Agreement (copy attached). This Agreement describes the procedures the United States will follow in its production and packing of apples which ensure equivalence with the guidelines in their effectiveness and level of protection. CCNAA assured AIT this agreement would permit continued Taiwan imports of U.S. apples. CCNAA agreed to send inspectors to U.S. production areas in August 1994 for the on-site inspection of the 1994 apple-growing season. CCNAA informed AIT that these guidelines will be promulgated within three months after this consultation.

CCNAA delivered to AIT draft guidelines for codling moth hosts other than apples. It was agreed that, as was done for apples, mutually agreeable modifications could be made to the guidelines to allow for imports of non-apple codling moth hosts from the United States.

6. U.S. SEED POTATOES

CCNAA stated that meristem culture potatoes are eligible to enter Taiwan under current rules.

CCNAA agreed in principle to allow imports of certified seed potatoes from Alaska, subject to review of information provided by AIT on the status of listed pests in Alaska. If CCNAA determined that a trip to Alaska was necessary for the final check for pest status, CCNAA agreed to provide AIT with a detailed description of what the CCNAA inspectors needed to see on the trip.

JMK
June
11/4/93

DS
11/4/93

7. U.S. TABLE STOCK POTATOES

CCNAA stated that the trips it had taken to the United States at the invitation of AIT were crucial to its current assessment of the golden nematode, burrowing nematode, and blue mold risk posed by imports of U.S. potatoes to Taiwan. AIT agreed to provide to CCNAA information on the methodology of collection and the extracting procedures for the 56,160 samples taken between 1985 and 1992, to provide information on the detection of golden nematode, potato rot nematode, stem nematode, and burrowing nematode, and to provide, in documentary fashion, any instance of violations concerning movement of quarantined products outside the quarantined area.

CCNAA agreed to remove blue mold as a "disease of concern" for imports of U.S. potatoes.

8. PESTICIDE TOLERANCE

CCNAA requested AIT to provide them with the 220 pesticides listed under the Codex category of "free distribution." AIT agreed to provide this list.

CCNAA said that because Thiabendazole (TBZ) was detected in imports of California grapes, the United States would have to apply for a tolerance for TBZ for grapes, as it had in the past for apples.

CCNAA agreed to follow-up on AIT's request concerning the specific reasons why Taiwan made the decision not to establish an Imazalil residue tolerance for bananas, and on the current status of the Imazalil tolerance for citrus. It was agreed that the two delegations would exchange information involving the additional pesticides of concern and that close cooperation would continue in developing and reviewing required data for the establishment of maximum residue levels (MRL's) for fruit exports.

JMK
for
11/4/93

JDS
for
11/4/93

9. WEED SEEDS

The CCNAA delegation presented again their data and expressed their great concern over the presence of a large variety of weed seeds in a high percentage of U.S. seed and grain shipments, and asked AIT for suggestions on how to handle this situation. AIT responded that the U.S. grain system was too large to make elimination of weed seeds from such shipments economically feasible. AIT repeated its view that weed seeds in grain for consumption and processing pose a negligible quarantine threat.

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ANIMAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY ISSUES

1. EXPORT OF DRIED AND SHREDDED MEAT PRODUCTS TO THE UNITED STATES

The CCNAA delegation noted that they would like to finalize any remaining issues on this subject as it has been discussed for at least 2 years. The delegation explained that production of the dried and shredded meat products involves cooking at temperatures above 100 degrees C and reaches internal temperature above 79.4 degrees C. Pictures of the process of cooking the meat prior to shredding and drying were presented.

The AIT delegation acknowledged that the processing times and temperatures for the beef and pork products were more than adequate to meet Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) requirements. The only remaining item needed is an indicator system to verify that the meat has met the necessary time and temperature requirements. It was explained that this could be by either an indicator cube of meat with a minimum size of 3.8 cubic centimeters or by use of a temperature indicator device that indicates the required temperature was reached. The names of several companies that could supply such devices were given to the CCNAA delegation.

The AIT delegation reported that USDA/FSIS had received the last of the responses to all five questionnaires in January 1993. After translation of the documentation, it was found that cited regulations were not included (the initial correspondence which provided the questionnaires requested regulatory documentation to accompany the responses). When AIT, Taipei, was informed in February 1993 that the regulations were needed in order to complete the document review process, Taiwan opted to translate them into English prior to forwarding them to FSIS. The Taiwan regulations were received by FSIS in September 1993. Pertinent parts of the regulations were submitted to FSIS technical staffs having expertise in the specific areas. Most of the staff reviews have been completed and comments will be compiled and a letter will be sent to CCNAA via AIT in the near future. Once the document review process shows Taiwan's system to be satisfactory, a technical team will visit Taiwan to evaluate its meat inspection system in operation. Because Taiwan is already listed in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), there will be no need to change current regulations.

The CCNAA delegation requested that the letter specifying the missing items be provided as soon as possible so that Taiwan could respond. This should enable an on-site visit to take place in the near future.

YRS
11/4/93

JMK
11/4/93

The AIT delegation reported that in addition to meeting APHIS' requirements, the meat products had to receive FSIS label approvals. Although labels could not be approved for plants which are not certified to export to the United States, an informal opinion as to whether the label met FSIS requirements could be obtained.

The CCNAA delegation requested copies of the request for label approval transmittals, which were provided by the AIT delegation.

The AIT delegation will supply an itemized list of steps (including certificate requirements) to be taken to prepare packages of shredded, dried meat for sale to tourists coming to the United States that would allow entry of such products.

AIT agreed to proceed as rapidly as possible to finalize the approval process.

2. FROZEN PREPARED FOOD CONTAINING MEAT FOR EXPORT TO THE UNITED STATES

The CCNAA delegation indicated that 17 plants are currently approved for export of their different frozen food products to Japan. They indicated that Taiwan farmers depend on exportation of meat in frozen food products to maintain a healthy livestock economy and that the livestock sector imports over 90% of their grain from the United States.

The AIT delegation stated that any product containing more than 3 percent meat had to meet the same FSIS requirements as specified under the previous subject, e.g., recognition of the inspection system and label approval. APHIS indicated that the only requirement to be met by the Taiwan authorities is to have a temperature indicator verification procedure. FSIS supplied the address for submission of requests for product label approval and also supplied the application forms.

3. HYGIENIC STANDARDS FOR EXPORT OF TAIWAN POULTRY MEAT TO THE UNITED STATES

The CCNAA delegation discussed the health status of their national poultry flock. They consider themselves free of Avian Influenza and VVND (viscerotropic velogenic Newcastle disease). They requested recognition by USDA officials of such status.

FB
JDS 11/4/93

JK
JDS
11/4/93

The AIT delegation responded that they would require responses to a questionnaire before being able to act on the request. A copy of the questionnaire was provided to the CCNAA delegation and a promise was made to speedily review the response upon receipt. APHIS will need to change its regulations to permit poultry imports from Taiwan.

AIT stated that FSIS would also need to have a questionnaire completed on the poultry inspection system, perform an on-site visit, and make regulatory changes before they could grant approval. Currently, only 5 suppliers of poultry meat are recognized for importation of poultry products into the United States. They are Hong Kong, Israel, France, Great Britain, and Canada. The questionnaire was supplied to the CCNAA.

The AIT delegation explained that because FSIS operates under two separate laws, the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, the process of gaining eligibility to export poultry products to the United States was completely separate from that of meat. However, the questionnaires are the same, but need to be answered from a poultry inspection perspective. Additionally, a letter requesting such eligibility, and the need for publishing a proposed regulation and a final regulation in the Federal Register was discussed.

Although questionnaires will be supplied with the letter responding to the request for eligibility the AIT delegation was provided with a set of advance questionnaires.

4. TAIWAN'S BACTERIA TOLERANCE LEVELS ON IMPORTS OF RAW MEAT AND POULTRY

The AIT delegation introduced this subject by citing the recent rejection by Taiwan authorities of raw U.S. seasoned boneless turkey breast roast for E. coli. An overview was presented as to why FSIS does not have microbiological standards for raw meat and poultry products. This included citing the consensus of the participants from eleven countries attending the October 1993 World Congress on Meat and Poultry Inspection (WCMPI) which was held at Texas A and M University. The AIT delegation also cited the conclusions of the Codex General Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods, the FAO/WHO Working Group on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, and the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, that criteria for raw meat and poultry products based upon indicator organisms were not considered to be justified. The AIT delegation asked the Taiwan authorities to review their microbiological requirements for raw meat and poultry products.

JGS
11/4/93

JMK
11/4/93

The CCNAA delegation mentioned some recent foodborne outbreaks in the United States caused by E. coli (0157:H7). CCNAA also cited and provided a list of approximately ten U.S. States which reportedly have microbiological standards including E. coli and coliforms for raw meat. They requested that AIT provide further information as to why these States have microbiological standards on raw meat. They also requested copies of the cited FAO and Codex documents, and any other documents which would provide scientific support for the AIT position. The Microbiological Criteria paper prepared by the WCMPI was given to CCNAA by AIT. CCNAA also stated that it would be very helpful if they could obtain a statement from a Federal microbiological committee stating that microbiological standards should not be set for raw meat and poultry products.

The AIT delegation agreed to provide as much of the requested information as was available and to look into the possibility of whether a statement could be obtained from a Federal microbiological committee. CCNAA said that they would present such evidence to their Food Sanitation and Safety Advisory Committee and request that an opinion be rendered as to whether the microbiological standards could be dropped for raw meat and poultry products.

5. TAIWAN'S REQUIREMENTS REGARDING IMPORT OF BRUCELLOSIS VACCINATED CATTLE

The AIT delegation reiterated that the subject of non-importation of brucellosis vaccinated cattle by the Taiwan authorities had been discussed for several years and all the scientific evidence regarding the safety in importing brucellosis vaccinated heifers had been previously presented to CCNAA.

The latest data on the status of the brucellosis eradication program in the United States was presented to CCNAA. A request was made by AIT that CCNAA reconsider their position as Taiwan's policy is limiting imports and limiting the genetic selection available to their dairy farmers.

CCNAA related that in 1992, Taiwan had imported 5 times as many U.S. cattle as in 1991. Several Taiwan dairy farmer groups now have contractual agreements with U.S. suppliers to produce heifers for export that are not vaccinated for brucellosis. The CCNAA believes that this arrangement will supply all the dairy animals needed by Taiwan.

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6. TAIWAN'S REQUIREMENTS FOR SWINE IMPORTS BECAUSE OF PORCINE REPRODUCTIVE AND RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (PRRS)

CCNAA requested information about the availability of reagents for the serologic test for PRRS and whether the United States could supply such reagents.

AIT responded that the National Veterinary Services Laboratories had developed their own procedures and were not now under the restrictions of patent protection that applied at the time of the 1992 meeting. APHIS will be in a position to supply such viruses and reagents as needed by the Taiwan authorities through AIT. A copy of the test procedure was given to the CCNAA.

AIT gave CCNAA copies of the protocol used by the United States for exportation of swine to Korea and Japan. CCNAA will review the testing protocol, request the reagents through the AIT office in Taipei, and develop quarantine requirements for use in the importation of swine from the United States. The Animal Quarantine Technical Committee will be involved in the process in Taiwan.

7. REQUIREMENTS BY TAIWAN FOR IMPORTATION OF POULTRY MEAT FROM AREAS IN THE UNITED STATES AFFECTED WITH AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

AIT discussed the questionnaire that is being completed for submission to Taiwan regarding AI. It was indicated that the material would be completed in the coming week and would be sent to Taiwan through the AIT office.

CCNAA indicated that the Animal Quarantine Technical Committee would have to review the data to be submitted before taking action to lift the ban on importation of poultry meat from the 4 states now banned.

AIT indicated that the danger of transmission of AI in poultry meat was extremely low and that a study was done as far back as 1931 in which poultry meat infected with AI and fed to chickens did not produce disease.

AIT therefore requested that CCNAA consider the possibility of importing poultry meat from the 4 states on an interim basis pending full review of the questionnaire. CCNAA agreed to put this request to the Animal Quarantine Technical Committee.

JRS
11/19/93

JWK
11/14/93

8. TAIWAN'S REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTING EDIBLE OFFALS

CCNAA indicated that no edible offals are imported into Taiwan from any country in the world at present. They stated that they do not have requirements in place at the moment and that they have concerns about the sanitation standards for edible offals.

AIT stated that imports of offals should be allowed unless scientific evidence demonstrates that there is a health risk in such importations. AIT asked that CCNAA begin development of protocols to allow importations of such material. AIT supplied CCNAA with copies of the U.S. regulations for the importation of offals.

CCNAA agreed to investigate the feasibility of allowing such imports and will report their position to AIT.

9. TAIWAN'S REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTING CATFISH

CCNAA indicated that Taiwan is free of two viral diseases of catfish, e.g., Ictalurid herpes virus and Edwardsiella ictaluria and is in the process of drafting requirements for the importation of frozen catfish meat. They requested any information that could be supplied about the two diseases and methods to prevent the transmission of these diseases via products.

AIT responded that they would obtain any information available about the two diseases and would forward it through the AIT office in Taipei. They also indicated that they would send information about which agency would certify exports if they are allowed. AIT requested a continuing dialogue about the draft protocol in order to arrive at a document that would be acceptable for both sides.

10. STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S AND TAIWAN IN TECHNICAL TRAINING AND VISITOR EXCHANGE

The CCNAA delegation outlined their interest in expanding cooperation in training and visitor exchange programs. They expressed interest in the following topics:

1. Wildlife management
2. Soil and water conservation
3. Forestry management
4. Pest risk assessment
5. Diagnostic technology

JMK
June
11/4/93

AS
11/2/93

The AIT delegation agreed to take these suggestions for cooperation under consideration. AIT explained that the Cochran Program, the OICD agricultural science research program as well as several other avenues of cooperation under the AIT-CCNAA Guidelines for a Cooperative Program in the Agricultural Sciences may be used to sponsor or fund such joint endeavors. AIT/Taipei and Council of Agriculture (COA), Department of Health (DOH), and Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Quarantine (BCIQ) will explore and organize such cooperation as appropriate.

The AIT delegation reminded CCNAA about the Meat and Poultry Inspection Training Program for Foreign Authorities.

JMK
11/4/93

JES *11/4/93*