

Minutes
The Second Session of
AIT-CCNAA Sanitary/Phytosanitary
and Agricultural Standards
Working Group Consultations
August 31 - September 3, 1992

At the second session of the AIT-CCNAA Sanitary/Phytosanitary and Agricultural Standards Working Group Consultations, held in Taipei August 31 - September 3, 1992, both sides reaffirmed the principles of the working group.

Those principles are as follows:

- Recognition of the growing importance of bilateral agricultural trade; and
- Recognition of the need to address scientifically mutual concerns regarding sanitary and phytosanitary issues in a way that enhances smooth trade flows.

It was agreed that the next session should be scheduled by mutual agreement within the next 12 months. That meeting would be held in Washington, D.C.

A list of the names of the members of the AIT and CCNAA delegations is attached.

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Phytosanitary Issues

1. U.S. Apples

Introduction and background from both AIT and CCNAA were exchanged on the Codling Moth issue related to U.S. apples shipped to Taiwan. The request by the authorities represented by AIT for a reduction in their inspection level requirement from five percent to two percent by the AIT delegation at the first session was acknowledged and the CCNAA delegation agreed to accept the two percent inspection level.

The CCNAA delegation also acknowledged receipt of information on field pest management control measures, but reminded the AIT side that a visit to the U.S. by CCNAA representatives would be necessary to further inspect U.S. apple packing and storage facilities and apple orchards and observe export quarantine procedures together with inspectors from areas represented by AIT. The CCNAA stated that the "Quarantine Guidelines for Importation of Fresh Fruit from the Countries or Areas Infested with the Codling Moth" will come into effect beginning with the crop season of 1993. CCNAA further reminded the AIT delegation that an invitation would be necessary for this visit. It was agreed that U.S. exporters would pay the expenses of the trip. It was decided that the invitation should be issued in September and the visit should take place before the new year's crop is shipped in late November or early December. The CCNAA delegation requested that packing and storage facilities and orchard inspections related to the visit be representative of the whole industry with a wider variety of packing and storage facilities than seen last November and visits to apple orchards being essential.

AIT requested specifics the authorities represented by CCNAA would be looking for on the trip. The CCNAA delegation stated that quarantine requirements were being developed and were now in draft (Chinese language only). The AIT delegation replied that after review of the requirements of which a copy was provided to the AIT delegation, a response, including possible requests for revision would be provided to AIT. The CCNAA delegation agreed to try to facilitate the concerns expressed by the AIT delegation.

In response to a CCNAA delegation request for clarification on the level of interaction between APHIS and state level inspectors, AIT stated that federal and state inspectors often worked together in the inspection process with both having full training and qualifications.

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2. Phytosanitary Certificates related to apples and other fruits

The CCNAA delegation requested an overview of the U.S. phytosanitary certificate issuing process for products exported from the U.S. AIT responded with an outline of the process.

Both sides exchanged information on the recent cases of misrepresented fruit being exported from the U.S. to Taiwan. An update of the investigation by the authorities represented by AIT was given the CCNAA delegation. Both sides agreed that they would cooperate closely in the future on this issue.

3. Application of Taiwan litchi and starfruit imported into the United States

The CCNAA delegation requested advice on how to expedite the process of APHIS authorization/approval to export litchi and starfruit to the U.S.

litchi

The CCNAA side acknowledged receipt of the pest concerns expressed by the authorities represented by AIT. They understood the concern over the oriental fruit fly, but questioned the concern about the litchi fruit borer and rust mite. The AIT side responded that the borer was a concern because of U.S. litchi production in Hawaii, Florida, and Puerto Rico. The mite, although it attacked only mature fruit, was an important pest in international research literature. The AIT delegation understood that the cold storage method now used on Taiwan could possibly be effective in killing both the borer and the mite. CCNAA agreed to provide information on such treatment shortly and asked that review of such information be concluded as soon as possible. CCNAA also clarified that the common name for the borer was litchi fruit borer and not cocoa pod borer.

starfruit

The CCNAA delegation presented their concern over the size of the research sample requested by the APHIS authorities. CCNAA requested a reduction in the sample from 100,000 larvae to 30,000 larvae, which is used for fruit export to Japan by Taiwan. AIT responded that the requirement could not be reduced but offered to share ideas and advice on how the Taiwan specialists might speed up the sampling/testing process. This would be discussed during the field trip following the working group meetings and in later correspondence.

The CCNAA delegation said they were concerned about the

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possibility of repeated additions of concerned pests related to the research requirements for litchi and starfruit. The AIT delegation indicated that pest risk assessment did not add any more pests to these two fruits.

4. Taiwan Mango exportation to the United States

AIT reviewed the status of application by the authorities represented by CCNAA to export Mango fruit to the United States saying that the regulation has been published in the Federal Register. CCNAA requested that review of pre-clearance procedures by AIT be concluded as soon as possible to facilitate mango exports. CCNAA stated that the chamber and fruit for export should be available for calibration tests in late May or June 1993. AIT agreed to send inspectors to check upon vapor heat treatment calibrations and related quarantine procedures. CCNAA also provided a clear copy of the export facility schematic drawings with English translation.

5. U.S. Potatoes

AIT asked for clarification on the CCNAA's review of material provided on tobacco blue mold and the golden nematode. CCNAA responded that since the golden nematode and tobacco blue mold are on Taiwan's prohibited pest list, and it has repeatedly expressed its serious concern over the devastating damage this nematode may cause to crops, it would be necessary to submit any proposed changes to the Quarantine Advisory Committee. The CCNAA delegation agreed that tobacco blue mold does not infect potatoes based upon literature. AIT agreed to provide further information on interstate quarantine protection for potatoes, the latest golden nematode survey information, literature published in scientific journals, and a detailed description of the golden nematode domestic quarantine process.

CCNAA stated that once all information is reviewed and accepted by the quarantine committee, a visit to specific potato growing regions in the U.S. at the expense of the authorities represented by CCNAA would be required to confirm the information provided. The Committee would then meet again to deliberate upon the findings and propose changes in the current quarantine practice if necessary.

6. Onions and other root crops

AIT requested clarification of additional declarations required for entry of onions and underground portions of the host plants of the stem nematode and the potato rot nematode to Taiwan. CCNAA stated that any shipment must be accompanied by a

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phytosanitary certificate stating that it had been inspected and found free of stem nematode (Ditylenchus dipsaci) and potato rot nematode (Ditylenchus destructor).

7. Weed Seed Contamination

CCNAA delegates reported on a one year study of imported grain shipments that revealed a large variety of different weed seeds taken from grain shipments. Of 128 samples from U.S. origin grain, 80 percent of the samples contained weed seed. The study found 17 weeds in the samples which are not indigenous to Taiwan. CCNAA requested that the AIT delegation consider the information and report it to the U.S. industry and the Federal Grain Inspection Service. CCNAA agreed to provide the list of weeds to AIT. AIT agreed to review the list and provide information on weed inspection activities.

8. Taiwan Grapes

CCNAA asked the AIT delegation to review quarantine entry requirements for Taiwan's Italia Ip65 grapes for export to the United States. CCNAA requested information on how to apply and what information to submit in order to accomplish a rapid and efficient review process. AIT responded that along with the formal request complete pest data for this grape variety would be essential for review, and CCNAA requested that such review be completed as soon as possible upon provision of the data.

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General Sanitary/Phytosanitary Issues

1. Confirmation of phytosanitary certificates

CCNAA stated that the process of communicating on phytosanitary certificate problems with imports from the territory represented by AIT should be expedited. AIT responded that the CCNAA/AIT channel must be used for all correspondence.

2. Approval procedures for new products to be exported from Taiwan to the United States - Pest risk management and time table

CCNAA expressed concerns over the approval procedures used for new product to be exported to the U.S. and requested a clarification. AIT responded by presenting an overview of the U.S. pest risk analysis process and the administrative steps necessary to change import regulations. AIT agreed to provide a written copy to the CCNAA delegation.

3. North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) - quarantine implications

CCNAA expressed concern about the effects of NAFTA on quarantine requirements. AIT responded that free trade does not mean elimination of quarantine requirements. Each country retains the right to apply scientifically based sanitary/phytosanitary measures.

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Food Safety Issues: Pesticide residue
tolerance levels and testing

1. Pesticide Tolerance Levels

The CCNAA delegation noted the exchange of letters beginning with AIT's letter to CCNAA on April 20, listing certain pesticides and the need for appropriate tolerances on specified fruits, as well as CCNAA's letter dated June 11 to AIT requesting residue data and detection methods.

The AIT delegation asked for a further clarification of the data which was provided as well as a listing of Taiwan's registered pesticides and any established temporary or interim tolerances. The CCNAA delegation agreed to provide this information.

CCNAA noted AIT request for acceptance of U.S. tolerance levels for pesticides which are not registered for use in the territory represented by CCNAA once import tolerance criteria are established and the data is provided.

Regarding pesticide residue tolerance levels for food commodities from Taiwan to the United States, CCNAA requested information on expediting this procedure with EPA. AIT noted that CCNAA requested AIT to consider Taiwan tolerance level for pesticides which are not registered for use in the United States for litchi, mango, and starfruit. AIT provided a list of approved pesticides in the U.S. applicable to litchi, starfruit, and mango and offered to provide additional details concerning EPA requirements for establishing import tolerances for pesticides used on food commodities which may be exported to the territory represented by AIT. CCNAA also requested a list of the current pesticides registered for use in the area represented by AIT.

2. Pesticide testing program on Taiwan

The CCNAA delegation explained the pesticide registration and the residue setting and testing programs for Taiwan. The pesticide residue monitoring program includes monitoring stations and field inspectors under the Council of Agriculture (COA) and market monitoring under the Department of Health (DOH). The authorities represented by CCNAA are in the process of establishing pesticide residue tolerance levels for those pesticides registered for use on Taiwan which do not yet have established tolerance levels. AIT requested a list of the current pesticides registered for use on Taiwan and the existing tolerance levels including temporary or interim levels which CCNAA agreed to provide.

Both sides agreed to continue their dialogue in the area of pesticide tolerance with a view to facilitating trade.

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Animal Disease Issues

1. Brucellosis

The AIT delegation introduced the topic by explaining the Brucellosis eradication program in the U.S. and the technical rationals for calfhood vaccination with strain 19. Additional handouts on the current status of prevalence of the infection by state and the surveillance activity in Brucellosis-free states were provided.

The CCNAA delegation responded by stating that their technical committee finds vaccination with strain 19 unsafe because some vaccinated animals could develop serological titers. They also find that the U.S. milk ring test does not give agricultural authorities the necessary degree of confidence. It took them 30 years to eradicate the disease and they want to avoid risks of reintroducing the disease. They believe that the U.S. industry can still provide non-vaccinated animals for export to Taiwan.

The two main reasons for rejecting calfhood-vaccinated cattle is that: 1) strain 19 is a live vaccine which can produce persistent strain 19 infection and therefore can not provide enough safety assurance; 2) Taiwan has been free from brucellosis since 1989 and the cost of eradication the disease would be great.

The CCNAA delegation also indicated that in 1986 Taiwan imported 1,800 U.S. cattle and found one reactor. In 1987, of 750 U.S. cattle imported, 2 reactors were found. The AIT delegation responded by indicating that there is confusion between serological reactors and infection. The AIT delegation stated that within a large vaccinated population, there will be occasional reactors. In order to address this issue and prevent the appearance of reactors AIT proposed a protocol identifying criteria for selection and pre-embarkation testing of cattle destined for Taiwan.

The AIT delegation also explained the reasons for the desire to vaccinate in the free-states although not mandated by federal regulations. It was explained that although it is possible to find small numbers of non-vaccinated cattle in the U.S., these animals will not be of the desired high-quality germplasm as already confirmed by Taiwan importers.

The CCNAA delegation received the additional information on the surveillance and prevalence of the infection and the five-point protocol provided and agreed to present both to the animal quarantine technical committee for review and comment within the next three months.

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2. Porcine Respiratory and Reproductive Syndrome (PRRS)

The AIT delegation presented the history and current status of the disease. The following written documents were handed to the CCNAA delegates:

- 1) Summary of PRRS
- 2) Protocol of IFA testing (PRRS)
- 3) Protocol for isolating PRRS virus
- 4) Part of Proceedings of PRRS conference (May 1992, St. Paul)
- 5) Proceedings of PRRS in the Netherlands (August 1992)

AIT reported that the new diagnostic (IFA) test kit is not available for distribution to Taiwan because the cell line is property of a private sector firm. As soon as a new cell line is developed by the U.S. government, it can be offered to Taiwan.

The AIT delegation developed and delivered a protocol on PRRS to the CCNAA delegation for review by the Quarantine Technical Committee.

The CCNAA delegation agreed to review the information and protocol provided by AIT during the meeting and provide a response to AIT. The IFA testing procedures must be reviewed and approved by the Quarantine Technical Committee first as was mutually agreed in the first session.

3. Import access on Taiwan for Hybrid Swine Genetics

The AIT delegation requested that CCNAA review their previous rejection of hybrid swine breeding stock imports, and clarify the established criteria for acceptance.

The CCNAA delegation outlined the growth performance and carcass quality criteria used to qualify any breeding stock imports beyond the four breeds that are currently approved. As a result of additional criteria which AIT had not been aware of, the CCNAA agreed to provide these to AIT. Both sides supported the establishment of fair and transparent criteria which would allow access to superior breeding stock from U.S. suppliers to the Taiwan market.

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Food Safety Issues: Red and white meat products

1. Dried and shredded meat products

The CCNAA delegation inquired about status of a USDA review for import eligibility of Taiwan processed meat products.

The AIT delegation reported that no further information is needed based on the processing procedures provided by the CCNAA delegation on Dec. 31, 1991. However, from the food safety basis the AIT delegation reported that USDA/FSIS had not received responses to two of the five questionnaires from the CCNAA delegation. These questionnaires are required for FSIS to evaluate Taiwan's meat inspection system. Once FSIS accepts the information leading to the certification of processing plants, then the products that meet APHIS's required processing standards will be permitted.

The CCNAA delegation responded that the two remaining questionnaires were being completed and would be ready shortly. Confirmation of questionnaire receipt and appropriate feedback would be provided by the AIT delegation.

The AIT delegation agreed that the results of the review of processed product and processing information provided by CCNAA last December will be provided shortly.

2. Frozen prepared food containing meat

The CCNAA delegation presented an overview of Taiwan's frozen food industry. They indicated their interest to export frozen food products to the United States and requested information about how they could expedite the application. The AIT delegation responded by reminding CCNAA of the two separate criteria, animal health and sanitary/food safety, involved in approving imports of prepared frozen food with meat. The CCNAA delegation agreed they would supply this information and also agreed to share their domestic standards/criteria for frozen food products. AIT stated that once they have received the needed information for both criteria, then an import risk assessment could be made by APHIS and FSIS authorities.

3. Microbiological testing of fresh meat

The AIT delegation briefly reviewed the history concerning microbiological testing by Taiwan authorities for fresh and frozen meat imports. AIT questioned the science of CCNAA's testing requirements from a public health point of view. AIT delegation mentioned that it was important to establish whether

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current Taiwan regulations were necessary from a food safety point of view. CCNAA responded by citing references of microbiological criteria in certain states in the U.S. AIT asked to review the materials that were referred to by the CCNAA delegation. AIT agreed to provide details on how the system implemented by its authorities assured the safety and wholesomeness of meat and again stated that at the federal level the U.S. does not have specific micrological standards concerning total aerobic bacterial count.

AIT referred to one case of alligator meat, where this type of microbiological testing had impeded trade. CCNAA asked that AIT pass on specific case information on U.S. exporter/Taiwan importer complaints or problems with the importation of meat and they would contact them directly to explain the situation. The CCNAA also asked the AIT delegation if they could provide the necessary information on the United States criteria for the importation of wild game meat for their reference. The AIT delegation said they would provide that information.

CCNAA provided the revised hygienic standards for frozen foods, meat and poultry to AIT.

AIT asked CCNAA if the same microbiological testing criteria for imports also applied to domestic frozen meat products. They said the same criteria applied.

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