

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

EQUIVALENCE - PROGRAMME FOR FURTHER WORK

Decision by the Committee

In the light of paragraph 13 of the Committee's decision on equivalence (G/SPS/19) and the decision at the Fourth Ministerial Conference regarding implementation-related issues and concerns (WT/MIN(01)17, paragraph 3.3), at its meeting of 19-21 March 2002, the Committee adopted the following programme to further the implementation of Article 4, with particular consideration of the problems encountered by developing country Members.

Informal and regular meetings of 18-21 March 2002

- Information from Members on their experiences regarding implementation of Article 4. Information submitted by Members should take into account the various elements contained in the Decision and particularly: (i) any successfully concluded bilateral equivalence agreements or arrangements; (ii) on-going discussions on recognition of equivalence; (iii) technical assistance activities related to the implementation of Article 4; and (iv) assistance provided to developing countries to facilitate their participation in the work of the standard-setting bodies.
- Consideration of information from the Codex, OIE and IPPC regarding their work on the issue of equivalence.
- Consideration and adoption of a format for the notification of agreements recognizing equivalence.
- In the course of its review of the transparency provisions, consideration of specific text drawing attention to the responsibility of national Enquiry Points to provide information.
- Further examination and discussion of the proposals submitted by Argentina regarding clarification of paragraph 5 of the Decision with respect to accelerated procedures for determining equivalence in respect of products historically imported from the exporting Member.¹
- Preliminary discussion of paragraph 6, including with regard to the relationship between current imports and potential compliance problems.

¹ G/SPS/W/116.

Informal and regular meetings of 17-20 June 2002

- Information from Members on their experiences regarding implementation of Article 4.
- Consideration of information from the Codex, OIE and IPPC regarding their work on the issue of equivalence.
- Consideration of any notifications received regarding agreements recognizing equivalence.
- Information from Members (and from the relevant observer organizations) regarding usual procedures for the determination of equivalence with respect to products which have not been previously imported from the interested exporting country.
- Examination of procedures to identify which steps might be accelerated, minimized or eliminated altogether with respect to products which have previously been imported from the exporting country, on the basis of categorization of historic or previous trade patterns (e.g., whether previous trade has been sporadic or virtually continuous; whether previous trade has fully complied with the importing country's SPS requirements or problems have been identified); and the nature of the health risks posed by the imported product and their potential severity.
- Suggestions by Members for clarification of the provisions of paragraph 6, including with regard to the relationship between current imports and potential compliance problems.
- Preliminary discussion of paragraph 7.

Informal and regular meetings of 7-8 November 2002

- Information from Members on their experiences regarding implementation of Article 4.
- Consideration of information from the Codex, OIE and IPPC regarding their work on the issue of equivalence.
- Consideration of any notifications received regarding agreements recognizing equivalence.
- Consideration of draft guidance for accelerated procedures for the recognition of equivalence of products historically traded, on the basis of categorization of trade patterns and risks.
- Consideration of a draft text clarifying the provisions of paragraph 6, including with regard to the relationship between current imports and potential compliance problems.
- Suggestions by Members for clarification of the provisions of paragraph 7.
- Consideration and adoption of the report to the Trade Negotiating Committee regarding progress on the implementation of Article 4, as stipulated in paragraph 12 of WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1.

First informal and regular meetings of 2003

- Information from Members on their experiences regarding implementation of Article 4.
- Consideration of information from the Codex, OIE and IPPC regarding their work on the issue of equivalence.
- Consideration of any notifications received regarding agreements recognizing equivalence.
- Consideration and, if possible, adoption of guidance for accelerated procedures for the recognition of equivalence of products historically traded.
- Consideration and, if possible, adoption of text clarifying the provisions of paragraph 6.
- Consideration of a draft text clarifying the provisions of paragraph 7.

Second informal and regular meetings of 2003

- Information from Members on their experiences regarding implementation of Article 4.
- Consideration of information from the Codex, OIE and IPPC regarding their consideration of the issue of equivalence.
- Consideration of any notifications received regarding agreements recognizing equivalence.
- Consideration and, if possible, adoption of text clarifying the provisions of paragraph 7.

Third informal and regular meetings of 2003

- Information from Members on their experiences regarding implementation of Article 4.
 - Consideration of information from the Codex, OIE and IPPC regarding their work on the issue of equivalence.
 - Consideration of any notifications received regarding agreements recognizing equivalence.
 - Commence review of the Decision on Equivalence in light of the experience of Members and work undertaken in the Codex, OIE and IPPC.
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