

**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**MONITORING THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL HARMONIZATION**

Responses Received from the Standard-Setting Bodies

Note by the Secretariat

As agreed by the Committee at its meeting of 7-8 July 1999, the Chairman submitted to the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures of the FAO International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Office international des épizooties (OIE) a copy of the first annual report of the Committee on the Procedure to Monitor the Process of International Harmonization (G/SPS/13). The Chairman in particular drew attention to those sections of the report relating to standards, guidelines or recommendations of direct relevance to each of these bodies, and indicated that the SPS Committee would appreciate being kept informed of what consideration, if any, was being given to the issues identified. The following responses have been received from the standard-setting bodies.

From Dr. Jean Blancou, Director-General of the OIE:

"... I wish to inform you that the Bureau of the OIE International Animal Health Code Commission met at the OIE headquarters in Paris shortly after the last meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee), of which you are Chairman.

During their meeting the members of the International Animal Health Code Commission took note of the provisional version of the aforementioned document and decided on a certain number of initiatives aimed at determining to what extent solutions could be proposed to problems raised in the document that fall within the scope of the OIE.

A study of document G/SPS/13 will also be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Bureau of International Animal Health Code Commission, due to be held next September. This will provide the members of the Bureau with an opportunity to study the document in greater depth; decide on the extent to which the Commission's working programme can be revised accordingly, and evaluate any available results of the initiatives already undertaken.

The OIE representative at the meetings of the SPS Committee will in due course inform the said Committee on the outcome of the deliberations of the International Animal Health Code Commission on the problems raised in document G/SPS/13 and the state of progress of the work undertaken in this respect."

From Dr. John Hedley, Chairman, Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures:

"The term "official control" as it occurs in the definition of quarantine pest will be discussed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Interim Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM).

It was suggested at the last meeting of the Standards Committee of the ICPM (Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary Measures) in May 1999 that the ICPM consider developing a short standard to provide a full description of the application of the term. The suggestion of the United States made in the SPS Committee meeting coincides with the suggestion of the Committee of Experts. Anyway, the matter will be discussed in October at the next meeting of the ICPM when we discuss the *glossary of Phytosanitary Terms*.

I will ensure that the SPS Committee is informed, probably with the help of Mr. R. Griffin, the Coordinator of the IPPC Secretariat, of the result of the considerations of the ICPM."

From Mr. G.D. Orriss, Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, in consultation with Mr. Thomas Billy, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:

"The request from the SPS Committee to consider and report on these issues is, we believe, a very positive aspect of the relationship between Codex and the Committee. The SPS Committee has called the attention of Codex to four specific issues: chlortetracycline on pork and pork products; *Bacilli* and other organisms in canned and bottled products; benzoic acid as a preservative in sauces; and certification regarding the absence of pathogens in raw meat products. These matters will be brought to the attention of the Chairpersons of the relevant Codex Committees with the request that they be discussed at Committee level in order to respond as positively as possible to the requests of your Members. Nevertheless, the implications of the request vary from case to case. The establishment of maximum residue limits for chlortetracycline in pork and pork products and the setting of levels for use of benzoic acid in sauces and other products are under active consideration by the relevant Codex Committees and hopefully will result in a final decision at the next (24<sup>th</sup>) Session of the Commission in 2001. The other matters are entirely new to Codex and there is no clear indication that they are amenable to the setting of standards or that standards are indeed needed; the advice of the relevant Codex Committees will be sought.

We will keep you apprised of developments in all four areas, both in writing and at meetings of the SPS Committee as the occasion warrants."

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