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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**SUMMARY OF THE TWO-PART APEC FOOD SAFETY COOPERATION FORUM WORKSHOP
ON "RISK COMMUNICATION RELATED TO MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMITS"**

SUBMISSION BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The following submission, received on 20 November 2023, is the statement made by the United States of America at the 15-17 November 2023 WTO SPS Committee, and is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the United States of America.

1. On 22 August 2022 and 15-16 May 2023, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies held a two-part workshop series titled, "Risk Communication Related to Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)," that aimed to strengthen APEC member economies' capacity to conduct risk communication.
2. The workshops, which were held in Thailand and the United States, respectively, and co-sponsored by Australia and Canada, provided examples and best practices to improve transparency and confidence in navigating information bias. The workshops were held as part of the Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) under the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC).
3. Workshop participants discussed the effects of media, communication bias, and information sharing between risk assessors and risk managers, and identified best practices for regulators' science-based risk communication on pesticide residues.
4. The workshops included presentations from experts across the APEC region. The first workshop highlighted the importance of developing an effective risk communication strategy on MRLs through the use of science-based evidence, concise communication, and transparency. The outcomes discussed by participants informed the second workshop, during which panel discussions with economists, industry, and journalists highlighted perspectives on science communication to the public.
5. Workshop organizers provided APEC economies with background information, frameworks, guidelines, summary deliverables and examples for member economies to implement best practices related to MRL risk communication.
6. As active Members of APEC, we are pleased to share this work with Members of the WTO SPS Committee, and we will keep the Committee updated as this work continues. The workshop laid the groundwork for future cooperation and collaboration among APEC economies related to risk communication in food and agriculture. Workshops, trainings, and other activities are being conceptualized as a result of the workshop's successful implementation.
7. Interim field guides from all working groups will soon be published on the US Department of Agriculture's website, with the goal of publishing all by early 2024, after which the guides will be uploaded to APEC's website, pending endorsement.

8. Recognizing that risk communication has been identified as an important topic for the SPS Committee, most recently by the Committee's decision to hold the "Thematic Session on Risk Communication, Misinformation and Disinformation", the United States invites all Members to review the information when it is available and consider its possible relevance in future Committee discussions, including those that may take place under the Sixth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement.
