

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SPS COMMITTEE ON  
THE OPERATION OF ENQUIRY POINTS**

Communication by the Department of Plant Protection of Pakistan

**Pakistan's Official Position**

1. Pakistan is a signatory of the WTO SPS Agreement and is in the process of instrumenting the new revised text of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), 1997. The International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures are considered and adopted according to the resources available. The Government of Pakistan respects the quarantine regulations of FAO member countries and supports agricultural trade that is free, fair and safe. Importing countries implement regulations through pest risk analysis and the subsequent development of import health standards where the basic conditions of importation are defined on their own terms and the means of mitigation of risk to attain the importer's appropriate level of protection are conveyed to Pakistan.

**Main Constraints**

2. Pakistan, like other developing countries, has problems relating to the SPS Agreement. The main problems are:

- Insufficient ability to set up a domestic phytosanitary system and to fulfil all of the requirements of trading partners. The phytosanitary standards of the developed countries include import bans, technical specifications and information requirements.
- Pakistan's existing plant quarantine regulations have a narrow scope and do not include pesticide residue, aflatoxin, packaging, invasive alien species, heavy metals, etc. Although agricultural trade has been satisfactory, there have been some rejections of Pakistan's exports due to packaging, concerns for aflatoxin and fruit fly infestation.

**Specific Problems**

- Fruit fly infestation - Germany, France and the Netherlands have intercepted fruit flies in mango and citrus.
- Aflatoxin - The EU has expressed concern over aflatoxin levels in food products. Iran has done the same for Pakistan's exports of rice.

**Solutions**

3. The Department of Plant Protection enforces the Plant Quarantine Act 1976 and Rules. In order to broaden the scope and meet the requirements of the trading environment influenced by the WTO SPS Agreement, a Technical Cooperation Programme entitled "Revision of Plant Quarantine Regulations" costing US\$50,000 was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture. This project has been

examined by the Technical Advisory Committee in the MINFAL. Moreover, the Department of Plant Protection has submitted the following projects to meet the requirements of trading partners:

Development Schemes

	(Million)
(1) Expansion of Plant Quarantine Section (Modified)	Rs 162,500
(2) Establishment of post-entry quarantine station at Port Qasim	Rs 15,565
(3) Plant Pest Surveillance	Rs 600
(4) Staffing of Vapour Heat Treatment Plant at the Department of Plant Protection, Karachi	Rs 4,720
(5) Capacity enhancement of Regional Plant Quarantine Laboratories under WTO	Rs 15.915

4. With the execution of these projects, Pakistan will be able to check the spread of harmful pests as required and thus boost trade. In the meantime, the following measures have been undertaken in respect to certain elements that have arisen after the institution of the WTO:

- (i) Aflatoxin - Agriculture commodities are tested for aflatoxin contents by the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Laboratories.
- (ii) Pesticide residues - Samples are tested by the Pakistan Institute of Science and Technology. We have one officer trained in pesticide residue analysis from the National Agricultural Research Centre, Islamabad. We are trying to establish a small unit for pesticide residue analysis within the Department of Plant Protection.
- (iii) Packing and Packaging - Efforts are being made to encourage exporters to use hygienic and suitable packing and packaging material as required by the importing countries.

**Fruit Fly**

5. Fruit fly is a major phytosanitary concern for Pakistan. It has been noted that, although green fruits may not be affected by fruit fly, as fruits ripen, they are more prone to infestation. The mitigation measures, as required by the importing countries, include:

- Pest-free areas that are determined through systematic survey, demarcated, notified, and recognized by the FAO and the importing countries.
- Eradication program i.e. sanitation, chemical control, bait traps, sterile insect techniques, bio-control and bio-technology.
- Disinfestation technique development, administrative authorization, recognition by the importing countries and subsequent establishment of a facility that is accredited and then approved by the importing countries. The elements for consideration are facility design, electrical and electronic components, recorders, quarantine areas, re-infestation safeguards, personal hygiene at the premises, post-treatment options, product outflow after clearance and quarantine inspection and certification, safety and alarm systems.

6. The department is in the process of establishing a Vapour Heat Treatment plant with public-private sector equity. With the commissioning of this Plant, trade in fruits and vegetables would be safe and the concerns of importing countries will be addressed.

7. The Enquiry Point of Pakistan responds to the reports of non-compliance received from trading partners according to available resources. Technical assistance in the matter would be welcome.

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