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Revision

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania has submitted the following revised information on Lithuania's progress in implementing the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, with the request that it be circulated to Working Party members.

Lithuania's Progress in Implementing the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

The Lithuanian Government herewith submits information on the most recent status of Lithuania's legislation and regulations and its institutional infrastructure in the field of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

It is recalled that in Lithuania food safety is under the jurisdiction of the National Nutrition Centre to the Ministry of Health, the State Veterinary Service and the State Plant Quarantine Inspectorate to the Ministry of Agriculture. Responsibility for inspection of unprocessed animal products (e.g. meat, milk) is being shared by the National Nutrition Centre and State Veterinary Service. Animal health is under the jurisdiction of the State Veterinary Service. Plant health is under the jurisdiction of the State Plant Quarantine Inspectorate.

Regarding transparency, Lithuania already publishes promptly all sanitary and phytosanitary regulations which have been adopted. Lithuania is establishing a process to allow a reasonable period of time between the publication of a sanitary or phytosanitary regulation and its entry into force to allow producers in exporting Members to adapt to the new requirements and expects this process to be completed in the near future. Lithuania has established the SPS enquiry point at the Ministry of Agriculture. The enquiry point also will carry out the notification obligations of the Agreement.

Lithuania already participates in the work of international organisations (the Codex Alimentarius, the Organisation International des Epizooties and the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation). To the greatest extent possible and appropriate, Lithuania is basing its SPS measures on the international standards and guidelines created by those organisations.

Hereafter are listed the tasks already completed and those currently being performed in the following fields:

1. SPS measures applicable to food products;
2. SPS measures in the veterinary field;
3. SPS measures applicable to plants and plant products.

As can be ascertained on the basis of this survey, practically all that is needed to apply the Agreement on SPS measures is already in place. Regarding the remaining tasks, only the Law on Food and some provisions on plants and plant products should be considered.

1. SPS Measures in the Field of Food Products
- 1.1. The tasks already completed:

Lithuania has been a member of the Codex Alimentarius Commission since 1992. There are 6 large laboratories in the Public Health Service under the Ministry of Health. They test for pesticides, heavy metals and other chemical contaminants in food and are located in the biggest cities. The Central Laboratory is in the National Nutrition Centre in Vilnius. There are 35 small chemical and microbiological laboratories situated across the various districts of Lithuania. They test for nitrates and microbiological levels in food.

During the year 1994-1996, by approving three major laws in the field, the system of risk assessment of food was introduced. The Law on Health System (19 July 1994), the Law on Mental Health Care (6 June 1995) and the Law on Health Care Institutions (6 June 1996) defined that the National Nutrition Centre to the Ministry of Health, the State Hygiene Inspectorate and the State Veterinary Service are in charge with implementation and inspection of mechanisms for risk assessment. The Law on Food which currently is submitted to the Parliament for approval will finally define the whole mechanisms for risk assessment of food.

Framework legislation in place:

- "Procedure of Food Products Imported into the Republic of Lithuania and their Safety and Quality Control" (Government Resolution No. 1106 of 9 October 1997). This document describes the obligatory requirements for food products intended for import in to Lithuania. It provides the structure and functions of authorities involved in food safety control in the process of importation and was prepared in accordance with FAO Food and Nutrition Paper 14/15 Manual of Food Quality Control, vol.15 Imported Food Inspection, Rome 1993;
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 38-1993. The Maximum Amounts of Unhealthy Substances Permitted in Tobacco Products" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 24 of 7 February 1994). The document describes all safety and quality requirements for tobacco products produced in Lithuania as well as abroad. These requirements conform to international requirements; they must be read in conjunction with the Lithuanian Law on Tobacco Control, approved on 20 December 1995, which prohibits the production and import of snuff and chewing tobacco;
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 54-1998. Raw Materials and Foodstuffs. Maximum Permitted Levels of Contaminants and Radionuclids" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 381 of 30 June 1998) which contains all revised provisions of previous HN 54-1995 and implements new Codex Alimentarius provisions. It is a basic document which lists all allowed maximum levels for chemical agents and radioactive materials in foodstuffs produced in Lithuania as well as abroad. The established levels of pesticides and other chemical contaminants are harmonised to recommendations of CAC Pesticide Residues in Food Codex

Alimentarius Supplement 1 to vol.2, FAO/WHO, Rome, 1993 and other CAC guidelines designed for concrete foodstuffs;

- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 53-1998. Approved Food Additives" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 794 of 31 December 1998) which contains all provisions of previous HN 53-1995 (it included a positive list of approved food additives and permitted levels of additives in concrete foodstuffs) and additionally contains amendments to approximate the correspond to the positive list of the European Communities;
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 26-1998. Raw Materials and Foodstuffs. Allowable Levels of Microbial Contamination" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 646 of 10 November 1998) which contains all provisions of previous HN 26-1994 on allowable maximum levels for microbes in foodstuffs produced in Lithuania, specifies imports and is fully harmonised with Codex Alimentarius recommendations;
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 15-1998 Hygiene of Foodstuffs" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 554 of 2 October 1998) (instead of planned HN 78-1998). This regulation sets up the Codex Alimentarius standard CAC/RCP 1 requirements, including HACCP, as mandatory for food establishments and all food handling;
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 16-1998. Materials and Articles Intended to Come into Contact with Foodstuff" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 793 of 31 December 1998);
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 24-1998. Drinking Water Quality Requirements and Programme Supervision" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 684 of 25 November 1998);
- "Lithuanian Hygiene Norm HN 28-1998. Drinking Mineral Water Quality Requirements and Programme Supervision" (approval of Ministry of Health No. 721 of 7 December 1998).

1.2. Tasks being performed at present:

Improvements to the framework legislation:

The adoption of the Law on Food is planned for during the course of 1999. At present, the final draft of the law is submitted to the Parliament for approval. The law addresses the regulation of food safety for human health. It will establish the foundations for the management of food safety and quality system, protect consumers from unhealthy production and false or misleading advertising of food. The law will also define the fields of competence and responsibility of the institutions conducting supervision of food safety.

2. SPS Measures in the Veterinary Field

2.1. The tasks already completed:

Lithuania has been a member of the OIE (Office International des Epizooties) since 1936, this membership was renewed in 1992. Lithuania also has been a member of the Foot and Mouth Disease Commission at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) since 1993. The State Veterinary Service follows the recommendations and standards of OIE: "Manual of Standards for diagnostic tests and vaccines", 1992, and the "International Animal Health Code (mammals, birds and bees)", 1992. Also, the State Veterinary Service is responsible for risk assessment (see above description under "SPS measures in the field of food products" of the implementation of risk assessment).

The National Veterinary Laboratory carries out monitoring programmes and performs tests for diseases with reference to the OIE recommendations and standards. Every month, the State Veterinary Service sends reports to the OIE about the epizootic situation in Lithuania and every week gets from OIE the latest information about the epizootic situation in the world.

Veterinary supervision and control is performed by 10 county veterinary services, 34 district State veterinary clinics and 4 stations of city veterinary sanitation. Every county State veterinary service has a veterinary laboratory. The National Veterinary Laboratory performs the mandatory tests and serves as a methods guidance centre for the State laboratories of the country. Border veterinary controls are conducted by the Border and Transport State Veterinary Service which reports to the State Veterinary Service. Sixteen border veterinary posts and 3 veterinary posts are in operation. They perform veterinary medical control of livestock, fodder, raw materials and food of animal origin.

Framework legislation in place:

The State Veterinary Service is guided by the Law on Veterinary Activities (17 December 1991). This Law defines the basic tasks, structure and management of veterinary activities.

Surveillance of the import and transit of animals, feed stuffs and products of animal origin into/through Lithuania is conducted in accordance with Government Resolution No. 284 (27 April 1993) "On Veterinary and Sanitary Requirements on Livestock, their Products, Raw Materials and Fodder Imported to the Republic of Lithuania and Transported as Transit through its Territory".

2.2. Tasks being performed presently:

Improvement to the framework legislation:

See above description under "SPS measures in the field of food products" of the Law on Food.

3. SPS Measures in the Field of Plants and Plant Products

3.1. The tasks already completed:

The Phytosanitary Research Centre tests for quarantine diseases, pests and weeds and provides the possibility for research in these areas. The simple visual analysis of weeds, nematodes and pests are implemented at the 10 regional plant quarantine stations located across Lithuania. During the course of 1998 the State Plant Quarantine Inspectorate has been reorganised as the part of the new institution, the State Plant Protection Agency. Now the Plant Quarantine Division of this Agency is continuing the work of the Inspectorate and also is responsible for the risk assessment.

In 1998 Lithuania joined the EPPO (European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation). Also Lithuania has improved the staff and basic equipment of the Phytosanitary Research Laboratory.

Framework legislation in place:

- Law on Plant Protection (19 October 1995) with the amendments of June 1998;
- Law on the Protection of Plant Varieties and Seed Cultivation (17 September 1996);

- Law on the Ratification of the Convention for Establishing of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (May 1998);
- Government Resolution No. 599 “On the Approval of Vegetable Quarantine Regulations for Import and Export of Goods of Vegetable Origin to and from the Republic of Lithuania and their Transit through the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania” (3 August 1993);
- Government Resolution No. 384 “On the Approval of Quarantine Regulations for the Production, Transportation, Conservation Sale and Utilisation of Plants and Plant Products on the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania (25 March 1996);
- Government Resolution No. 312 “On the Approval of the Regulation of the Registration of the Plant Protection Products and Statute of the Government Commission for the Registration of the Plant Protection” (March 1996);
- Lists of harmful organisms: the list A1 covers harmful organisms which are not known to occur in Lithuania and the list A2 covers harmful organisms the spread of which is limited in the territory of Lithuania (Decree of Ministry of Agriculture No. 312 of 28 December 1998);
- List of plant protection products authorised for use in Lithuania approved by State Committee for Plant Protection Product Registration (Decree No. 3 of 2 June 1998);
- Rules for use of plant protection products approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment (24 February 1994).

3.2. Tasks being completed at present:

Lithuania also is continuing the establishment of plant quarantine posts which have begun their operations in the country and at border posts.

Special regulations are under preparation for the mechanism of risk assessment of plant origin products.

The State Plant Protection Agency is establishing the pest free areas in accordance with FAO-IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) standards. This is expected to take place at the latest by the end of 1999.

Lithuania is preparing to ratify the IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) at the latest by the end of 1999.
