

**Working Party on the
Accession of Oman**

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ACCESSION OF OMAN

Action Plan for Implementing SPS Agreement

Plants and Plant Products

Existing Position and On-going Programmes

The Plant Quarantine law that came into force by the Royal Decree No. 49/77 was designed to protect the major economic crops of the Sultanate. This decree was conceived during a period when the classification of pests by the region into those that are of significance; globally, to the region and the country did not exist. Therefore, quarantine impediments were applied to pests of economic significance as well as to pests that were then believed to be not present in the Sultanate. The law does not differentiate the quarantine pests, regulated pests and regulated non-quarantine pests from other pests.

The Decree was published in the government gazette and copies of this were made available. Additionally, publicity was achieved through brochures and the print. Transparency was provided in the customary manner. The Decree does not discriminate between domestic and foreign supplies. It provides MFN treatment and does not hinder trade.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries administers the Plant Quarantine Law through its plant quarantine section within the Department of Agricultural Affairs. Scientists and Researchers of the Directorate General of Agriculture Research provide the necessary technical support.

Recently a parent Plant Quarantine law came into force between GCC member nations, designed to protect the major economic crops of GCC. The law differentiates the quarantine pests, regulated pests and regulated non-quarantine pests from other pests.

This agreement was announced in major news papers throughout GCC countries to provide timely information to all who may be concerned. The law will further be published in the Government gazette and copies of this will be available. Additionally, publicity will be achieved through brochures and prints. Transparency will be provided in the customary manner. The new law does not discriminate between domestic and foreign supplies. It provides MFN treatment and does not hinder trade.

Action Plan

1. A new Royal Decree 31/98 issued on 19th May 1998 for the protection of agricultural wealth has been designed to strengthen pest-entry quarantine and is being implemented.
2. By the Ministerial Decision No. 7/98 issued on 24th January 1998 a special committee to evaluate the existing plant quarantine regulations in relation to the requirements of the WTO and SPS Agreements, was established within MAF.

3. A special committee has been formed to revise and update the Nursery Establishment law and to harmonize it with that of GCC member nations.
4. Plant quarantine manual and other directions are under preparation based on scientific data for the implementation of the regulations.
5. Special effort will be made to harmonize the regulation. Publicity will be ensured through the print and electronic media. Transparency will be achieved by circulating the regulations to the concerned parties and to the committee on SPS measures well ahead of the publication of the regulations. Comments and concerns will be invited and appropriate action will be taken.

Future Programmes:

1. The updated quarantine regulations will be harmonized and will apply quarantine impediments to pests for which pest-risk analysis has been completed.
2. The updated regulations will be published and adequate transparency will be ensured. Comments will be invited from concerned parties and from the committee on SPS measures. The necessary modification to the regulations may be made as is customary in the Sultanate.
3. The legal and administrative frame work together with the identity of the institutions responsible for the implementation of the updated regulations will be notified well in advance of the date of enforcement of the regulation.
4. The necessary staff to implement the various provisions in the regulations will be trained and made available in due time.
5. Effort will be made to obtain the services of experts in areas where such expertise is lacking.

Fertilizers

Existing Position and On-going Programmes:

The Sultanate is now implementing the Gulf Standards that specify the general requirements and specifications of the organic and inorganic fertilizers. The MAF will inquire a certificate from the country of Origin.

Action Plan:

1. A Ministerial Order No. 1119/4 of 06th September 1998, was issued to form a special committee from the Directorate General of Agricultural Research to revise and update the fertilizer production and importation policies and the quarantine measures.
2. A fertilizer quarantine manual for the Sultanate of Oman is under preparation
3. Extension services will be involved in the publicity and the circulation of the regulations through mass and electronic media, and feedback will be carefully evaluated, and an appropriate action will be taken.

Future Programmes :

1. Adequate transparency will be the core in updating the quarantine regulations by inviting experts and concerned parties and a copy of it will be sent to WTO members.
2. Notification of the legal, administrative framework and institutions responsible for the implementation of the updated regulations.

Pesticides and residues

Existing Position and On-going Programmes:

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries regularly updates and publishes the list of banned pesticides based on UNEP recommendations. An equipped Pesticide Quality Control and Residue Analysis Laboratory was established in the MAF, and it is fully functional. The Royal Decree No. 46/95 was issued on 18th September 1995 empowers the Minister of Regional Municipalities and Environment to implement the laws relating to the control and use of pesticides. By virtue of the powers provided in the Royal Decree, a permanent Committee had been formed with representation from the Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries; Commerce and Industry; Health; Defense; Petroleum and Gas; Water Resources; and the Police and the Sultan Qaboos University. This Committee provides guidelines for the drafting of the regulations and will oversee its implementation.

Future Programmes:

By the Ministerial Order No. 1118/ of 06th September 1998, a pesticide law for the regulation of agricultural pesticides is under preparation by the experts of the Directorate General of Agriculture Research (MAF). The MAF will be responsible for:

1. Recommendation of the registration of the pesticides for use in agriculture. A certificate of registration and use from the Country of Origin or from EPA or the European Union will be required.
2. Determination of pesticides residue levels in fresh vegetables and fruit commodities based on Codex Alimentarius, MRL's limits. A certificate from the country of Origin is required for imported commodities.

Livestock and Livestock Products

Existing Position and on-going programmes :

To safeguard the health status of livestock and public, the Royal Decree No. 47/77 and the Ministerial Order No. 3/84 were issued that makes the basis for the Quarantine Restrictions and the control of animal diseases in Oman. Veterinary Quarantine fees were specified by the Ministerial Order 29/89. With respect to zoonoses control, a Royal Decree 73/92 was issued where specific zoonotic diseases were subjected to compulsory notifications. The National Zoonotic Committee was set up under Ministerial Order 177/87 and revised under Ministerial Order 231/92 where common zoonoses are discussed and tackled jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Health.

Based on these, the following was undertaken;

- (a) Decrees were published in government gazette, and copies of this were made available. All regulations were publicized through brochures and the print. Transparency was provided in

the customary manner. The regulations does not discriminate between domestic and foreign supplies. It provides MFN treatment and does not hinder trade.

- (b) General quarantine guidelines and specific regulations have been practiced with respect to the importation and exportation of livestock, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, livestock products, animal feed, veterinary drugs, veterinary vaccines and biologicals.
- (c) Importation is only possible through application of an import permit and all imports must accompany a health certificate or certificate of analysis (for drugs, vaccines and animal feed.) Halal slaughter Certificate is a must in all consignments of meats and poultry.
- (d) All importations/exportations have to pass through official ports of entry.
- (e) A veterinary Quarantine Guidelines and Directions have been prepared and distributed to all quarantine staffs for easy reference and implementation.
- (f) To facilitate efficiency, competent and sufficient staff working on 24 hours basis have been employed in most port of entries.
- (g) Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements have been agreed with certain countries.
- (h) Oman is an active member of OIE and importations or exportations of animal and animal products in most case are based on the OIE International Zoo-Sanitary Codes which offers all possibilities to safeguard the interest of trading partners.
- (i) Oman is a FAO member and embarks on FAO Projects in the field of Regional and International collaboration in combatting major epizootics. Oman also supports Regional initiatives in disease surveillance and control including FAO Regional Animal Disease and Control Network (RADISCON).
- (j) Oman is also a WHO member and works very close especially on matters related to International Collaboration in Surveillance and control of major zoonoses.
- (k) Oman co-operates with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Developments on various fields related to Livestock Developments, Disease Control and training.
- (l) Recently a parent Veterinary Quarantine Law came into force between GCC member states. It has formed to facilitate and simplify trade of animal origin between GCC member and the outside world.

Future Programmes

Free trade on livestock and livestock products will initiate Oman to embark on a program to review its zoo-sanitary conditions and measures so as to conform to SPS Agreement. In doing this, it is anticipated that;

1. This programme will be basically applied with an objective mainly of protecting human and animal health, while considering the risk involved in the international trade of livestock and livestock products.
2. Adequate transparency on zoo-sanitary measures and quarantine regulations, inspections, testing and controls will be available to all interested parties. All updated changes will be notified well in advance.

3. SPS measures shall be published in a single publication available to all interested parties covering all relevant information. In the event of modification or changes it shall allow reasonable time between publication and enforcement so that importers/exporters shall be well aware prior to importation/exportation.
 4. Routine Risk Assessment Analysis as a protective measures on human and animal health shall be applied indiscriminately. The determined measures shall be based on logic and by methods approved by OIE.
 5. Oman will harmonize its standards and zoo-sanitary measures to those practiced and accepted by WTO member states. They will be based on SPS Agreement and International Organization.
 6. Consideration will be made on the sanitary conditions of local products and those of other countries where they originates or are destined taking into account the disease situation, control or eradication of epizootics and zoonoses, handling, transportation and presence of bilateral or multilateral agreement and relevant international standards.
 7. Oman will ensure that there will not be any discriminations with respect to different suppliers. Likewise local and foreign suppliers will be treated equally.
 8. The requirements of certifications with respect to importations/exportations shall be based on the guidelines and recommendations of the OIE. Oman's certificates have been and continue to be based on the patterns recommended by OIE, or by bilateral/multilateral agreements. The only exception and for religious reasons will be Halal Slaughter Certificate which will be demanded for all meats and poultry destined to Oman.
 9. Oman will continue to work closely with International Organisations (OIE,FAO, WHO etc.) in assessing the sanitary situations locally, regionally and internationally especially in the field of cooperation and collaboration in the control of major epizootics and zoonoses.
 10. Oman will continue to encourage bilateral and multilateral agreements to facilitate trade on livestock and livestock products with an aim of reducing health risks on human and animals.
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