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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**FLOOR STATEMENTS
NOVEMBER 2019 WTO SPS COMMITTEE - FORMAL MEETING**

**AGENDA ITEM 2(A)(IV): APEC IMPORT MRL GUIDELINE FOR PESTICIDES – A GUIDELINE ON
POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO ACHIEVE ALIGNMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MRLS**

Communication from the United States of America

The following communication, received on 12 November 2019, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of the United States of America.

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1. We thank Australia for bringing the APEC Import MRL Guideline to the Committee's attention. We would also like to express our warm appreciation to Chile for hosting APEC in 2019, and to congratulate and welcome Malaysia as the host of APEC in 2020.
 2. The sharing of this document is timely, particularly in light of the week's excellent thematic session on approval procedures, as it provides a practical framework for developing science-based import MRLs.
 3. The APEC Import MRL Guideline for Pesticides seeks to provide a framework within which science-based standards for import MRLs can be developed and applied uniformly and transparently across APEC economies.
 4. MRL harmonization efforts are important to the United States, and initiatives within APEC to promote greater alignment of import MRLs have played a key role in shaping and moving these efforts forward in the United States.
 5. Even though the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) already has a process in place for reviewing and establishing import MRLs, the APEC Guideline inspired EPA to initiate a pilot project to test a streamlined data review strategy for import MRLs.
 6. The pilot project aimed to determine the feasibility of acceptance of reviews of residue chemistry data conducted by other national authorities or by JMPR to support a safety finding by EPA and establishment of an import MRL. In the pilot program, EPA accepted evaluations conducted by Brazil, the European Food Safety Authority, Japan, and JMPR in its reviews.
 7. We are pleased to share that the results of the pilot have been highly positive, especially for EPA evaluators, who have found significant time savings compared to the standard process. While EPA still conducts a national dietary risk assessment, it estimates that approximately 50 hours have been saved per MRL by utilizing other regulatory authorities' reviews of residue chemistry data.
 8. In addition, through this process, EPA has set 14 new import MRLs for priority exports of US trading partners in APEC – including import MRLs to facilitate exports of tea, hops, cereals, cocoa, coffee and ginseng to the United States.

9. EPA is continuing the pilot on additional crop/chemical combinations and intends to use the results to determine how the streamlined data review process might become a standard operating procedure in the future.

10. We find that resources like the APEC Import MRL Guideline can play a constructive role in strengthening implementation of the SPS Agreement, by enabling Members to develop and apply uniform and transparent science-based standards to protect health and facilitate trade.

11. In this regard, we would like to recognize the APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum for its work to prevent and resolve MRL-related trade issues, and we look forward to continued work on MRLs in 2020 with Malaysia as host.

12. Chair, we appreciate the discussions in this Committee on actions to improve transparency and support greater shared understanding of concerns raised in Committee. We will therefore submit this statement to the Secretariat and request its issuance as a GEN document.
