APEC Export Certification Workshop

Rationale, Methods and Avoiding Redundancy

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Imported Food Control

- Imported food control program
  - Provides food safety assurance
  - Generally includes multiple risk management activities
    - Pre border, border and in country
  - It is the integration of risk management activities that ensures effectiveness

Imported food pathway

Pre border | Border | Post-Border/Importing country
Pre border activities

Objective

Assurance of controls in exporting country

- Risk management activities within an importing country’s control program and should be:
  - risk based and
  - tailored to specific country requirements

- Other pre border risk management activities may include
  - Requirements that importers establish supplier verification.
  - Requirements for 3rd party certification
Importing country considerations

• Knowledge
  • Build and maintain confidence in the inspection and certification system of an exporting country.
  • Requires collaboration between exporting and importing countries

• Establish priorities
  • Prioritise pre border activities, based on, for example:
    • Product risks,
    • Volume of trade,
    • Food business controls and oversight in exporting country

• Integration
  • Integrated border controls, in country risk management activities
Formalising “assurance”

• Generally an arrangement between countries
  • Guidance provided in various CCFICS guidelines and includes concept of certification* as:
    • the procedure by which official certification bodies or officially recognized certification bodies provide written or equivalent assurance that foods or food control systems conform to requirements.
  • Options for providing assurance of food control systems
    • Memorandum of understanding or recognition of the exporting country’s system
    • List of processing plants recognised by the competent authority in the exporting country
  • Options for providing assurance of foods
    • Export certificates for multiple lots from one plant or
    • Lot by lot certificates

*CAC/GL20-1995
Import decisions: Incorporating “assurance”

• Implementation
  • Needs clear and transparent import processes including:
    • Information about imported products at point of entry,
    • Coordination of border (e.g. customs), quarantine and food safety import processes
    • Processes to validate documentation (to prevent fraudulent entry)
    • Minimising duplicative inspection requirements both at the border or in-country, where exporting country provides assurances
  • Ongoing collaboration and cooperation between importing and exporting country
    • Information exchange on changing requirements, new and emerging risks or non compliance
Conclusions

• Certification is a valuable procedure that generally is most effective where it is:

  • Used as an expression of confidence in the exporting country’s food safety system,
  • Established within a formal arrangement between countries
  • Used within a risk based and transparent import food control program that also includes border and in country activities