

SPS News

Welcome to the fifth publication of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Newsletter which will report on SPS issues that were addressed at the National SPS Committee during the third quarter of 2014. During the period under review, the committee convened its third meeting for the year 2014 and held discussions on various issues as reported on below.

Update on market access issues

Indonesia—Jakarta Port closure affecting the exports of South Africa's horticultural products (Notification No. 9/SPS/N/IDN/48)

The issue of access to the Jakarta Port for South African exporters of horticultural products has not been resolved yet. There has been an industry visit to Indonesia and many promises have been made by Indonesia. There has been a shift in information requirements from food safety issues to phytosanitary issues. The additional information requested by Indonesians has been provided. The visit that was scheduled for week 25 was postponed a week before the scheduled date.

Thailand—exports of South Africa's horticultural products

The Thailand phytosanitary authority responded to South Africa's inputs made regarding table grapes and they have been invited to visit South Africa in January 2015. There has been no movement for apples, pears and stone fruit types so far.

EU—citrus black spot (CBS)

South Africa voluntarily suspended export of citrus to the EU other than from the official CBS-free areas and other than soft citrus for the remainder of the season. Currently there are 16 notifications of interception. In terms of the current EC implementing decision there is a need for the monitoring and certification system to be reviewed to establish if there are some areas leading to an increase in interceptions. A meeting was held with a delegation from the European Commission Food and

Veterinary Office that was in SA on a separate mission. Side bar discussions were requested to discuss the status of CBS interceptions. Information was provided in terms of the training that was supplied to role players and the actions taken on the production units from which consignments were intercepted. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has undertaken to put together at their expense a group of CBS experts from the end of September 2014 to try to reach some kind of consensus on the risk posed by the citrus fruit. Dr Vaughn Hatting from SA will participate in the group.

The dispute settlement process is going on as planned and the letter has been sent from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) Minister to the dti Minister recommending that the dti should proceed with the WTO dispute settlement process.

China—exports of fish and fishery products

- The Chinese inspection visit took place on 27 June to 01 July 2014 and it was facilitated by DAFF and National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS).
- The Chinese went through the Food Processing Establishments, laboratories and the abalone farms. They also visited the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research laboratory and they wanted to know how the biotoxin monitoring is undertaken. A report on their findings is still awaited, however, on their departure they appeared to be impressed with the control programmes that are in place as well as with the production and processing facilities.
- Hong Kong requested for the certificate for fish and fishery products. They requested for the health certificate to be developed specifically for Hong Kong to replace the China certificate which is currently being used. Two certificates have been drafted for fresh and live and for processing of aquatic animals which were submitted on 16 September 2014.
- China requested the NRCS to give health guarantees for fish oil consignments that came from the fishing plant.
- Food grade fish must be used to produce fish oil and for further processing of pharmaceuticals. The facility must satisfy the requirements for processing human food.
- The establishment approved for the production of animal feed cannot be changed to the production of food or pharmaceuticals.





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- The NRCS enforcement division has an agreement with the European Union (EU) to receive raw material as oil for the production of food or pharmaceutical products that are further exported back to the EU from where the raw material originated.

Reporting on SPS engagements

Food and Veterinary Office (FVO)

There has been an FVO visit since 09 September 2014 up to 18 September 2014. An oral report will be presented on 18 September 2014 and it will give an idea of how good/bad the South Africa's situation is. A written report will be issued after 20 working days after which an action plan will be developed to address the issues identified. A visit to the labs was considered to be excellent, however, the trace back of the rapid alert system had some questionable moments because we are not reporting back to them and they were concerned about that. The continued use of unregistered chemicals is of concern and there is a need for a database of registered plant protection products.

SPS trade concerns

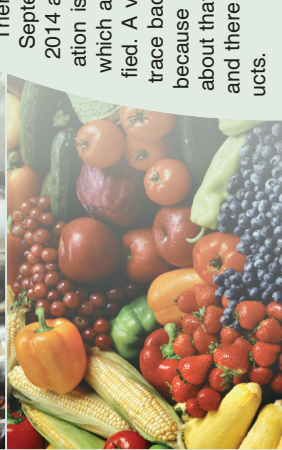
Application to the OIE for disease-free status

South Africa is considering applying to the OIE for the contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) country status. The country has not reported the disease so far.

Disease and/or pest outbreaks

Bactroera invadens (B. invadens)

- The national surveillance programme is ongoing.
- Lower numbers of fruit flies were noted during the winter season.
- The status report has not been updated yet on the international phytosanitary portal.



- The statement to report the status will be finalised soon and posted.

FMD

- There will be an OIE mission in November/December 2014.
- The purpose of the mission is to visit SA and assure themselves of the control measures that SA indicated that are in place.
- The OIE mission will probably be visiting all three provinces (Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal). They have indicated that they will want to visit Limpopo and verify for themselves that the control measures are in place.
- The impact of non-compliance with the OIE recommendations is a trade ban on cloven-hoofed animals and their products as experienced in 2011. Stricter measures to deactivate the virus will be imposed.

Regional coordination of SPS matters

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

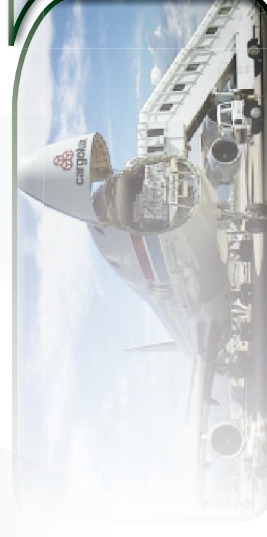
- The SADC together with the United States Department of Agriculture arranged a workshop for the SADC during week 37 of 2014. The workshop was held at the OR Tambo. The workshop looked at the way of trying to harmonise SPS matters by making use of the American approach of a standard method and procedures for animal health trying to identify specific animal diseases that are going to be handled in a similar manner by all SADC Members for the purpose of trying to increase market access for the SADC products to the rest of the world.

Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) agreement negotiations

- TFTA negotiations are ongoing.
- The SPS Annex to the Tripartite FTA Agreement has been concluded in January 2014.

WTO SPS notifications

- In June 2014 SA submitted the SPS notification to the WTO regarding Regulations relating to the labelling and advertising of foods and it was published from the WTO on 26 June 2014.





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- In July 2014 SA submitted the SPS notification to the WTO regarding the proposed amendment of the compulsory specification for frozen fish, frozen marine molluscs and frozen products derived therefrom and it was published from the WTO on 27 July 2014.

- On 27 June 2014 SA submitted comment to the US on the proposed Food Safety Modernisation Act (FSMA) rule entitled Focused Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food against Intentional Adulteration.

- On 24 June 2014 the EU replied to SA's comment submitted with regard to notification which set proposed maximum residue levels (MRLs) for guazatine. The DAFF DG wrote a letter to the EU SPS contact point requesting the following:

- a) To be provided with the EFSA assessment report as soon as it is available.
- b) To be allowed an opportunity to comment on the report before implementation of the assessment outcomes.

The DG made the above request considering that the EU postponed the implementation of proposed MRLs in order to provide the EFSA sufficient time to complete its assessment of a pending import tolerance request for guazatine in citrus, and for risk managers to take the assessment into account.

- SA requested Russia to substantiate the claim that SA currently has PEDv and consequent follow-up were made. On 21 July 2014 the Russian Federation notified through the WTO the removal of SA from the measure that was imposed affecting exportation of breeding and production pigs and pig blood products.

Announcements

- There is a workshop on risk analysis organised by the WTO Secretariat as part of the 4th Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement. The workshop will be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 13 to 14 October 2014. SA will present a case study during the risk analysis workshop to share experience on the management of zoonosantary risk.

Upcoming meetings
WTO SPS Committee meetings: 15 to 16 October 2014

For further information, please contact

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