

Global MRL Initiative – Africa
Workshop Report
March 30-April 2, 2009

Summary:

Following the Global Minor Use Summit (Rome, 2007), USDA, FAO, EPA and IR-4, along with other global partners, committed to support developing countries on minor use issues through technical support and exchange initiatives. The workshop in Alexandria, Egypt for African countries was the first of a planned series of global workshops in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to meet the commitments toward establishing single, global MRLs.

The workshop focused on the following topics:

- how to establish MRLs through the Codex system that are more relevant to Africa
- how to facilitate the registration of new, safer pesticides in Africa
- how to strengthen regional partnerships through work and data sharing

Goals:

The long-term goals of establishing single, global MRLs and making newer pesticide chemistries accessible to growers in developing countries remain an enormous challenge. We are now taking first steps toward that long-term goal. During this first phase of workshops, our objectives include the following:

- establish a common knowledge base among countries on the challenges of the minor use issue, on current (and past) regional and international harmonization efforts, on mutually beneficial international initiatives, and on understanding how to better communicate and engage in the international MRL-setting process
- establish regional crop priorities to consider when establishing commodity groupings and submitting data packages to JMPR
- establish a list of key contact points within each country – registration officials, Codex delegates, and Codex Contact Points, and to establish electronic MRL Advisory Groups for each continent

Attendees:

A total of 40 officials from 24 countries participated in the workshop (see attached participant list). Participants hold responsibilities within their countries for pesticide registrations and/or MRL setting. Others attending the workshop included speakers from FAO (Jeronimas Maskeliunas, YongZhen Yang), EPA (Luis Suguiyama), USDA (Jason Sandahl), IR-4 (Dan Kunkel), and the World Bank (John Lamb). The meeting was opened by the Egypt Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (H.E. Mr. Amin Abaza), the Chairman of Egypt's Agricultural Pesticide Committee (Professor Mostafa Tolba), the FAO Agricultural Officer and JMPR Secretary (YongZhen Yang), and the FAS/Cairo Counselor (Peter Kurz).

Items Discussed:

The four-day workshop included two days of presentations and two days of discussions. The presentations covered current regional and global harmonization efforts, private standards, global

joint reviews, global field trials, commodity grouping, and the Codex MRL-setting process. Discussions were held on the following issues:

- how commodity grouping can benefit African countries for Codex MRL-setting
- how joint reviews and joint field trials could benefit African countries
- how the CCPR Electronic Working Group (EWG) can benefit African countries
- review of questionnaires submitted by countries prior to the workshop
- establishing regional priority crops and discussing ways to have these crops included on the JMPR schedule
- outlining terms to consider when establishing a global definition of “minor use”
- plans for future meetings and cooperation
- how to consider private MRLs when considering national and/or CODEX standards

Outcomes/Follow up:

- Establishment of the Africa MRL Advisory Group (electronic forum for workshop delegates to communicate on African MRL issues)
- Agreement to work toward single, global MRLs through Codex, discourage private MRLs
- Commitment to support the continuation of the CCPR EWG (*country delegates attending this year’s CCPR)
- Commitment of workshop delegates to join the CCPR EWG (*country delegates will contact Codex Points about procedures to join EWG – to be done by end April)
- List of prioritized crops by Africa countries/regions (on questionnaire summary)
- Matched list of prioritized crops with JMPR pesticide schedule – to be shared with CropLife and other industries within participant countries (*Suguiyama will take lead to communicate with CropLife, and *country delegates will follow up with local industries)
- Creation of a weekly EPA release of pesticide actions (*Suguiyama will take lead)
- Document containing registration and MRL setting requirements, priorities, harmonization efforts, and capacities within each country (from questionnaires) – a summary of responses was compiled. Participants agreed that some information would not be shared outside of the group. (*Sandahl will take lead on questionnaires – completion by end April)
- Agreement to post workshop agendas and outcomes (current and future) on the IR-4 Minor Use web portal. (*Kunkel will take lead to post information on portal)
- Request to FAO, USDA, IR-4 to better understand JMPR processes and crop grouping (*Yang will consider follow up return for additional training)
- Request to FAO to develop guidelines for MRL-setting data requirements for minor crops (*Yang will keep country delegates informed of progress)
- Request to international community to invite African countries to participate in global field trial program, and possibly joint reviews (at a introductory level)
- Request to FAO (CCPR) to define “specialty crop” and “minor use”, and to consider criteria inputs from African countries (*country delegates attending CCPR will move this issue forward through the CCPR floor or EWG)
- Agreement on terms of next workshop:
 - February 2010 (host to be determined); all Africa (not regional)
 - Format: 3-4 days of delegates, and 1-2 days inclusion of private sector groups
 - Agenda: focus on JMPR/CCPR preparations and establishing African positions, other possible topics of importance (counterfeits, label harmonization, field trials, risk evaluations, laboratories, container management, improving residue data, etc.)



Opening session of workshop: Salah Soliman (Egypt), Jason Sandahl (U.S.), Amin Abaza (Egypt), Mostafa Tolba (Egypt), Peter Kurz (U.S.), YongZhen Yang (FAO).



Delegates representing northern Africa (upper left), western Africa (upper right), southern Africa (lower left), and eastern Africa (lower right) – discussions on priorities within their regions.