Current State of Specialty Crop Programmes, Initiatives and Challenges

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Objective of this presentation

- To try to capture why we are facing trade difficulties for specialty/minor crops
- In theory, form an import/export perspective
- In reality, we are all in this together
  - The problems aren’t that different whichever way you look at this!
Specialty crops are....

- Internationally traded
- Usually high value
- Often grown using intensive and/or expensive inputs
  - either manpower and/or chemicals
- Often need to be shipped in a ‘gentle’ way
- Have the potential to offer a good rate of return for those involved in their production
What makes specialty crops any different to major crops?

- Internationally traded
  - true for both
- Usually high value
  - true for both but in different ways
  - especially true for developing countries
- Often grown using intensive and/or expensive inputs
  - either manpower and/or chemicals
    - true for both but in different ways
- Often need to be shipped in a gentle way
  - true only for specialty crops (major crops – bulk transportation)
- Have the potential to offer a good rate of return for those involved in their production
  - true for both but in different ways
  - especially true for developing countries
So why are we here discussing specialty crops?

- Specialty crops don’t offer a good rate of return if there are trade barriers
  - Lack of harmonised MRLs and import tolerances presents trade barriers
  - Where harmonised MRLs and import tolerances do exist, they are implemented in different ways
    - National rules
    - Discussions at CCPR 2007 on application of Codex MRLs
Consumers expectations

- European consumers expectations!
- A ready supply of fresh and diverse fruits and vegetables every day of the year
- No more seasonality
  - Examples – strawberries and mangoes
- In UK supermarkets seen for the first time this year
  - Berries from Peru
  - Brussels sprouts from Australia!
What are exporters doing to ensure specialty crops can be traded?

- Ensuring those in the production chain can comply with MRLs and import tolerances
  - But also supermarkets separate requirements
    - Positive - ensuring pesticides used responsibly
    - Negative - different supermarkets have different requirements
- Carrying out surveillance monitoring prior to export
  - Importing countries also carrying out surveillance monitoring prior to import!
How easy is it to comply with MRLs and import tolerances?

- Not that easy!
- Many national systems with different levels
  - Many under review e.g. Japan, European Union
- New EU system
  - Positive - one system for the whole of the 27 member states
  - Negative - unclear on timing of implementation, difficult for growers to plan
- Codex MRLs
  - Used as the standard in trade disputes
  - How often used in trade disputes in practice?
Why is it so difficult to obtain an MRL or import tolerance?

- **Residues data and methods data needed**
  - Expensive to generate – prohibitively so in developing countries
    - Organisation not simple
    - GLP and extensive method validation often required

- **Need to make a (regulatory) submission**
  - Not straightforward
    - Manufacturers already facing resource challenges from routine reviews etc
    - Often represents a very minor component of manufacturer’s global market
    - Some countries require data to demonstrate efficacy against pest
    - Regulatory fees are expensive

- **Takes time for applications to be processed**
  - Regulatory authorities already facing resource challenges from routine reviews etc
Are there any alternatives to MRLs and import tolerances?

- Setting nothing?
  - No baseline standard
  - Likely to increase trade barriers rather than decrease
  - Consumer concerns
    - even though MRLs are not health standards

- Other suggestions?
  - Predicting residue levels rather than measuring?

- Better acceptance of Codex or other harmonised MRLs?
Has anything else in the past proved helpful to speed up the process?

- **Spices in JMPR using monitoring data**
  - Unconventional approach to GAP makes this appropriate
  - Large database on monitoring data

- **Crop group tolerances**
  - MRLs set for major or representative crops extrapolated to whole group
    - JMPR need label to recommend MRL
    - Clear guidance and policy needed

- **Central co-ordination**
  - e.g. IR-4
    - Requires substantial government support
    - Most government initiative in Europe focussed on reducing pesticide reliance and use
  - e.g. ColeACP initiative
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