



THE IPPC IN 20 YEARS

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IPPC in 20 Years: a United States Perspective

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This paper is intended to stimulate SPG discussion of key issues or trends which may impact and influence NPPOs and RPPOs in the years ahead, including IPPC's future role and relevance.

1. Commerce

The ability to trade in plants and products is fundamental to commerce and essential to many national economies. This will continue to be the case in 20 years. The UN estimates the world's population will increase from 7 billion in 2011 to 10 billion by the end of the century. To feed this growing population, food production must increase. Advances in transportation, handling, and storage will continue, thus improving distribution possibilities. A key challenge for the 21st century is adapting agricultural policy frameworks to promote productivity while also cultivating a trade environment that accommodates the needs of commerce and demands of a growing and changing consumer population.

2. Changing Agricultural Business Models: Integrated Production Chains

Trade is no longer characterized by the exchange of finished products alone, but also by the co-production of goods between countries. We have seen some of the largest agricultural companies diversify their presence and production around the world. This enables companies to shift food supplies around the world to respond to fluctuations in demand, as well as source agricultural materials from different countries and regions.

According to one expert, "...the scale and complexity of global production and supply chains may threaten to overwhelm national regulatory authorities"¹. Consequently, regulatory frameworks will need to evolve as countries become more involved in complex global production and new bundling and distribution practices. Pressure will be on governments to streamline and lighten the regulatory burden, complexity and costs on businesses.

Seed production, distribution, and global movement are examples of this changing business model that may characterize other commodity sectors. Will plant health strategies need to evolve to respond and manage pest risks in this type of changing business model? The IPPC can respond by generating future standards that reflect these changing business practices.

3. Quest for Treatment Alternatives and Tools

Consumer interest in, and demand for, nutritious and environmentally friendly foods continues to increase. Can organic production fit into traditional plant quarantine paradigms related to managing plant health risks and emergencies? Is reliance on some non-chemical approaches resulting in adaptations of

¹ Regulatory Coherence in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Talks. Thomas J. Bollyky

plant diseases/pests that could spill over into conventional crops and orchards? Traditional tools used by quarantine officials are coming under increasing scrutiny. Public acceptance of eradication programs and some pest control programs also continue to be a public relations challenge.

More challenges are likely to occur with respect to the international use of methyl bromide for quarantine purposes. Presently, Quarantine and Pre-shipment (QPS) use of methyl bromide is exempt from the global phase-out of the chemical under the Montreal Protocol. However, every year there is increasing pressure to remove this exemption.

4. Future Organizational Credibility

Apart from standard setting, the IPPC is a unique forum where governments (presently 181) can engage and collaborate on plant protection issues. Looking ahead 20 years, it is possible that other international institutions, like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), may evolve and compete with the IPPC as the international venue of choice. Some regions may place greater emphasis on work through their RPPOs, especially among the larger regions where most of their trade occurs.

At the moment, the IPPC is the primary international structure for cooperation in plant health, but steps will always need to be taken to: enhance its organizational efficiency; focus limited resources on areas of comparative advantage and highest need; and, identify new ways to fund its mission.

5. IPPC: Self Supporting in 20 Years!

The continued reliance on international and regional trade for stimulating economic growth will result in: ongoing pressure on IPPC and NPPOs to effectively manage the pest risks; a continued focus on the appropriate application of phytosanitary measures in trade; continued efforts to improve harmonization of measures; and, efforts to strengthen countries' capacity to meet the anticipated demands of commerce. IPPC' unique role as a standard setting body will continue into the future.

In addition, the rapid development of new information, diagnostic, and other technologies will create new opportunities for plant health officials and professionals as well as challenges and implications that will require collective dialogue and approaches. The IPPC could be the best forum for facilitating this global dialogue to ensure that the growth of “big data”, new diagnostic technologies, and other advances in plant health and pest sciences serve to improve global plant health rather than become destabilizing influences among countries.

The key challenge, however, is making the IPPC a self-supporting organization that can adequately fund its mission and be viewed as a high performing, credible, and needed international organization. The trend among inter-governmental organizations, like the CPM, is to rely increasingly on voluntary contributions from non-governmental sources, rather than a traditional budget based on assessed contributions from member governments. We envision that the development and ongoing maintenance of a global ePhyto system can be a major IPPC contribution to making the future global trade system functional and safe, while also creating a new opportunity for the IPPC to generate revenue to cover its costs, support the exchange and movement of goods, and allow it to be self-funded.