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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

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CPM-14 Side Session: Sea Change for Sea Containers

Submissions by Contracting Parties on their challenges, experiences and best practices in managing pest risks of sea containers

English only

I. New Zealand Statement

A. Overview:

1. The New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) regulates sea containers by setting import requirements under the New Zealand Biosecurity Act as sea containers can be defined as "risk goods" under the Act. The import health standard for sea containers requires all importers of sea containers to ship clean containers to New Zealand (NZ).

2. The import health standard is outcome focused standard, and states "that containers must be clean and free of pests and biosecurity contamination". However due to high numbers of interceptions of Halyomorpha halys (Brown marmorated stink bug) in 2017, specific conditions have now been applied to full containers from one country in Europe for a period of two years while further data collection is undertaken.

3. MPI has also been developing better intelligence tools to target areas of higher risk in sea containers. The tools under development enable MPI to gather information around previous compliance, importer / exporter information, location of loading etc. and this drives risk profiling and border interventions. By being able to target risk better, MPI can utilise our resources more effectively.

4. On-arrival enforcement actions on some container pathways have shown to effectively encourage compliance. MPI can refuse discharge of containers if non-compliance is identified across multiple shipments, either from a port of loading or individual importers. However there are still non-compliant containers being sent to NZ. Approximately 18% of containers do not complying with NZ requirements in the import heath standard.

5. Persons in control of containers entering NZ are required to submit a New Zealand Customs Service Import Entry and a MPI Quarantine Declaration (QD) to MPI 12 hours prior to the container arrival. This information includes Container Number, Country of Origin, Port of Loading and Importer/Exporter details.

6. The management of the sea container pathway is not something that a National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO) can undertake alone. Only by engaging with supply chain operations, shippers, importers / exporters can robust systems be established to manage the risk associated with sea containers. The aim of any sea container management systems is to have a sufficiently robust system to manage risks, designed in a way that encourages participation and taking responsibility in the system, without unintended consequences.

B. Successes

7. All sea containers entering NZ are checked or inspected by either Accredited Persons (external industry persons) and/or MPI Inspectors. This provides a real time ability to act on detections of live pests at the place of unpacking. These checks occur at Transitional Facilities located away from the port.

8. The role of an Accredited Person is to detect, contain and report pests, contamination and non-compliant wooden items such as packaging materials and pests. By training these people MPI has increased the understanding of biosecurity (over 16,000 people trained) and its important function in protecting NZ. For instance in the 2016 Brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) season close to 33% of the BMSB interceptions have been reported to MPI by Accredited Persons.

9. All transitional facilities that receive sea containers are registered and subject to audit. The facilities are approved to receive specific types of goods. The facilities are required to have MPI trained operators, and MPI approved operating manuals that describe their procedures for managing the sea container and what to do if pests or contamination are found.

10. The Sea Container Hygiene System (SCHS) is a formal agreement between NZ MPI and industry entities to manage the biosecurity risk associated with sea containers from high or low risk profiles (e.g. country, port of load and/or shipping line). The SCHS ensures a high degree of confidence that container processing contractors at the port of loading will be exporting clean containers to NZ. These containers, by and large, will not require any additional cleaning or treatment in NZ.

11. New Zealand initiated the SCHS in the Pacific region to manage the risk of pests and general contamination. Sea container cleanliness is managed at the point of export. There is on-going expansion and uptake of the system to ensure container cleanliness for high risk containers coming to NZ. The current contamination rate of containers covered by the SCHS is under 1% compared to previous contamination levels of over 50% for general contamination and 18% for live ants.

12. MPI jointly works with Australia (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) to operate and expand the SCHS in the Pacific region. Currently the SCHS is operating in Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

13. MPI believes that the SCHS and/or variations of it can be utilised in most countries to manage the risks associated with sea containers. The principles allow basic hygiene processes to be implemented and, if followed, gives confidence to exporters / importers and NPPOs.

C. Challenges

14. MPI engaged with exporting country NPPOs to address contamination issues on sea containers. MPI often looks for assistance to investigate how the contamination is occurring and help to improve compliance. However often the NPPO is unable to act on contamination problems due to a range of issues including: legislative issues, lack of resources, or it is unclear which government department is responsible for sea containers.

II. Australian submission - Challenges, experiences and best practices in managing pest risks of sea containers

A. Introduction:

15. Invasive pests travel around the globe in and on traded agricultural and forestry products. Pests may travel alone as contaminant pests or be carried in biosecurity risk material such as soil, seeds or timber packaging. They can contaminate vessels, cargo and the internal and external surfaces of sea containers. Once introduced, pests are very difficult and expensive to control or eradicate.

16. Australia has strong controls to prevent the entry and establishment of pests and diseases that could threaten our economy, environment or human health. The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) works with international, national and domestic agencies and industry to implement these measures and a range of other multilateral, bilateral and national programs pre-border, at the border and post-border.

17. The challenge for Australia in managing contaminant pests is increasing because of greater global trade and movement of pests and diseases around the world. Additionally, countries' prioritisation of preventive measures vary as certain pests may be endemic or not pose as great a risk to them as they do to Australia.

18. Managing risks offshore provides Australia the highest level of biosecurity protection.

B. Challenges:

19. Increased volumes of sea containers places additional pressure on logistics, available space on wharves and the ability to manage high risk mobile pests once cargo is discharged.

20. As some contaminant pests and inanimate objects such as containers are not regulated in some countries, managing these risks through offshore arrangements at an NPPO level is not currently feasible.

21. Some contaminant pests (such as Brown Marmorated Stink Bug – BMSB) are difficult to detect through inspection due to their nature to overwinter in a range of goods and have the ability to survive dormant for long periods.

22. For specific mobile pests, onshore management may not provide the appropriate level of protection.

23. Break bulk goods (including open top and flat rack containers) present a greater risk due to the lack of containment of this pathway.

24. Limited onshore treatment capacity may restrict the ability for effective and timely treatment, increase industry costs and delay clearance of goods.

C. Innovation / Novel Solutions:

25. To address these challenges the department has developed a long-term strategy (known as Sea Container Hygiene System – SCHS) in collaboration with industry to manage biosecurity risks associated with sea containers at the port of loading.

26. The New Zealand and Australian governments work collaboratively to establish and maintain the SCHS at a number of international ports. As part of this strategy, Shipping lines or port authorities implement offshore processes including:

- Ensuring ports of loading have effective means to clean shipping containers prior to loading;
- Minimising the risk of recontamination, ensuring cleaned containers are stored in a clean area prior to loading;
- Ensuring cleaned containers are not re-contaminated in transit to the ship, prior to loading;
- Increasing sea container hygiene awareness.

27. The offshore management of biosecurity risks under the SCHS offers both economic and biosecurity benefits to Australia, New Zealand and participating countries. There are a number of SCHS facilities currently operating at the reduced intervention rate of 5 percent. Participating shipping lines have reported significant savings (several million dollars per annum in some cases) in clearance costs.

III. Summary from NPPO of China

28. Ideas for more cost-effective approaches on addressing pest risks associated with sea containers

A. Success and/or challenges

29. Since the close of the 1st SCTF meeting in Shanghai, China has accomplished many tasks on communication with several ministries and industries to increase awareness, such as recommending an invited expert from industry to 2nd SCTF member, compiling of 1st SCTF meeting files, promoting research and development of 3 national standards, 2 local standards, 1 research project, supporting the implementation of the relevant parts of the CTU Code and a general guide to container cleaning(IICL),and so on. From the work, we gain success and challenges as well.

B. Solutions:

- Realizing entirely and addressing effectively biosecurity risks associated with sea containers
- Admitting difference in Role between CTU Code and ISPM
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C. Expected results:

30. Framework recommendation for ISPM on Sea containers for discussing:

31. It is difficult to formulate and promulgate international standards for sea containers, mainly due to the wide range of issues involved and the unclear division of responsibilities of all parties. Repositioning empty containers cannot guarantee the necessary cleaning and no inspection before export. This directly leads to poor phytosanitary conditions of imported containers and high risk of introduction of pest.

32. An integrated management system of sea containers should include several essential parts. Firstly, sea containers including repositioning containers management and international recognition system, regarding to less influence on the trade facilitation, a container which cleaned before exported will be got rapid and low-cost conform to the requirements of the container customs clearance; secondly, set up a pest risk control technology system on sea containers, identify control techniques for different risks. Thirdly, a third party institution can be introduced to serve as a bridge between the government and the shipping company. On one hand, the government authorizes the quarantine inspection of containers and the issuance of cleaning before containers exported. On the other hand, it can help the shipping company to manage the station and accept containers .