New Zealand's Experience with International Harmonization

Dr Bill Jolly

Chief Assurance Strategy Officer

Presentation Summary

- Global Context

- Actions New Zealand has taken

- Areas in International Trade still causing concern

- Potential areas where better international alignment could help?

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

Global Context

- Global supply chains are getting more complex.

- It is not possible to produce commodities to multiple different process prescriptive standards (NZ exports to 160 countries).

- More than ever, international trade is dependent on countries recognizing products produced in conformance with international standards, guidelines or recommendations.

- International trade is reliant on countries recognizing different production and control systems can achieve the same outcome (equivalence) – much wider than Article 4

- Trade processes and documentation is rapidly being digitalised, which will increasingly require harmonized, interoperable electronic certification systems.

Actions New Zealand has taken

- New Zealand has **explicit references to WTO/SPS in all Primary Legislation** forcing Ministers and Officials to comply with the WTO/SPS and other treaties.

- **Outcome-focus, risk-based and equivalence are foundational concepts** in NZ's Food and Biosecurity legislation and operational policies.

- New Zealand Food **Legislation automatically defaults for imports to**:

  o Codex Vet Drug MRLS and

  o Codex Pesticide MRLs for imports.

  o There is also a generic default of 100 ppb for others.

  o Food additives and labelling, joint system with Australia – closely follows Codex

Actions New Zealand has taken

- **As a trading nation NZ is an enthusiastic supporter of international standard setting fora and international harmonisation**

- **NZ actively participates in most Codex Committees**, including hosting the meat and dairy Committees - foundation standards include:

  - Codex Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat

  - Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products

- **NZ equally prominent in the OIE and IPPC**

- **NZ's E-cert systems fully UNCEFACT, Codex, OIE and IPPC consistent**

Actions New Zealand has taken

NZ is currently directly Promoting International Harmonisation for example by chairing or co-chairing a number of Codex working groups such as:

- **Chairing CCFICS work groups on:**
    - The use of System Equivalence
    - The consolidation of all other CCFICS Equivalence Guidance

- **Chaired / co-Chairing the CCFL**
    - General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods
    - Guidelines on front-of-pack nutrition labelling

- **Chaired the revision of the CCMAS**
    - General Guidelines on Sampling

Areas in Trade still causing concern

1. **Number of countries NOT recognising international standards**

   - Developing economies often much better than developed

2. **Lack of international coherence, and diversity of import requirements**

   - Process prescription rather than outcome focus

   - Not reflective of bilateral risk profiles

   - The misuse of Article 8, Annex C Approvals – foreign establishments

   - Lack of recognition of equivalence

3. **Challenge of inefficient / inappropriate border clearance processes**

Areas in Trade still causing concern

4. **The time lag before international standards are promulgated**

    - Retrospective rather than prospective

    - Too many non-risk or non-scientifically evidenced factors considered

5. The **interface between the WTO/SPS and TBT Agreements**

    - Import requirements are often a combination of both

6. **Transboundary Regulation**

    - Too much "one size fits all" process prescriptive regulation

    - Requirements and approval processes don't recognise different country risk profiles

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

Areas needing better international alignment

1. **Regulatory coherence**

   - The world does not just need to recognise the final standards but also agree on the assessment criteria (e.g. VICH, OECD)

   - How to deal with uncertainty

2. **Efficiency and Timeliness of International Standard development**

   - e.g. for Ag compounds and new technologies standards need to be developed at the same time the compounds / technologies hit the market

3. **Risk rather than Hazard-focus standards (including by the ISBs)**

   - Need better proportionality and correlation with risk attribution

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

Areas needing better international alignment

4. **More legislated references to "Recognition of international standards"**

    - Either as a default or as an explicit ability to recognise

5. **Less transboundary process prescription and duplication of processes**

    - Especially where credible processes already performed by international bodies or nationally

6. **Increased Recognition of all or parts of National Food Control Systems**

    - Especially where based on the relevant international standards (system recognitions)

7. **More harmonisation and simplification of certificates and use of E-cert**

    - More collaboration between the ISBs on Certification / E-cert and focus on WTO TFA

Ngā mihi

Questions?

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua