New Zealand’s Experience with International Harmonization

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Presentation Summary

• Global Context

• Actions New Zealand has taken

• Areas in International Trade still causing concern

• Potential areas where better international alignment could help?
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:
  - Codex Vet Drug MRLS and
  - Codex Pesticide MRLs for imports.
  - There is also a generic default of 100 ppb for others.
  - Food additives and labelling, joint system with Australia – closely follows Codex
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
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
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
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?