OVERVIEW REPORT OF A SERIES OF MISSIONS CARRIED OUT IN THIRD COUNTRIES BETWEEN 2004 AND 2010
TO EVALUATE CONTROLS OF PESTICIDES IN FOOD OF PLANT ORIGIN INTENDED FOR EXPORT TO THE EUROPEAN UNION.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an overview report on a mission series by the Food and Veterinary Office to 13 third countries (TCs) between 2004 and 2010 to evaluate pesticide controls in food of plant origin intended for export to the EU. The decision to organise these missions was based on infringements with legal limits for pesticide residues in imported produce notified through the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), and also on the volume of food of plant origin imported from the visited countries. As pesticide residue controls are directly related to the national rules for the marketing and use of Plant Protection Products (PPPs), the control systems in this area were also part of the missions.

Official controls were in place for the retailers of PPPs, who were registered and regularly inspected. In addition, the quality of marketed products was regularly checked. However, pesticide controls at growers were only implemented in a minority of the visited countries. Furthermore, there is no legal requirement in the EU that authorisations of PPPs in TCs must be aligned with authorisations in the EU, and many authorised uses of PPPs in TCs could lead to residues which are not in line with EU maximum residue levels (MRLs).

Pesticide residue monitoring studies or programmes existed in most visited countries, but focussed mainly on domestic produce. Export certification for pesticide residues is not required by EU legislation, and specific export control systems were implemented in only 6 of the 13 visited countries. These controls consisted of systematic sampling and analysis of selected commodities, or risk-based sampling and analysis of a larger number of commodities. Satisfactory action has been taken by TC authorities in response to EU RASFF notifications. Good systems were in place for traceability, but follow-up to non-compliances could be improved, if Member States always reported the full traceability information in the sampling record.

Although pesticide residue laboratories were operational in almost all visited countries, not all designated laboratories were accredited and the analytical scope was too small to test for the many authorised pesticides, which could be legally used and which were subject to RASFF notifications.

Private controls of pesticide use and pesticide residues had an important impact on compliance of exports with EU MRLs. The majority of exporters concluded contracts with their suppliers including clear product specifications. They also provided producers with pesticide application schemes to be followed in order to comply with EU MRLs.

Overall conclusion

As authorisations of PPPs in TCs are not aligned with EU MRLs, growers producing for export to the EU must be informed on Good Agricultural Practices in line with EU MRLs. Such information is generally provided by pack-houses and exporters, and their self-control systems largely ensure compliance of imported fruit and vegetables with EU MRLs. Official pesticide controls focus mostly on compliance with national rules, which differ from EU legislation, and only limited laboratory resources have been designated.

The reports contained suggestions to the competent authorities aimed at improving the control systems.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Competent Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODEX</td>
<td>Codex Alimentarius, FAO/WHO Food Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROSTAT</td>
<td>Statistical Office of the European Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVO</td>
<td>Food and Veterinary Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
<td>Good Agricultural Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organisation for Standardisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-MS/MS</td>
<td>Liquid Chromatograph coupled to tandem mass spectrometers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRL</td>
<td>Maximum Residue Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Plant Protection Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC(s)</td>
<td>Third Country(ies)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **INTRODUCTION**

This report provides an overview of the main findings and conclusions of a mission series of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the Directorate General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission in Third Countries regarding pesticide controls in food of plant origin intended for export to the EU. The missions included in this report were undertaken during the period February 2004 to June 2010. In total 13 TCs were visited and follow-up missions were performed in four of these countries. A total of 20 missions have been performed in this series. The missions typically lasted two weeks and consisted of a team of two inspectors and one national expert from a Member State of the EU. This mission series is still ongoing and further missions are planned for 2011.

This report summarises the findings of the individual missions. Since the missions were conducted, the situation in the countries may have changed and corrective measures taken.

2. **OBJECTIVES OF THIS SERIES OF MISSIONS**

The **objective** of the missions was to evaluate the systems in place for the control of pesticides in foodstuffs of plant origin intended for export to the EU, in order to assess whether these systems offer adequate assurance that the produce concerned is within the specified residue limits laid down in EU legislation.

In terms of **scope**, the missions reviewed the controls in place on the production and export, including a review of national legislation, competent authority organisation, their controls and enforcement capability, facilities (laboratory capability) and measures in place for the determination of pesticide residues in foodstuffs of plant origin. As the residue controls are directly related to the national rules governing the authorisation, placing on the market and use of PPPs, the control systems in this area were also part of the missions.

3. **LEGAL BASIS**

3.1. **Legal basis for the missions**

The mission was carried out under the general provisions of EU legislation, in particular Article 46 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council which stipulates that EU controls in TCs may verify compliance or equivalence of TC legislation and systems with EU feed and food law and EU animal health legislation. These controls shall have particular regard to the assurances which the TC can give regarding compliance with, or equivalence to, EU requirements. Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 applies since 1 January 2006, and earlier missions were carried out under the general provisions of EU legislation, and in agreement with the competent authorities (CA) in the respective TCs.

A full list of the legal instruments referred to in this report is provided in Annex 1. Legal acts quoted in this report refer, where applicable, to the last amended version.
3.2. Legal Standards

Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 requires that food and feed imported into the EU for placing on the market within the EU shall comply with the relevant requirements of food law or conditions recognised by the EU to be at least equivalent thereto.

Article 18 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 requires that products covered by Annex I of the same Regulation shall not contain, from the time they are placed on the EU market as food or feed, any pesticide residue exceeding EU maximum residue levels (MRLs), or 0.01 mg/kg for those products for which no specific MRL is set.

Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, in conjunction with Article 4.1 and Annex I, Part A.III of the same Regulation, requires that food business operators producing or harvesting plant products are, in particular, to keep records on any use of PPPs.

Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 in connection with Article 6 of the same Regulation requires that every food business operator shall notify the appropriate CA of each establishment under its control that carries out any of the stages of production, processing and distribution of food, with a view to the registration of each such establishment.


The Codex Alimentarius of the FAO/WHO includes Guidelines for the design, operation, assessment and accreditation of food import and export inspection and certification systems (CAC/GL 26-1997) and Guidelines for the assessment of the competence of testing laboratories involved in the import and export control of food (CAC/GL 27-1997). The Codex Alimentarius Commission also establishes MRLs for pesticides, which are considered for the establishment of EU MRLs.

4. BACKGROUND

The decision to organise a mission to a specific country was based on the notifications of pesticide residues in the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), and on the volume of fresh fruit and vegetables imported from the TCs.

Article 50 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council requires EU Member States to disseminate information on foodstuffs and feedingstuffs found to have public health implications through the RASFF to all MSs and to the exporting country. The number of RASFF notifications for pesticide residues in imported food of plant origin from 2004 to 2009 is summarised in table 1.

Data from EUROSTAT on imports of fresh fruit and vegetables into the EU in 2008 is also included in the table.
Table 1: Number of Notifications in Rapid Alert System for pesticide residues from 2004-2009, and EUROSTAT data on exports to the EU in 2008 (in tonnes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third country</th>
<th>Number of notifications</th>
<th>Main commodities notified</th>
<th>Export of fresh fruit excl banana, (in tonnes)</th>
<th>Export of fresh vegetables (in tonnes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Apple, pear, lemon</td>
<td>673,125</td>
<td>62,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Grape, apple</td>
<td>583,593</td>
<td>1,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Grape, peach, apple</td>
<td>710,576</td>
<td>53,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pineapple, melon, mango</td>
<td>757,765</td>
<td>3,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tropical vegetables</td>
<td>11,387</td>
<td>7,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Peach, strawberry, orange, pomegranate</td>
<td>178,541</td>
<td>323,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Grape, okra, curry leaves</td>
<td>51,555</td>
<td>26,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carrot</td>
<td>178,419</td>
<td>361,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Passion fruit, green bean, okra</td>
<td>12,874</td>
<td>61,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mint, different vegetables</td>
<td>393,944</td>
<td>623,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grape</td>
<td>1,221,690</td>
<td>23,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Tropical vegetables, fresh herbs</td>
<td>14,085</td>
<td>12,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>Pear, pepper, courgette, tomato</td>
<td>580,188</td>
<td>348,974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **OVERVIEW OF MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

5.1. **Relevant National Legislation**

**Findings**

All visited countries had legislation in force for the authorisation and controls of the marketing of PPPs. Nine of the 13 visited countries had legislation covering the control of the users.

Nine of the visited countries had established MRLs for pesticide residues. However, in three of these countries the number of MRLs was small and not all MRLs of the Codex Alimentarius (FAO/WHO Food Standards) had been included in national legislation. No MRLs had been set in 4 of the visited countries.

Additional legislation was adopted in some of the countries regarding Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), registration of pack-houses of fruit and vegetables, traceability, keeping of records of PPP uses and pesticide residue controls (see specific chapters below).

**Conclusions**

National legislation on the authorisation of PPPs allows the control of the products on the market. The lack of comprehensive MRLs in many TCs makes enforcement measures in residue control programmes difficult.

5.2. **Competent authorities**

**Findings**

Competent authorities (CAs) for the control of pesticides were designated in all visited countries. In four of the countries, one CA was responsible for pesticide controls, whereas two CAs were responsible in another four countries. Three CAs were responsible in a further four countries. In one country, there were even six CAs designated for pesticide controls.

**Conclusions**

Competent authorities were designated in all visited countries, but with significant variation in the number of authorities. This has implications for the co-ordination of control activities.
5.3. Controls on the marketing and use of plant protection products

Findings

5.3.1. Authorisation of plant protection products

All visited TCs had systems in place for the authorisation of PPPs. In the majority of TCs the authorisations relate to the marketing and the use of PPPs, and the authorised conditions for use are precisely defined. The authorised conditions for use included *inter alia* the crops to be treated, the application rates and the pre-harvest interval. In some TCs, however, the authorisations related only to the marketing of PPPs. In these countries, the conditions for use of the products were not always legally binding, although recommended uses were always included on the label of the products.

The number of active substances (pesticides) included in authorised PPPs varied between the visited TCs from 178 to 500, compared to 352 in the EU. The active substances were included in up to 19,300 different authorised PPPs. In all visited TCs, the authorised PPPs contained at least some pesticides which can not be marketed and used in the EU, and their use could lead to residues which are not in line with EU MRLs. In one TC, only 88 of the 500 pesticides contained in authorised PPPs could be marketed and used in the EU. In addition, the authorised uses in TCs were not always aligned with EU or Codex MRLs. This means that the authorised use of a PPP in a TC could lead to residues in excess of EU MRLs, even if the marketing and use of PPPs containing the same pesticide is authorised in the EU (but with different conditions for use).

In the majority of notifications of pesticide residues in the EU RASFF, the cases resulted from uses in accordance with the authorisations in the TC. In the EU, however, the marketing and use of the pesticides involved was not authorised, or the authorised conditions for use were different.

In most of the visited TCs, the CAs publish the register of authorised PPPs in printed books and on the internet. In two TCs, however, no official register was published, and in another TC the information was only available for a fee. In many TCs, the published information does not include the complete information about the authorised PPP uses. Often further information on authorisations is published by private companies such as distributors of PPPs.

In four of the visited countries, the CA for pesticide controls was regularly providing information about EU MRLs to professional organisations or published information about EU MRLs on their websites. In two further countries, semi-official bodies for the promotion of trade provided such information.

5.3.2. Controls of retailers of plant protection products

In 12 TCs, there were legal requirements for registration or licensing of the retailers (in one country, no related information was collected by the mission team). Licenses are typically renewed annually for up to three years, and in order to obtain a license, at least one staff member of the retailer must be qualified and trained. These licensing systems were generally implemented in the TCs visited. However, in two countries the requirement was not enforced.
systematically, in a further country the system was suspended at the time of the mission, and in a fourth country the system was still in the process of introduction.

Regular official inspections of retailers of PPPs were carried out in 12 TCs. In most of the TCs visited, retailers are inspected more than once per year. In one of the TCs, up to four inspections per year were performed. Inspections typically focussed on aspects of the health and safety of the workplace, on environmental protection, and on the authorisation status of the available PPPs. However, in many TCs inspectors did not have updated information about the authorised conditions for use and it was not possible for them to verify whether the information on the labels of the PPPs fully complied with the authorisations granted. Inspectors had sufficient legal powers to perform the inspections, and in case of infringements, inspectors could generally seize non-compliant produce or withdraw licenses of the retailers. Further sanctions were often available, but usually not used. In most of the visited countries, inspection procedures were documented, and inspectors followed checklists. Reports were drawn up, at least in case of non-compliance.

In two visited TCs, a system of prescription sale was introduced, and PPPs can only be purchased, if prescribed by a certified private or official expert.

5.3.3. Formulation analyses

Regular sampling and formulation analyses of PPPs were carried out in 11 of the 13 visited countries. In one further country formulation analyses are carried out to follow up complaints. Only in one country there was no formulation analysis. The number of samples analysed annually varied between 88 and 5,500. PPPs are analysed in the authorisation procedure, and further samples are also taken at the point of import. In addition, samples are taken at national formulators, at retailers and distributors. Countries generally analyse for identity and content of the active ingredient, and some countries additionally analyse physical and chemical properties of the products.

5.3.4. Controls of growers

Regular inspections for pesticides at growers are only performed in five of the 13 visited TCs. In one of these countries the controls related to producers of grapes for export, and in another country it related to official certification to Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), which, in this country, is a legal requirement for export to the EU.

In several countries there were programmes for the training and certification of users of PPPs. In these cases, training was provided by the CAs in co-operation with other institutions such as universities. Where infringements were identified, normally no fines or sanctions were applied, but producers were required to undertake corrective action or were offered more training, respectively. The emphasis of inspections, training and certification of PPP users in these countries was on education of the growers rather than on enforcement of legislation.

In 12 of the 13 visited countries, growers had implemented systems to record PPP uses, and only in the remaining country records were not found in the majority of visited growers. The keeping of records was generally implemented although it was normally not a legal requirement in the individual countries. In only two countries was there a legal requirement
Conclusions

Controls of PPPs in TCs generally focussed on the marketing of these products. All visited countries had systems in place for the authorisation of PPPs. Controls were in place for the retailers of PPPs, who were registered and regularly inspected. In addition, the quality of marketed products was regularly checked. However, controls of pesticide use at growers were only implemented in a minority of the visited countries. There is no legal requirement in the EU that authorisations in TCs must be aligned with authorisations in the EU, and many PPPs authorised in TCs can not be marketed and used in the EU. This may be due to different climatic conditions, the different nature of pests and plant diseases, or different measures to protect consumers, workers or environment as compared to the EU. Therefore, the official controls of the marketing and use of PPPs in TCs does not in all cases ensure that the pesticide residues in exported produce are in line with EU MRLs.

5.4. Controls of pesticide residues in food of plant origin

Findings

5.4.1. Control of pack-houses and exporters

In all visited countries, there were requirements for registration or authorisation of pack-houses, and pack-houses were regularly inspected. The frequency of inspections ranged from resident inspectors in large pack-houses to one inspection in 3 years. Inspections, however, focussed on requirements for food hygiene, product quality or plant health (covered by other relevant EU legislation, which was not within the scope of the missions). The existing self-control systems for pesticide residues were included in the scope of inspections in two of the visited countries.

The mission teams noted that pack-houses and exporters had generally implemented comprehensive systems for traceability, and products could normally be traced back to the farm, and in most cases even to the plot. Traceability was a legal requirement for all products grown in only 1 of the 13 visited countries. In a further 4 countries, traceability is legally required for one or two specified commodities.

5.4.2. Sampling programmes for pesticide residues

Pesticide residue monitoring programmes or once-off surveys had been implemented in 12 of the 13 visited countries. In the majority of countries, sampling and analyses concentrated on domestic produce, and between 50 and 2,500 samples were taken and analysed in the different countries. The purpose of the monitoring programmes was to assess dietary exposure and to check compliance with the authorisation of PPPs. In seven countries, no or only few MRLs were established so that there was no legal possibility for enforcement measures, unless
illegal uses of pesticides could be proven. Samples were taken in supermarkets, markets, pack-houses and farms.

In six of the 13 countries, there were sampling programmes in place for produce intended for export (see next chapter). These samples were normally taken in the pack-houses, except in one country, where samples are taken in the orchards before the harvest.

A sampling procedure was observed in 9 of the visited countries. The observed procedures mostly followed the respective Guidelines CAC/GL 33-1999 of the Codex Alimentarius, which is equivalent to Commission Directive 2002/63/EC. Only minor differences to the procedure of the Codex Guidelines were noted: in two countries the samples were not sealed, in one country the sample did not contain a sufficient number of units, and in one country the different lots in one consignment were not considered separately.

5.4.3. Control of exports

The EU legislation does not require export certification of plant produce for pesticide residues, and export certification for pesticide residues is not performed in 7 of the 13 countries visited. The remaining visited 6 countries have implemented different elements of export control and certification:

- Two of the countries have implemented requirements for compulsory pesticide residue analysis for export certification of selected commodities. One of these countries limited the export certification for pesticide residues to grapes, and the other country to herbs and olives.

- Further two countries have implemented a risk-based monitoring programme for produce intended for export, and 2000 or 9000 samples, respectively, were taken annually. In these countries, export certificates related not only to pesticide residues, but also to the quality of the produce. In one of the countries, the analytical result was awaited before export certificates were issued. In the other country, the produce was certified and exported before the analytical result was available. However, in case of non-compliance, further export of produce from the involved producer was suspended pending further analysis confirming the conformity of the produce.

- In one country, representative analyses for export control was required for produce from plots, which have not received GAP certification from the CA. Over 10,000 export control samples were analysed annually. Phytosanitary certificates were only issued, when the analytical result confirmed the conformity of the produce. GAP certified farmers were subject to further regular surveillance samples.

- In one country export control samples of produce exported to the EU were only taken for produce from farmers involved in EU RASFF notifications for unacceptable levels of pesticide residues. Phytosanitary certificates were only issued after the analytical result confirmed the conformity of the produce.
5.4.4. Follow-up of notifications in the EU RASFF

Where consignments are rejected at the EU import point due to non-compliance with EU legal limits for pesticide residues, or where a possible health risk for consumers is identified in samples taken on the EU market, the Member States inform the Commission, who circulates a notification within the EU RASFF. The Commission also informs the TCs of these cases. The follow-up to these notifications was evaluated in 12 of the 13 visited countries. In all 12 countries, the notifications were received by the CAs; however, not all notifications were received in two of the countries due to insufficient communication within the countries. In three of the countries, the notifications were followed up by writing to the exporter or pack-house concerned asking for an explanation or by inviting them to a meeting at the CA. In the remaining countries, inspections of the pack-houses took place to investigate the possible reasons for the residue detections. The mission teams noted that the CAs were able to trace back the produce to the farm or even the plot, if the records of the samples taken in the EU contained this information. It was also noted, however, that in a number of cases, the sample records drawn up by the sampling officers in the EU did not contain the full traceability information, and the CA in the Third Countries could not identify the reasons for the MRL infringement in these cases. In the majority of cases, the CA took follow-up samples for pesticide residue analyses at the pack-houses, or even at the farmers involved.

5.4.5. Private controls of food of plant origin intended for export to the EU

Private controls were not within the scope of the missions, but the private control systems were observed at the visited pack-houses and at the producers in all visited countries.

Comprehensive self-control systems had been put in place by the pack-houses, exporters and growers. Growers were normally certified to private GAP standards, except certain small growers. Pack-houses/exporters had agreed pesticide application schemes with their customers in the EU to achieve compliance with EU MRLs. Pack-houses generally concluded contracts with their suppliers requiring growers to follow the agreed pesticide schemes.

Pack-houses also operated private inspection programmes, where the contracted producers were inspected by technical advisors and substantial numbers of pesticide residue samples were taken.

Exporter associations were also involved in the development of GAP guides, which were developed in co-operation with the CAs. Exporter associations also provided substantial information about requirements of the EU market to their members.

In two countries it was noted, however, that exporters have often not laid down pesticide application schemes for their suppliers. Growers in these countries produce both for the EU market and the domestic market and have not received adequate information on the conditions for use to follow in order to comply with EU MRLs. In these countries, growers were mostly not certified to private GAP schemes. It was noted that these countries have received the highest numbers of EU RASFF notifications.
Conclusions

Although pack-houses for fruit and vegetables were officially controlled in all visited TCs, these controls rarely included pesticides in their scope. Pesticide residue monitoring surveys or programmes existed in most visited countries. As export certification for pesticide residues in products of plant origin is not required by EU legislation, or indeed in countries importing from the EU, specific export control systems were implemented in only 6 of the 13 visited countries. These controls consisted mostly of risk-based sampling and analysis of a larger number of commodities, but in other cases of systematic sampling and analysis of selected commodities. Satisfactory action has been taken by TC authorities in response to EU RASFF notifications. Good systems were in place for traceability, but follow-up could be improved if Member States always included the full traceability information in the sampling record.

Private controls of pesticides use and pesticide residues had an essential significance, and largely facilitated compliance of exported produce with EU MRLs.

5.5. Laboratories for pesticide residue analysis

Findings

Official pesticide residue laboratories were operational in 12 of the 13 visited countries. In nine of these countries, more than one laboratory was designated for pesticide residue analysis by the CA.

In six of the countries all laboratories designated for pesticide residues were accredited to ISO 17025. In a further four countries, at least one of the designated laboratories was accredited.

A broad analytical scope with low limits of quantification, which allow quantification at the legal limits set by EU MRLs, requires LC-MS/MS equipment. Such equipment was available in the designated laboratories of 9 countries, but it was used for pesticide residue analysis in only five of the countries. Consequently, the analytical scope was limited in the majority of the TCs, and did not include many pesticides, which were subject to RASFF notifications in the EU. Laboratories in only 4 countries had an analytical scope above 100 pesticides, and in 4 countries, the analytical scope was smaller than 50 substances. These limitations were specifically evident in developing countries.

Conclusions

Although pesticide residue laboratories were operational in almost all visited countries, not all designated laboratories were accredited and the analytical scope was too small to test for the numerous authorised pesticides, of which many cannot be used in the EU, and which have been detected by EU laboratories in produce from these countries.

6. Overall Conclusions

As authorisations of PPPs in TCs are not aligned with EU MRLs, growers producing for export to the EU must be informed on Good Agricultural Practices in line with EU MRLs. Such information is generally provided by pack-houses and exporters, and their self-control
systems largely ensure compliance of imported fruit and vegetables with EU MRLs. Official pesticide controls focus mostly on compliance with national rules, which differ from EU legislation, and only limited laboratory resources have been designated.

7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

With regard to food of non-animal origin, compliance with EU requirements other than phytosanitary ones is ensured in most cases by non governmental bodies and imports are allowed upon the guarantees offered by the importer of the food into the EU. When importing food of non-animal origin, it is incumbent upon the importer to ensure compliance with the relevant requirements of food law or with conditions recognised equivalent thereto by the EU.

EU legislation within the scope of the mission does not contain specific requirements for competent authorities. The competent authorities are, however, the natural contact points of the European Commission in Third Countries, and the reports contained recommendations to the competent authorities aimed at improving the control systems in the visited countries.

The recommendations related in particular to the following areas:

- Provision of clear information to farmers on pesticide good agricultural practices which will not lead to residues exceeding EU MRLs;
- Inspection of users of PPPs, such as farmers and pack-houses;
- Sampling of produce intended for export to the EU and for the domestic market;
- Sampling procedure for pesticide residues in line with the respective Codex Guidelines CAC/GL 33-1999;
- Broadening the scope of analyses in the pesticide residues laboratories to include important pesticides used by growers and involved in RASFF notifications;
- Evaluation and/or accreditation of laboratories under officially recognised programmes.

8. **ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION SERVICES**

8.1. **Follow-up of mission recommendations**

For each mission, a copy of the report was sent to the TC CA with a request for an action plan, indicating the steps taken to address the report’s recommendations.

A deadline was set for submitting these plans and the response given by the CA was evaluated. Where the actions could not be implemented by the TC authorities, they were contacted after the proposed deadlines and asked for an update, or evidence, respectively, of the proposed actions.
8.2. Further action

Under the Better Training for Safer Food Programmes, the DG for Health and Consumers of the European Commission has financed regional Training Workshops targeted on pesticide controls or including these controls among other issues. Such workshops were held in India, Thailand, Egypt, Brazil and Argentina, where FVO missions on pesticide controls had been performed previously. Staff of the DG Health and Consumers, including the FVO, participated in these workshops as lecturers or trainers. A training course on pesticide residue analyses for experts from various TCs is envisaged for 2011. In a further country, a short term expert from an EU Member State has been commissioned for targeted training regarding the issues identified during the mission.

On request of TCs, the EU has established import tolerances under Regulation (EC) No 396/2005. An import tolerance is an MRL set for imported products to meet the needs of international trade where:

- the use of the active substance in a PPP is not authorised in the EU for reasons other than public health reasons for the specific product and specific use; or

- a different level is appropriate because the existing EU MRL was set for reasons other than public health reasons for the specific product and specific use.

Emergency measures imposing special conditions on official controls governing the import of pears from Turkey due to high residue levels of amitraz were taken with Commission Decision 2009/835/EC in November 2009, expiring on 24 January 2010.

The new Commission Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin and amending Decision 2006/504/EC is applicable since 25 January 2010. It lays down rules concerning the increased level of official controls to be carried out pursuant to Article 15(5) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004, and gives MS guidance on the implementation of import controls on commodities not included in Commission Decisions. The mission reports have been considered, among other sources of information, in the discussions on increased levels of import controls established under the Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 and its quarterly revisions. The Commission has put in place increased levels of import controls on pesticide residues for certain specified produce from the Dominican Republic, Thailand, Turkey and Egypt.

The overview report on import controls in the EU is available at the following web-site: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/specialreports/gr_2009-8328_aw_en.pdf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU legislation</th>
<th>Official Journal</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
residues in and on products of plant and animal origin and repealing Directive 79/700/EEC

ANNEX 2 — DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL MISSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Dates of Mission</th>
<th>SANCO ref. no.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>11/06 – 19/06/2008</td>
<td>2008-7845</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>16/11 – 25/11/2005</td>
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<td>11/11 – 19/11/2009</td>
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<td>28/01 – 05/02/2009</td>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>07/10 – 15/10/2009</td>
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<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>03/06 – 12/06/2008</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
<td>22/01 – 31/01/2007</td>
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<td>07/02 – 16/02/2010</td>
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<td>India</td>
<td>16/02 – 27/02/2004</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
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<td>17/05 – 21/05/2010</td>
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The reports on individual missions are available on the Directorate General’s Website:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm