



Trip Report:

Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Survey

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February 25- March 21, 2007

Submitted by:
Abt Associates
CARANA Corporation

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Gaborone, Botswana

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1. PURPOSE

- Interview a sample of leading grower/shippers, traders, processors, procurement organizations, and food retailers to identify instances during the last three years in which cross border shipments of fresh or processed food (especially fruits or vegetables) have been prevented, detained, dumped or otherwise impeded
- Create a matrix of such situations that characterizes and explains them in terms of single or multiple apparent causes.
- Write up profiles for possible use during the mid-June conference tentatively entitled “Dealing More Effectively with SPS and other Standards in Southern Africa Regional Trade”
- Based on the typology developed, identify and suggest appropriate preventive or remedial actions that might be taken, and associate them with different sets of public or private sector actors
- Weave this research into the draft agenda for the SPS conference

2. LOGISTICS AND DATES

February 25 -26

Rick Clark: Travel to Washington D.C. (weather delays)

February 27

Rick Clark: Briefing at Abt Associates offices, then begin travel to Botswana

February 28

Rick Clark: Travel to Johannesburg

March 1

Rick Clark: Arrive Gaborone, Botswana
Met with Hub staff
Discussed sow and agenda

March 2

Rick Clark:
Hub office
Met with Lawrence Johnson
Met Amanda Hilligas

March 3

Off day

March 4

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson: Travel to Cape Town via Johannesburg

March 5

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson - meetings with:
Jaco van Tubbergh - Managing Director, FVC International (Fruit & Veg City)

Lindi Benic – Manager, Trade/Market Access Affairs, Deciduous Fruit Producer's Trust
Colette le Roux – Asst Manager Food Safety & Quality Assurance, Dole
Hannes Nieuwoudt – Business Manager, Commercial Market and Development, Dole
Also did a quick tour of the Cape Town Fruit and Vegetable Terminal Market

March 6

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson - meetings with:
Jan Venter – Director, FreshMark
Marc VanReusel – Regional Manager New Developments, FreshMark
Lee Smith – Director Procurement, FreshMark
Werner Lubbe – BC Logistics (an independent trucker for FVC International)

March 7

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson - meetings with:
Harold Harris – Golden Harvest
Theo – Golden Harvest
Tersia Marcos – MSc (Agric), Colors
Margo Kritzinger – Technical Manager, Colors
Stuart Symington – CEO, Fresh Produce Exporter's Forum – FPEF
Greg Pepper – General Manager, International Supply Chain, Woolworths
Shaun Titus -Import Manager: Foods, Woolworths
Mukhtar Allie – Export Manager: Foods, Woolworth's

Travel to Johannesburg

March 8

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson - meetings with:
Michael Anderson – General Manager, Pick'n Pay
Elzette van Schalkwyk – General Manager, Score supermarkets
Solomon Gebeyehu, Manager for PRAs NDA

March 9

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson - meetings with:
Mario Ugarette – FreshMark Centurion Office
Jan Hendrik Venter – Manager Early Warnings, NDA Plant Health
Robbie Forbes – Transit

March 10

Rick Clark: Travel to Maputo, Mozambique
Stephen Wingert, consultant USAID/Mozambique

March 11

Rick Clark:
Jake Walter – Director, TechnoServe Inc. Mozambique

March 12

Rick Clark:
Serafina Mangana – Department Head, Plant Protection, Ministry of Agriculture
Hassane - Phytosanitary inspection service

Armando Marcos - Plant Quarantine
Antonia Vaz - Phytopathologist
Christine de Voest – Private Enterprise Officer, USAID
Elsa Mapilele – Rural Enterprise Advisor, USAID
Pine Opperman – Fresh Produce, Shop-Rite Mozambique (FreshMark)

March 13

Rick Clark:

Rogério Ossemane – CEPAGRI
Pine Pienaar (telephone call) – ACDI-VOCA, Beira Corridor
Ashok Menon (telephone call) - Director - Trade and Investment Project (TIP)
Cavalho Neves - USAID consultant

March 14

Rick Clark: Travel - Maputo to Lusaka

Craig Carlson: Travel – Gaborone to Lusaka

March 15

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson - meetings with:

Mupelwa Sichilima – Trade and Policy Advisor, MATEP Project
Bourne Chooka – Business Development Advisor, MATEP
Bruce Mukanda – COMESA
Luke c. Mbewe – Chief Executive, Zambia Export Growers Association - ZEGA
Andrew Stock – FreshMark/Shop Rite

March 16

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson – meetings with:

Nick Tembo – general manager SPARS supermarket
Nigel Pollard – General Manager, York Farms Limited

Craig Carlson – meetings with:

Mr. A. Sakala, Manager, Plant Protection Department, Zambia

Rick Clark: Travel - Lusaka to Johannesburg

Dermitt Cassidy – consultant, Chemonics MCC Zambia

Craig Carlson: Travel - Lusaka to Johannesburg

March 17

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson: Travel – Johannesburg to Gaborone

March 18

Off day

March 19

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson – meetings with:

Visited Botswana/South African border crossing
Visited Gaborone office of Ministry of Agriculture

March 20

Rick Clark and Craig Carlson – meetings with:
Phillip van Niekerk – Regional Manager, ShopRite
Botswana Ministry of Trade
Julian Van Der Nat –Agribusiness Consultant, Tahal consulting

March 21

Rick Clark:
Hub office
Left for Washington DC

March 22

Rick Clark: Travel day

March 23

Rick Clark: Abt office

March 24

Rick Clark: Returned home

3. CROSS-CUTTING OBSERVATIONS AND THEMES

As far as we could tell from the interviews listed, SPS is not being used as an artificial barrier to trade within Southern Africa, with a few noted and well known exceptions that seems to be “politically motivated”. Border restrictions or other cross country problems appear to be based more on the precautionary principle common in most countries. In effect plant quarantine and customs officials seem to be saying “if we don’t know what it is – we won’t let it come in.” Others interpret this stance as a “sit back and do nothing” attitude, partly motivated by a desire to protect national industries. All countries visited claim they want to facilitate trade, yet they tend to protecting themselves not only scientifically but also politically and commercially. This need to protect themselves, yet the lack of scientific knowledge to do so, opens the doors for the politicians (e.g. Zambia and Botswana) to implement biased measures. The problems are enormous and there are not enough resources available to correct the whole system in one fell swoop. Therefore priorities for enhancing market access need to be established on a market based – commercial value system.

The physical crossing at borders and the documentation involved do not seem to unduly hinder trade, yet they could be improved as part of the overall upgrading of systems and/or structure. However, at-the-border issues should not be singled out for assistance *per se* because there are many more pressing matters.

Theme #1 – Need for Greater SPS Awareness

The principle problem encountered is that central governments have a huge trade work load in general, and tend to see SPS as a low priority. Not making SPS a priority, coupled with the long time required to do Pest Risk Assessments (especially in light of the lack of resources) leaves all countries in the region with less agricultural diversification than they would like to achieve and otherwise could achieve. There appears to be no sense of urgency at the central government level in terms of helping the local private food sector to

import or to export. All import/exports-- whether “widgets” or watermelons receive the same attention.

At the same time there is a limited amount of capacity to deal with trade issues in general. Simply adhering to agreed-upon tariff implementation issues is perceived as a major challenge. The customs bureaucracy is not set up to deal with perishable crops as separate from any other import/exports. The process for opening up market access and then implementing new procedures needs to be more streamlined. Changes in personnel also greatly affect the process. All these factors have different effects on the import/export process yet the government at the higher levels, because of other pressing problems lump them all together.

Within the SPS arena—which covers three main areas (human, animal and plant health and life) more official emphasis is placed in the region on animal and plant issues rather than on food safety. Except, that is, for those shippers who need to implement EurepGAP to export to the EU. If Southern Africa is to enter the global market all three areas of SPS will require equal emphasis. With respect to plant products, pesticide residue levels, micro-bacteriological contamination, and misuse of additives are all hot issues in global agrifood trade.

More effort needs to be placed on having relevant central government agencies and actors become more aware of human health-related SPS issues – not just the Ministries of Agriculture. As an example, FDA, through the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition –JIFSAN has been planning an awareness workshop for Central America that could be mirrored at some point in Southern Africa either at a bilateral or regional level. Possible thematic areas that could be included: (1) A general overview of government food safety regulations and market standards with emphasis on health issues relating to microorganisms, water quality, worker safety and hygiene, etc.; (2) Food safety from the view of the market; (3) Food safety from the producer/exporter view; (4) An introduction to food safety and Good Agricultural Practices; (5) How Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) standards can be used to provide for a safer food supply. Participants might include: Vice Ministers of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture offices such as regulations and norms; animal health and plant safety, quarantine; and technical offices or extension services; Ministry of Health officials who have a direct relation with food safety as it applies to production, food supply and worker safety issues; Ministry of Environment; food safety administrators of local supermarkets chains; associations of producer and/or exporters of agricultural products; donor agencies; academia.

Theme #2 – Resource Constraints

All public sector agencies we visited complained of “lack of’s” - funding, infrastructure, talent, knowledge, communication, support, NPPO structure, surveillance, data, early warning systems, personnel, experience, and on and on. At the base is probably lack of attention to or low priority of SPS issues as mentioned above, which in turn manifests itself in lower budgets for SPS, then everything spirals downward from there. However, as was pointed out various times the present system is too large to try to fix the whole thing at once. So priorities need to be set, and funding should be available for small projects. A list of more technical priorities could probably be generated at the regional level and then discussed either regionally or bilaterally. Suggestions made were:

1. Develop a crop list prioritized by phytosanitary risks: for example, known fruit fly

hosts like citrus at the top and lesser risk crops like carrots at the bottom. This list then has to be matched against market demand and effort placed to develop the less “risky” crop with the highest market demand. The lack of knowledge about pests within each country’s borders (due again to a lack of resources) prompts and fuels the precautionary (conservative) approach to SPS measures.

2. Thought needs to be given to doing PRAs on a regional basis. Perhaps a solution is some kind of regional PRA Center that can draw on the available resources within the region to work on a regional prioritized PRA list. For example, USDA APHIS recently approved greenhouse (actually screened houses) tomatoes from all of Central America based on research in selected, but not all countries.
3. Based on market demand, implement production and post-harvest handling systems that mitigate potential pest infestations in the field, in packing sheds or in transit. Again the recent APHIS approval for screen-house tomatoes and bell peppers from Central America. Crops are grown in enclosed houses with barriers designed to control fruit fly infestations and monitor systems to verify controls.
4. Develop or begin the process of developing uniform agricultural standards for the region, along the lines of EurepGAP (there now exists a ChileGAP and a KenyaGAP, and SA Gap is gaining traction).
5. Develop or most closely mesh import and export standards for each country so that they are balanced and more harmonized.

Most of the other “lacks” are directly related to funding problems. One objective of the awareness workshop mentioned above would be to find more funding for very specific prioritized efforts. Someone needs to help the countries in their prioritization on a technical – urgency level related to potential trade, probably short term first, e.g. monitoring for the fruit fly *bactrocera invadens* on the northern Mozambique area. The new SPS contract being let by USDA with USAID support could help governments in the region to prioritize on a one-on-one basis, e.g. developing a crop pest list for melons from Botswana is more important setting up border surveillance for all fruit flies. Again, the important thing here is not to try to change the entire system or ask for unreachable quantities of funds, but rather to have outside technical assistance help on the prioritization. The priorities need to be based on real markets, so the previous market studies done by the Hub can form the basis for the initial priority crops.

Theme #3 – Need for SPS Training

A central theme surrounding both the awareness and “lack of” issues is the need for more training—but specific, prioritized training. As part of a workshop (or awareness sessions) a training plan should be developed based on market demand and trade potential. Along with the marketing study already done, an effort should be made to link South Africa importers with possible exporters and then deal with specific issues where training would assist in trade, e.g. a one day class in documentation for border crossing for new personnel; how to detect specific pests, etc.

Theme #4 – SPS-related Communications

A major reason for the awareness problem is the lack of technical based communication within; between; and outside the Southern African region – the countries do not network. Regional countries feel at a disadvantage relative to South Africa (perceived as “big brother”) and therefore resent their point of view and communication is impacted as is

regional cooperation. Tackling all aspects would be overwhelming however, so once again it is better to start on a small scale and work up.

There are a number of already operating web sites (USAID developed one for Spanish-speaking countries at www.msfinfo.com) that could be readily customized for Southern Africa needs. The web site should be user friendly and contain at a minimum all local, regional and international legislation pertaining to trade issues (specifically SPS), have production guides, have sections on Good Agricultural/Manufacturing /Business Practices; international standards; and possibly marketing links. It should also have an up-dated section on activities (not events) taking place within the region pertaining to SPS: PRA lists, import restrictions, surveillance problems, market prices, high/low demands, etc. This web site could be developed at maintained at the hub level until it can be passed on to a regional entity. It should also be linked to the International Phytosanitary Portal <https://www.ippc.int/IPPC/En/default.jsp>, which was developed by FAO and is sponsored by the International Plant Protection Consortium (IPPC) as well as WTO.

Theme #5 - Exporting into South Africa

This is an area that needs to be dealt with first bilaterally (someone suggested doing a study to show the effects on South Africa markets if they allowed more product into their country, i.e. the Mexican/California avocado effect). The South African SPS structure and trading mechanisms, although not ideal, still are stronger than all other Southern African countries. This adversely affects trade – yet South Africa is trying to protect their private sector and their export trade to US and EU markets. This is a rather difficult area in which other countries feel that South Africa could loosen up their restrictions and work more with other countries - a hard sell. At the same time, some receivers, distributors and retailers within the RSA would like to have better access to specific imports that they feel are being hampered by their own government which places them in the awareness category above. There is however, a lack of effort on the part of private sector to get directly involved with regional governments - either financially or in lobbying. A *laissez faire* attitude - as long as things work more or less and they make a profit—seems to prevail. Somehow the private sector at all levels needs to be more involved in public sector SPS issues. National and regional producer, exporter and industry associations should be encouraged to play a stronger role in using SPS to facilitate rather than impede trade.

Theme #6 – Exportable and Export-quality Supply of Fruits and Vegetables

If Southern Africa countries other than RSA are to compete globally they need to improve all aspects of local fruit and vegetable production: varieties, good agricultural practices, food safety, chemical use, irrigation, transport, packaging, etc. They also need assistance in good business practices, organization and marketing. Quality, volume, and consistency of supply must all be improved. Regional agri-food exports, into RSA especially, will not prosper to any large extent with the more up scale or sophisticated consumers in the region until a product grown to international standards is marketed. However, since the Trade Hub has limited resources, the challenges of significantly increasing and upgrading exportable supply must generally be faced within each source country, by USAID, other donor or governmental agricultural development projects.

4. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS:

Botswana:

As noted above, all Southern African countries have SPS resource or capacity problems: be it funding, lack of technical personnel, just not enough time to upgrade their SPS regimes and systems. Botswana is no exception.

With the exception of the import permit restrictions, Botswana seems to have no major problems with trade coming in by land (everyone wishes border crossings could be faster –but that’s a common complaint everywhere). The main obstacle to uninhibited trade in agri-food products seems to be import restrictions applied arbitrarily to protect and promote local agricultural production, without apparent scientific basis. Ironically, the efforts of government officials to protect local production actually hurt consumers, by limiting product availability, quality and variety, which in turn means higher cost.

Yet this is definitely a bilateral issue, not easily resolved. Ideally the focus of the Botswana government would be on increasing local production, but not only looking at increasing area planted, but also yields, new varieties (heat tolerant broccoli for example) and introduction of Good Agricultural Practices. This would be a long term effort. However, in the meantime perhaps something can be done to have more detailed or more specific restrictions. Instead of just “onions” have dry onions, sweet onions, spring onions, valued added, etc. This would allow product to come in from the outside, keep the shelves full and maybe provide incentive to local farmers. It is not clear what the solution is, but one cannot promote local trade by restricting competition, and in the end one hurts the consumer. The planned national fresh market would seem to be a good start but an effort has to be placed on bringing more farmers into the production system.

The potential for fresh produce exports from Botswana is limited at this time, yet there are specific windows for certain crops that warrant further development, both in terms of market access into RSA and in terms of agronomic and post-harvest practices. Ideally, the Trade Hub and other collaborators would pick very specific crops (tomatoes, colored bell peppers) and seasons to focus on then follow both a value chain approach to development and a “systems” approach to SPS issues, to mitigate, to some extent, RSA reluctance to accept fresh produce from Botswana. Pressure to engage in such efforts needs to come both from Botswana grower/shippers and from importers or other receivers in South Africa. Normally, this would be a bilateral effort, yet in the absence of a USAID country mission in Botswana, the Trade Hub can play a useful role.

Mozambique

Once a commodity has been granted access to the RSA market, Mozambique has no real regulatory problems at the border. Agricultural trade seems to flow smoothly, albeit slowly.

Yet again, Mozambique does have considerable resource and therefore capacity issues with respect to SPS measures. Resource constraints inhibit them from developing the crop/pest lists, PRAs, monitoring systems and surveillance that RSA would like to see. According to those interviewed Mozambique has potential with a wide variety of crops to the extent of supplanting those commonly grown in South Africa. Examples include bananas, plantains, papaya, mango, pineapple, citrus, litchis and a host of other tropical fruit and specialty vegetable crops. Yet funding for major agribusiness projects and

funding for doing regulatory/mitigations is limited. USAID Mozambique appears to be considering one or more agribusiness or agricultural export projects, which might provide a useful injection of energy and resources into the commercial fruit and vegetable industry.

Zambia

Zambia also suffers from resource constraints, as enumerated above.

Border crossing procedures and documentation do not seem to be a problem, although again everyone wishes they were faster. The main SPS issue found in Zambia is the import permit. This is a bilateral issue and not easily resolved as it seems to be mostly political in its intent. It appears the World Bank, the MCC and other consulting organizations within the country are trying to resolve this impasse. Not sure what else can be done.

Zambia does have product (snow peas, snap peas, mini vegetables, and flowers) that belong on the global market, and supposedly has potential for other products as well– we heard mention of strawberries, for example. An effort should be made to increase trade in these areas – how to get more farmers involved, do necessary PRAs, introduce GAPs, involve importing countries in effort, etc. Again this is not country specific, but rather applies to all countries we visited.

South Africa

Presently with a few exceptions, the trade in Southern Africa is definitely out of South Africa and into the surrounding countries. South Africa businesspeople – supermarkets, truckers, clearing agents, etc. have all figured out how to conduct trade. Although border crossing could be faster, bureaucracies lessened, more documentation done electronically, etc. – the system works. Special exceptions are Zambia with its restrictive import permits and Botswana with its program to “promote” local farmers, and the port system in Angola, but even with these exceptions trade flows into the countries.

South Africa does however, face the same public sector problems as its neighbors: lack of funding; few qualified personnel, lack of SPS technical understanding, politics replacing technical SPS issues, over bearing bureaucracies, etc, etc. However, since they are mostly exporting they (through the private sector) are able to meet requirements of receiving countries. In the RSA case, the lack of capacity is mostly felt by those who wish to import into South Africa, so the local industry remains protected. Public sector officials and the industry are obviously more concerned with exporting to EU and US, so scare resources are allocated there.

Work has to be done to convince the South African produce industry (and public sector) that in the long run it behooves them to increase the importation of produce from other regions of Southern Africa – to have consistent volume throughout the year, better quality produce or newer varieties, etc. Resistance to imports is common around the world, but eventually it can be overcome once the trade realizes that 12-month supply actually lifts sales of the same product during the peak domestic season. For example, when California Avocado growers finally let in Mexican Avocados after a 90 year ban, the whole category grew tremendously. Such a scenario would occur in South Africa as well, since the country is surprisingly undersupplied for much of the year because of a legacy of protectionism and isolation.

4. Contacts

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