

# MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FISHERIES SURINAME

## NOTE REGARDING PLANT-, ANIMAL- AND FISHERIES HEALTH IN SURINAME

### **Background**

Suriname's agricultural sector is export oriented and therefore highly sensitive to developments in the international markets. Continuous changes are taking place at the global, hemispheric and regional levels. Suriname wishes to continue and expand its agricultural exports and is making the necessary policy and institutional adjustments and adopts appropriate strategies. Traditionally Suriname exports in agricultural and fishery products to markets with high food standards such as Japan, the United States of America and the European Union (Netherlands, Belgium, France, United Kingdom and Spain) and recently to the Caribbean (Caricom).

The important challenge facing the agricultural sector today is the fact that the de-regulation of domestic agricultural markets and trade liberalization are accompanied by new standards and requirements to ensure food quality and human health and safety. This requires an effective regulatory service that covers the areas of food safety, plant and animal health, quarantine and inspection services and regulatory of inputs.

In addition, the country's preparedness to participate in the new competitive environment and to comply with new trade agreements requires legislative reforms and updating of existing legislation. Legislation is also required to protect local agricultural activities against unfair trade practices and to ensure food safety.

### **Activities executed**

To comply with the WTO Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (LVV) of Suriname, in September 2001, established and operated an Agricultural Health and Food Safety Unit (AHFSU) to coordinate health and food safety issues and activities.

During the period 2001 - 2004, with the support of an IDB loan and technical assistance of the Inter-American Institute of Corporation for Agriculture (IICA) in Suriname, the Ministry of LVV implemented an LVV-IICA-IDB project entitled "Establishing and operating an Agricultural Health and Food Safety Unit" for Suriname to facilitate WTO/SPS Compliance.

The unit is responsible for the coordination, monitoring, administration and reporting of the health activities for the Ministry of LVV.

Programs are implemented by staff members and co-workers of the Department of Research, Planning and Development, Agriculture and Livestock.

The involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the health and food safety programs was an important part of the overall project.

On 5 March 2007 the Fish Inspection Institute (Viskeuringsinstituut-VKI) was established by the Ministry of LVV. The VKI is the competent authority of industrial quality in fishery and aquaculture.

The VKI is established to execute the Fish Inspection Act of 2000 and thereby conducts the followings:

- a) Determining of quality standards for all fisheries products;
- b) Execution of all necessary inspections and control for quality assurance of fisheries products such as:
  - Execution of control on the hygiene on board fishing vessels
  - Execution of control on all plants, landing sites and commercial aquaculture farms
  - Execution of control over the entire production chain of fisheries products
  - Execution of control over the quality of processing water used
  - Execution of control over personal hygiene of personnel at landing sites and plants
  - Execution of control over packing, labeling, storage and transportation of fisheries products
  - Testing of fisheries products and the health control of aquaculture products
- c) Registration of landing sites and commercial aquaculture farms, also the recognition of all plants
- d) Issuing of inspection and health certificate
- e) Training of quality managers, their assistants and other personnel, needed for correctly executing the tasks of the VKI
- f) Setting up and implementing of all necessary monitoring programs at national level, pertaining to all possible causes that could harm the quality of fisheries products

#### **Achievements of AHFSU:**

- The establishment and operation of an “Agricultural Health and Food Safety Unit” (AHFSU) to comply with the WTO/SPS agreement to facilitate production and trade;

- Establishment of a Surveillance and Monitoring System for Animal and Plant Pests and Disease through national farmers registration for livestock and crops;
- Farmers registration on a national level;
- Registered data processed and analyzed and determination of crop and livestock pests and diseases and the use of chemical pesticides and medicines;
- Public awareness campaigns have been and are being conducted through posters, leaflets, television, radio and newspapers for researchers, producers, exporters and for training and public awareness purposes;
- Participation in national, regional and international workshops, seminars and training by staff members related to agricultural health and food safety issues;
- A Trace Back system has been implemented for crop farms and packing facilities;
- Good agricultural Practices (GAP) trainings for vegetable and fruit producers, research assistants and extension officers of the Ministry;
- Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) trainings for staff members of the Ministry for data processing concerning surveys in animal and plant health and food safety issues;

**Other objectives that are achieved to strengthen the health and food safety issues:**

- Agricultural legislations updated and draft documents presented for parliamentary approval;
- Suriname is an active member of the OIE, the IPPC, the Codex Alimentarius Committee and to improve the national standards according to their regulation and standards.
- Suriname has signed the WTO/SPS, the CSME and FTAA Agreement, and to comply to their provisions in terms of agricultural health and food safety.
- Updating and harmonization of agricultural acts according international standards and regulations:
  - o Pesticide Act (update in operation since February 2005, refers to Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention and prohibits import, sale, and use of these chemicals);
  - o Review the pesticide list and improve and updated the list.
  - o Phasing out of four (systemic) pesticides, which are regularly found to be used inappropriately. These pesticides pose a threat to public health and environment;
  - o Plant protection Act (FAO model updated, to be approved by Parliament);

- Seed Act (approved by the Parliament and in operation since May 2005);
- Plant Variety Protection Act (PVP) – Plant Breeder’s Rights Act. The draft PVP is currently under review by the National Seed Board (2005);
- Animal health Act in preparation (according to the Caricom Animal Health Model);
- Animal development Act in preparation;
- Various Resolutions regarding Animal Health in preparation (meat inspection, pet shop, Veterinary service, quarantine, drugs and pesticide)
- Codex Alimentarius:
  - National Codex Contact Point indicated (in 2001);
  - Engagement of legal officer (especially for Codex Alimentarius);
  - Training of legal officers at the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat of the Ministry of Agriculture in Holland in 2004 for two months;
  - Codex Alimentarius workshop with FAO consultant;
  - Implemented:
    - Draft National Food Laws is presented in workshop with stakeholders;
    - Establishment of a National Codex Committee since 2004;
  - Formalizing the establishment of the Codex Secretariat.
- The project: “Strengthening of the Food Control System in Suriname”, which is implemented with the support of the FAO, is executed. The objective of this project is to provide the basis for the establishment of an effective national food control system to ensure quality and safe food executed by trainings programs such as: post harvest management, HACCP principles, new lab practices and by purchasing of laboratory equipments.

### **Ongoing activities:**

- Post-harvest training for producers/technicians especially among export farmers;
- The operationalization of the AHFSU based on the experiences gained during collaborative work during the period 2001- 2004;
- Implementation of pesticide management systems including training in diagnostics and acquisition of relevant materials; increased application of IPM methods;
- Training of farmers, extension officers and salesman of pesticide shops in safe use of pesticides and alternative control methods. Also storage,

- labeling and recognition of pests and diseases is part of the training sessions;
- Continues implementation of trace-back systems for crop farms and packing facilities;
  - Continue update of all relevant Agricultural Health and Food Safety Legislation;
  - Strengthening the cooperation within ministries involved with health and food safety issues.

## **The fishery sector**

### **Achievements of VKI:**

- The establishment and the operation of the VKI are based on the Fish Inspection Act of November 2000, Fish Inspection State Decree of 11 February 2002, and (other) Ministerial Decisions.
- Establishment and implementation of an annual surveillance and monitoring system for biotoxins (ciguatera and histamine) and contaminants (Hg, Pb, Cd) in fisheries products).
- Establishments and implementation of an annual Residue Monitoring Plan for aquaculture products in compliance with EU regulations. The program monitors the following possible residues in aquaculture products at farm level: Chloramphenicol, Nitrofurans (AHD, AMOZ, AOZ and SEM), Tetracyclines, Oxolinic acid, Enrofloxacin, Emamectine, SUM DDT, Malachite green, Leucomalachite green and Crystal violet)
- Establishment and implementation of a surveillance and monitoring system on the hygiene for processing plants
- Implementing of Freshness test of fishery products
- Training of a number of Quality managers in post harvest handling of fish and fishery products for the FII and for the private sector
- Training of Fish inspectors
- Implementing of the needed inspections to ensure the quality of the fishery products, to execute the control of:
  - the hygienic situation on board of the fishing vessels
  - the processing plants, landing sites, aquaculture farms
  - the quality of the processing water and the fishery products
- Registration and recognition of landing sites, aquaculture farms, processing plants
- Issuing of the inspection - and health certificates
- Implementation of a trace back system for processing plants and aquaculture farms
- Implementation of a surveillance and monitoring system for smoked fishery products (monitoring of benzo(a)pyrene)

**Ongoing activities:**

- a new laboratory will be set up ( according to HACCP and ISO standards) and accredited. The needed equipment will be replaced or purchased
- lab personnel will be trained in the new lab technology
- updating of all necessary or relevant legislation regarding Fish Inspection and food health
- implementing of the Fish Inspection Act and all duties assigned by LVV

**Livestock sector:**

The livestock sector has made a start to establish the animal disease monitoring and surveillance system.

To achieve this, an institutional strengthening of the Veterinary service is required and therefore the following activities are conducted:

- 40 extension officers in animal health have been trained and equipment and logistics purchased.
- Purchase of a software program “Inter-trace” for the registration of animal-farms and farm-animals
- Livestock farmers and farm animals registration on a national level with GPS;
- Different extension materials were prepared and distributed for public awareness like folders, posters, radio programs, etc
- Different GAP trainings were held for animal farmers
- The resort offices were provided with software and hardware and other office supplies
- Different workshop were held for the Veterinaries, Animal Health and Extension Officers in regarding preparedness for emergency outbreaks
- Registration of all poultry slaughterhouses with GPS
- An animal disease preparedness plan for avian influenza is drafted.

To ensure the disease monitoring system and to maintain disease free status, the following activities will be conducted:

- a new veterinarian laboratory will be set up ( according to HACCP and ISO standards) and accredited. The needed equipment will be replaced or purchased.
- laboratory personnel will be trained in the new lab technology.

Direct beneficiaries of this project are Plant-, Animal- and Fisheries Health Services, and the participating Departments of the LVV and consequently the indirect beneficiaries will be agricultural producers, local exporters and local consumers of agricultural products and relevant stakeholders.

### **Areas of attentions:**

The agricultural health services in Suriname are not fully effective and efficient.

The following factors should be strengthened:

- the capabilities of the agricultural health delivery system;
- the capabilities to identify and respond to emergencies and emerging issues;
- the agricultural health and food safety legislative framework in keeping with international standards.

### **Action plan**

The Ministry started with a strengthening and upgrading plan for fully comply with the international standards. In case of problems they will be able to respond efficiently according to international standards and regulations to ensure food production and food safety for the domestic and export market.

The aim of the strengthening and upgrading of our “Agricultural Health and Food Safety Unit (AHFSU)” is to improve:

- the Agricultural Health Service of Suriname to facilitate increased production and trade.
  
- the existing agricultural health and food safety unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (LVV)

An action plan regarding a Residue analysis laboratory is drafted in cooperation with Rikilt, Wageningen, Netherlands. The aim is to get a laboratory on short term, to ensure a safe production and to guard the environment.