

THE PRIME MINISTER

**DECISION No. 147/2008/QĐ-TTg OF
NOVEMBER 17, 2008, APPROVING
THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON
ACCELERATION OF THE IMPLE-
MENTATION OF COMMITMENTS
UNDER THE AGREEMENT ON THE
APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND
PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES IN
PERFORMING THE WTO MEMBER
OBLIGATIONS**

THE PRIME MINISTER

*Pursuant to the December 25, 2001 Law on
Organization of the Government;*

*At the proposal of the Minister of Agriculture
and Rural Development,*

DECIDES:

Article 1.- To approve the National Action Plan on acceleration of the implementation of commitments under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) in performing the obligations of a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the following contents:

I. OBJECTIVES

To create a substantial progress in raising the capacity of state management agencies for the

following objectives:

1. Comprehensively implementing the SPS Agreement according to the commitments made by Vietnam upon its accession to the WTO;
2. Minimizing negative effects while tapping to the utmost the advantages of Vietnam's WTO membership regarding its agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food processing industry;
3. Assuring food hygiene and safety for domestic and foreign consumers through the supply of agricultural products and foods which are of good quality and free of toxic chemicals and harmful microorganisms;
4. Further promoting the commercialization of agricultural, forest and aquatic products and processed foods, improving the competitiveness and marketability of Vietnamese products on the international market;
5. Protecting domestic agricultural production, forestry and fisheries from pests and diseases borne by imported products, and protecting the ecological environment and the diversity of fauna and flora resources in Vietnam.

II. CONTENTS AND SOLUTIONS

1. Contents of implementation of the commitments in the WTO/SPS Agreement:
 - a/ Enhancement of institutions:
 - Perfecting the system of legal documents to conform to international regulations and practice:
 - revising current guiding documents and elaborating and promulgating new ones;

- Elaborating technical regulations on good cultivation, animal husbandry and aquaculture practices according to regional and international standards, assuring safety of the food chain;

Elaborating technical regulations on fertilizers, pesticides and animal feed (including aquatic animal feed) as per international standards and recommendations, assuring hygiene and safety in agricultural production and fisheries;

- Elaborating legal documents and technical regulations on bio-safety in food production, processing and preservation, cultivation and animal husbandry;

- Promulgating regulations on coordination between different authorities and branches in investigation, notification and coordinated prevention and eradication of animal and plant diseases on the principle of proactive surveillance;

- Mobilizing all social strata to take part in the work of animal health and food hygiene and safety surveillance;

- Perfecting the organization of and regulations on control, inspection and certification of food safety for agricultural, forest and aquatic products, fresh and processed foods.

b/ Building of the capacity of SPS personnel

- Working out plans on development of human resources with scientific knowledge and skills meeting requirements of international integration in the control, inspection and surveillance of food hygiene and safety and sanitary and phytosanitary protection;

- Building the capacity of personnel of the National SPS Enquiry Office and technical

assistance points based in ministries and branches in order to meet requirements of transparency of SPS information;

- Training full-time personnel to be professionally qualified and have a good command of foreign languages to take charge of food hygiene and safety, animal health or plant protection and possess skills of solving trade-related SPS problems;

- Building the capacity of personnel engaged in the assessment of risks of food hygiene and safety and animal or plant diseases, and in the diagnosis, inspection and surveillance of chemical and antibiotic residues and diseases.

c/ Intensification of information and propaganda activities

- Disseminating the SPS Agreement and the importance of compliance with the Agreement's provisions in trade among all branches, levels and concerned organizations, especially business associations, enterprises and production units;

- Disseminating information to raise the awareness of agricultural product and food processing units and enterprises about bad effects caused by violations of SPS regulations on consumer health and reputation of products in the domestic and export markets;

- Building a database on SPS protection of Vietnam and its trade partners; adding and updating information on the SPS Portal of Vietnam; printing use manuals;

- Disseminating among, and training in raising the capacity of, technicians and farmers typical models of application of Good Agricultural

Practices (GAPs), Good Animal Husbandry Practice (GAHP) and Good Farming Practices (GFPs), Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), skills of identifying diseases and principal measures for disease prevention and control in the domain of animal health, aquatic products and plant protection (training, building of demonstration models, editing and printing of technical documents, setting up of an online information system and, recording on CDs a database on methods of investigation, identification and basic biological and ecological characteristics of diseases and methods of prevention and control);

- Popularizing knowledge about technologies for post-harvest processing and preservation of agricultural, forest and aquatic products to ensure food safety among food producers, processors and traders;

- Establishing, applying and exploiting a network of information, propaganda and community education about food hygiene and safety and prevention and control of animal and plant diseases.

d/ Expansion of markets for agricultural, forest and aquatic products

- Surveying markets and studying technical regulations of foreign countries in order to raise the processing rate and the value of agricultural, forest and aquatic products, fresh food products or food products processed for export;

- Formulating a trade promotion assistance program compliant with WTO regulations (the

Agreement on Agriculture);

- Improving enterprises' awareness about the implementation of commitments in the SPS Agreement, the observance of SPS regulations of Vietnam's foreign trade partners and methods of settlement of SPS-related trade issues;

- Building integrated supply chain models for a number of export agricultural products according to internationally accredited technical processes (GLOBAL GAP, trade fairness and internationally accredited private certification standards).

2. Solutions for fulfilling the obligations under the WTO/SPS Agreement

a/ Ensuring scientificity

- Establishing systems to control risks of food contamination and food-borne diseases. Anticipating and forecasting the possibility of contamination of major food products for each year. Consolidating the system of information, propaganda and reporting on food poisonings and food-borne diseases;

- Establishing a national system for quick warning of food hygiene and safety connected to the food hygiene and safety quick warning systems of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU);

- Establishing a network and organizing a national program for anticipation and forecast of animal and plant diseases and pests and propose appropriate prevention and control measures to minimize production damage, which are based on ecological and geographical conditions and prioritize some key plants and animals;

- Formulating programs to prevent the entry of Infectious Hypodermal and Hematopoietic Necrosis Virus (IHHNV), Taura Syndrome Virus (TSV) and Necrotizing Hepatopancreatitis Bacterium (NHPB) on shrimps, and completely eradicate viruses causing white spot syndrome and yellow head disease on shrimps and red spot syndrome on catfishes;

- Conducting capacity building training for personnel engaged in the diagnosis, inspection and control of food hygiene and safety, analysis and diagnosis of animal and plant diseases; raising the capacity of equipment and personnel of regional animal and plant quarantine stations, and at seaports, airports and border gates;

- Studying approaches to post-harvest processing of vegetables and fruits for export in conformity with the SPS Agreement.

b/ Establishing and harmonizing Vietnam's food hygiene and safety and sanitary and phytosanitary standards with those of the CODEX Alimentarius (CODEX), the International Office of Epizootics (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

- Revising existing food standards and promulgating new ones conformable to the standards, instructions and recommendations of the CODEX. Identifying resources for active participation in activities of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission;

- Revising existing standards and technical regulations on sanitary measures (for terrestrial, amphibious and aquatic animals) and promulgating new ones conformable to CODEX and OIE standards, instructions and recommendations and

the OIE. Identifying resources for active participation in activities of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission;

- Revising existing standards and technical regulations on phytosanitary measures and elaborating and promulgating new ones conformable to IPPC standards, instructions and recommendations; identifying resources for active participation in IPPC activities.

- Elaborating a scheme on "single standard" for products for export or domestic consumption.

c/ Ensuring equivalence

- Assessing the actual conditions of, upgrading and building key branch testing laboratories under ISO/IEC 17025 standard. Ministries shall propose projects on building or upgrading specialized testing laboratories to the Prime Minister for approval;

- Drafting a regulation on assessment and recognition of equivalence of Vietnam's SPS measures to those of other WTO members in the region and the world;

- Negotiating for the formulation of bilateral agreements on inspection, control and certification of food hygiene and safety and sanitary and phytosanitary measures;

- Elaborating and promulgating a regulation on management of domestic and foreign organizations conducting inspection, control and certification of food hygiene and safety standards;

- Organizing the application of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Animal Husbandry Practice (GAHP) and Good Farming Practices (GFPs), Good Manufacturing Practice

(GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), all on the principle of control of product quality from farms to dining tables;

- Providing training in the management of production and supply of cattle and poultry meat to meet the food hygiene and safety requirements of developed countries;

- Providing training in the management of production and supply of fishery and aquatic products to meet the food hygiene and safety requirements of developed countries;

- Providing training in the application of processes of production and supply of fresh vegetables and fruits to meet the food hygiene and safety requirements of developed countries;

- Heightening the role of commodity associations in elaborating and enforcing separate standards, inspecting and controlling the application of standards in order to ensure food quality, hygiene and safety;

- Promoting operations of agricultural cooperatives, cooperative groups and organizations of farmers in making farmers aware of the production of safe and high-quality foods and, at the same time, strengthening the link between producers and trading or processing establishments in order to stabilize product prices on the basis of covering production costs, bringing about profits to farmers and satisfying increasing market demand.

d/ Analysis of epidemic and disease risks

- Analyzing and assessing risks from imports, applying internationally accredited standard methods to diagnose and identify food

contamination risks caused by chemicals and microorganisms;

- Formulating a program on analysis and assessment of food contamination risks. Conducting capacity building training for analysts and assessors of biological, chemical and microbiological contamination of foods;

- Formulating a program on analysis and assessment of risks of aquatic product epidemics and diseases. Conducting capacity building training for analysts and assessors of risks of aquatic product epidemics and diseases;

- Formulating a program on analysis and assessment of risks of animal epidemics and diseases. Conducting capacity building training for analysts and assessors of risks of animal epidemics and diseases;

- Formulating a program on analysis and assessment of risks of plant pests and diseases. Conducting capacity building training for analysts and assessors of risks of plant pests and diseases;

- Raising the capacity to assess and control plant pests and diseases toward minimizing adverse impacts on the environment and human health;

- Formulating a national key program to accelerate research and production of vaccines against animal diseases (hypotoxic vaccines and recombinant vaccines) and biological preparations for plant protection activities (useful viruses, bacteria, fungi, insects, etc.);

- Formulating a program on analysis of epidemic and disease risks from imported industrial plant varieties, animal breeds and

microorganism strains;

- Raising the capacity of management agencies and the awareness of managerial personnel through risk assessment before formulating appropriate policies on risk management;

- Establishing a system specializing in the assessment of viruses and bacteria causing food contamination and animal diseases, and working out plans on cooperation with foreign assessment centers;

- Conducting training to raise the capacity of diagnosis and assessment of insects, weeds, plant and animal diseases, focusing on the application of quick and modern diagnosis techniques;

- Compiling training materials and introducing training in risk analysis and assessment for food hygiene and safety, animal health and plant protection into the teaching programs of specialized universities;

- Restoring and building museums of specimens of weeds, pests and diseases on animals and plants at specialized research institutions to serve their research and training activities;

- In emergency circumstances and with a view to minimizing bad human health and socio-economic effects, functional management agencies shall set up taskforce teams (with the participation of the Vietnam SPS Office) to assist the analysis and assessment of risks of spread of chemicals, microorganisms, bio-toxins and products of genetically modified plants in order to devise SPS measures;

- Studying and proposing taxes or fees on plant protection drugs in order to partially cover healthcare and environmental protection expenses

incurred due to the use of these drugs;

- Researching and applying new technologies to the inspection and assessment of food contamination levels;

- Compiling training materials and introducing training of specialized food hygiene and safety inspectors into tertiary education programs;

- Enhancing the management capacity of national assessment laboratories and assessment centers of specialized research institutes;

- Informing management agencies at all levels of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Animal Husbandry Practice (GAHP) and Good Farming Practices (GFPs) in order to raise their inspection, surveillance and certification capacity;

- Building the Center for assessment of risks of plant epidemics and diseases into a general training center to assist the protection of plant health;

- Conducting risk analyses and feasibility studies in order to establish disease-free areas which are free of some typical pests and diseases in cultivation, husbandry and aquaculture;

- Raising the capacity to analyze and assess risks of genetically modified plants in order to effectively control genetically modified plants and their products in Vietnam;

- Furnishing modern diagnosis equipment (high-definition image systems) that can transmit images of pests and diseases through the Internet between domestic central laboratories and quarantine centers;

- Expanding and consolidating the proactive surveillance system already established in some provinces and concurrently integrating this system

with the operating infectious disease surveillance system. This surveillance system should be expanded to all provinces and cities after organizing investigation skills training for surveillance officers;

- Formulating a program on analysis of disease risks, safety and hygiene of animal feed.

e/ Adaptation to regional conditions

- Supervising and establishing areas free of aquatic product diseases, and supervising animal health and plant protection activities;

- Establishing appropriate disease-free areas and areas of low pest or disease prevalence up to international standards as alternatives to post-harvest treating methods;

- Establishing and maintaining a network for emergency response to food poisonings, human diseases, plant pests and animal diseases;

- Formulating a strategy on vaccination against serious animal diseases, such as foot-and-mouth disease, classical pig cholera, pig blue-ear disease and bird flu.

f/ Transparency

- Building the capacity of the Vietnam SPS Office and technical assistance points at ministries and branches;

- Developing a database on Vietnam's SPS measures and uploading it on the SPS portal in Vietnamese and English;

- Working out plans on and actively participating in conferences, workshops, formal and informal meetings on SPS transparency held by the WTO/SPS Committee.

g/ Control, inspection and approval procedures

- Formulating a mechanism for management and surveillance of risks of food contamination, plant pests and animal diseases based on international standards approved by relevant parties;

- Elaborating a general regulation on control, inspection and certification of food hygiene and safety and sanitary and phytosanitary measures;

- Formulating a mechanism for management of imported and exported agricultural products and foods on the principle of mutual recognition;

- Conducting analysis of risks and possibility of cross-border transmission of diseases, and formulating a mechanism for disease control cooperation with other countries, especially bordering countries.

3. Funds for implementation

The Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry shall, in pursuance to the State Budget Law, coordinate with the Planning and Investment Ministry and the Finance Ministry in working out plans and funding estimates for the implementation of the National Action Plan for acceleration of the implementation of commitments under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in performing the WTO member obligations.

Funds for performing activities set forth in this Action Plan will come from the state budget source for capital construction, investments in scientific and technological equipment and facilities, funds for annual regular operations of ministries and branches, and financial assistance of international organizations and donors through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, investment,

non-refundable aid and technical assistance projects.

Article 2.- Organization of implementation

1. Based on the major contents of the Action Plan and the functions and tasks of their respective ministries or branches, concerned ministers shall personally direct and assign tasks to their relevant functional units to concretize activities set forth in the Action Program and allocate annual funds for implementation. For activities not required to be carried out under schemes, programs or projects, they should be immediately carried out to meet practical needs and ensure the effective fulfillment of commitments.

2. The Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development; Health; Industry and Trade; and Science and Technology shall, on the basis of their functions and assigned tasks, monitor and urge the implementation of the Action Plan and periodically report it to the Prime Minister so as to ensure that the contents and solutions specified in the Action Plan are materialized in a coordinated and effective manner.

Article 3.- This Decision takes effect 15 days after its publication in “CONG BAO.”

Article 4.- Ministers, heads of ministerial-level agencies, heads of government-attached agencies, and presidents of provincial/municipal People’s Committees shall implement this Decision.

Prime Minister
NGUYEN TAN DUNG