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Member Update

Title: International Workshop Agreement (IWA) on Grain Sampling

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Distribution

- NACMA Members – primary contact list. Please circulate to all appropriate internal parties

Background

An International Workshop was held on 14-16 May 2008 in Seattle to “develop a rational sampling protocol for commodities (cereals, grains, oilseeds, feeds) that are traded in bulk and may be handled in a continuously flowing stream”.

Under ISO, there are a number of standards for sampling of cereals, oilseeds, feeds and meals, of which many are currently under review. Additionally there are other standards used in trade that were developed by Codex Alimentarius, GAFTA, FOSFA, ISTA, National governments, inspection companies and exporters/importers.

Invitations were sent to all international parties involved in standards setting with a view to developing a set of common factors in sampling plans. These principles could be used to revise the existing standards.

The NACMA Standards committee developed a position on sampling and was represented at the IWA by Gerard McMullen.

Outcomes of the Workshop

Discussion occurred on a range of industry needs including:

- A desire to have a common sampling procedure for all commodities, applied at both export and import.
- Sampling plans must be practical and able to be implemented without unwarranted cost to industry.
- Sampling plans must assume no product is homogenous and levels of uncertainty must be considered when developing proposed sampling rates.
- Sampling plans must be based on scientific rigour.
- The IWA agreed to develop sampling plans for moving and static bulks of varying size. Container and bag shipments will be included.
- Sampling plans are to be recommended rather than mandated, to reflect the right of each country to introduce their own legislation .
- While the minimum number of sample increments per lot should not vary, the lot size should increase with the increasing size of consignments.
- Manual sampling may require a different number of increments per lot compared with automatic sampling.
- Varying sample sizes are to be nominated where samples are to be sent to a laboratory depending on the analysis required.
- While there is a strong desire for increased sampling rates and sample sizes for GM commodities and to determine mycotoxin content of a consignment, having different protocols for one consignment are often impracticable to implement. Additionally there does not appear to be a basis for a higher rate of sampling for GM products.

- A reference document will be produced to provide data to support the various sampling protocols in the IWA.

Action from Here

- A first draft of the sampling plan is being finalised following receipt of comments from countries that did not attend the workshop.
- A second draft is expected to be distributed to NACMA for comment in August.
- A final draft will be developed in September. A follow-up meeting may be required depending on stakeholder feedback.
- Following further editing, the final draft is expected to be published by ISO as an IWA.
- Organisations with existing standards will be encouraged to review their own standards using principles outlined in the IWA.

NACMA Input and Consultation with Industry

- NACMA will continue to provide input on the IWA until it is finalised through liaison with the NACMA Standards committee.
- Where required, wider industry input will be sought.
- NACMA will review existing Australian sampling standards and consider any impacts of the IWA.
- NACMA will pursue the need to progress a more formal consultation in Australia on such matters with relevant standards bodies such as Standards Australia.

Further information

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