

1. New Standards in EU, US to hurt Vietnamese Pepper

Vietnamese pepper farmers could lose significant market share if new quality control measures in Europe and the United States take effect.

The European Union (EU) is currently considering lowering residual limits on Metalaxyl—a common fungicide. The new measure would lower the limit to 0.05 parts per million (from 0.1 ppm) according to the Vietnam Pepper Association (VPA). A recent report from the European Spice Association showed that in 2016, only 17 percent of nearly 800 Vietnamese pepper samples met the new standard. The EU consumes around 40,000 tonnes of Vietnamese pepper per year, about 23 percent of the country's annual export.



The overall picture may prove gloomier as the US weighs new requirements on agricultural imports, including Vietnamese pepper, according to the VPA, which has warned farmers to shift focus from quantity to quality.

Vietnamese farmers often use excessive amounts of fertilisers and pesticides to boost productivity, weakening the natural resistance of pepper trees. As the trees grow more vulnerable to pests, farmers apply higher doses of chemicals. “Only when farmers change their habits will the quality of Vietnamese pepper improve. Then, the industry will develop on a sustainable path,” the VPA said in a press release.

In 2016, Vietnam sold a record 177,000 tonnes of pepper abroad, netting US\$1.4bn and representing an on-year jump of 34.3 percent in volume and 12.9 percent in value. As global demand for pepper is expected to rise in 2017, the trade ministry has set a 13-percent growth target for the industry, which hopes to draw US\$1.6mn from foreign markets.

<http://e.vnexpress.net/news/business/new-standards-in-eu-us-could-hurt-vietnamese-pepper-3538857.html>

2. Chinese Legislators to Review Standardisation Law

Chinese lawmakers on April 24, 2017 started to review a draft amendment to the Standardisation Law. The draft revision, the first since the law came into force in 1989, was given a first reading at the bimonthly session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.



The draft expands the scope of standards to cover sectors, including agriculture, industry, services and social programmes. Current standards only cover industrial products, construction and environmental protection.

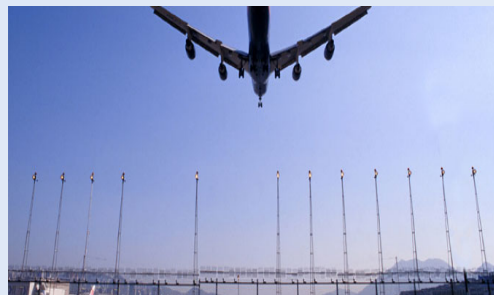
The draft focuses on the technical requirements of health and safety, national and ecological security, as well as the basic need to manage society and the economy. It calls for a coordination mechanism under the State Council, China's cabinet, to draw up major policies and promote key reforms in standardisation.

China will participate in formulation and use of international standards in accordance with the country's actual situation, it said. The government authorities should review and assess standards on a regular basis, the draft noted, adding that information on mandatory standards should be freely available to the public.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/24/c_136232602.htm

3. Airbus-Boeing Support New Standards for GADSS

During the opening joint session of the 2017 Airlines Electronic Engineering Committee (AEEC) and Avionics Maintenance Committee (AMC) general session, representatives from the world's two biggest commercial airplane manufacturers, Airbus and Boeing, provided an overview of the work they feel is necessary to standardise onboard aircraft hardware necessary to support the International Civil Aviation Org.'s (ICAO) initiative to improve global aircraft flight tracking.



In March 2016, on the two-year anniversary of the Malaysia Airlines MH370 incident, the ICAO approved new provisions as amendments to Annex 6 of the Chicago Convention. These provisions include three new amendments that the ICAO will adopt to Annex 6 by 2021, designed to enable commercial airline flight operations to support its concept of the standards and recommended practices to address this Global Aeronautical Distress Safety System (GADSS) concept of operations. While presenting Boeing's perspective of the provisions, Charles Adler, a senior avionics engineer at Boeing, outlined the ICAO provisions as the following:

1. Commercial airliners should be equipped with a 90-day low frequency underwater locator device by January 2018. So far, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is the only civil aviation regulator with a mandate for this type of equipage, which Adler noted would have the biggest airline impact.
2. By November 2018, when aircraft are in normal flight conditions, operators should have the ability to track them every 15 minutes, with optional abnormal event tracking capability. According to Adler, several states have already introduced new requirements around this provision, including India, Malaysia, China and Singapore. EASA has 2018 applicability for this provision as well.
3. By 2021, new-production airframes should be equipped with the ability to produce position reports once per minute when under abnormal flight conditions, independent of aircraft power and not isolatable. This capability has remote activation capability.
4. By 2021, new aircraft type designs should feature timely recovery of flight data, which could potentially occur in the form of automatic deployable flight recorders, or flight-data streaming.

<http://www.aviationtoday.com/2017/05/01/airbus-boeing-support-new-standards-gadds/>

4. ISO Preps Blockchain Standards

Blockchain technology holds immense promise to revolutionise financial transactions – and with it, improves a whole host of things from financial inclusion to efficiencies in government, health and all areas of business.



A new ISO technical committee promises to take it to the next level, having now defined areas for future standardisation work.

The inaugural meeting of ISO TC 307 Blockchain and electronic distributed ledger technologies recently held in Sydney, Australia, brought together international experts from over 30 countries to set the future course of standardisation in this area, forming five key study groups for standard development: reference architecture, taxonomy and ontology, use cases, security and privacy, identity and smart contracts.

Blockchain is a shared, immutable ledger that can record transactions across different industries, thus enhancing transparency and reducing transaction costs. It is a digital platform that records and verifies transactions in a transparent and secure way, removing the need for middlemen and increasing trust through its highly transparent nature.

<https://www.finextra.com/pressarticle/69411/iso-preps-blockchain-standards>

5. Canadian Standard to Improve Consumer Product Safety

The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) recently announced the publication of a new National Adoption of Canada that provides practical guidance to suppliers on assessing and managing consumer product safety, including effective documentation of risk assessment and risk management



SCC collaborated with UL to facilitate the adoption of ISO 10377, Consumer product safety – Guidelines for suppliers, which was published under the National Adoption of Canada process as CAN/UL 10377. The standard is expected to support Health Canada’s efforts to encourage effective systems within Canada – particularly within small- and medium-sized enterprises – that identify, prevent or respond to real or potential dangers to human health or safety associated with consumer products.

Through the adoption process, UL Standards piloted a virtual standards development approach that included outreach to potential participants through social media to identify Canadian national differences, and conducted the ballot, public review, and comment resolution stages of the adoption process virtually.

Online platforms and virtual communication optimised openness and transparency throughout the consensus process in line with SCC standards development requirements for a National Adoption of Canada.

<http://www.hpacmag.com/heating-plumbing-air-conditioning-general/new-canadian-standard-strengthens-consumer-product-safety/1004108723/>

6. Women Key to Standards in Society

Director-General, Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Osita Aboloma, said women as “engines of small and medium businesses”, were key to standardisation in the country.

He said the role of standards in the promotion of women rights could be viewed from the context of the influence of standards on economic growth, productivity and elimination of poverty. The world had



become a global village and that standards played major role in ensuring product acceptability and breaking of barriers to trade. And there was need to inculcate in women the culture of standardisation as a way to drive the reform of the present administration in the country.

Aboloma said that SON would soon commence certification of services offered by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), including barbing, tailoring, masonry, cobbling, events management, automobile maintenance and repairs services, car washing and carpentry.

He said that the aim of the certification was to improve the quality of services rendered by practitioners to satisfy the needs of consumers, create orderliness and enhance competitiveness that would promote continual improvement.

The promotion of opportunities that build women’s capacities to be competitive in the continent is significant to the recognition of the rights of women.

<http://www.nan.ng/news/women-key-to-standards-in-society-son/>

7. Exporters, Importers Face Non-Tariff Hurdles

Nearly three out of four Philippine exporters and importers continue to reel from non-tariff measures (NTMs), which have largely hampered their capability to further expand their operations in strategic markets abroad.

The incidence of companies suffering from such challenges was reportedly one of the highest rates seen by the International Trade Centre (ITC), compared to the other surveys that it had also conducted in the region.

According to the ITC, it polled 1,150 local companies, of which about three-fourths reported that they continued to face difficulties in complying with foreign technical requirements and conformity assessment procedures, such as fumigation and labelling regulations or product certification and testing, which were often stricter in the developed countries to which they were exporting.



The agency also reported that “Filipino exporters experience NTMs related to rules of origin for which the delivery of related certificates often generates unnecessary costs and delays in domestic institutions.”

“Another difficulty faced by exporters is national export-clearance processes, which occur in local administrations, and mainly concern high fees and administrative burdens. Interviewed companies mentioned 50 public and private institutions involved in NTM-related procedures, suggesting a heavy administrative cost of compliance,” the ITC disclosed.

<http://business.inquirer.net/211732/75-of-ph-exporters-importers-face-non-tariff-hurdles>

8. Vietnam Eyes More Fruit Exports to Japan

A report from the Ministry of Industry and Trade's Export and Import Department showed that Vietnam earned US\$1.46bn from exporting agricultural products and seafood to Japan last year, a year-on-year increase of 6.6 percent. Of these, vegetables and fruits were valued at US\$75.1mn, up 1.5 percent.

The Department said the implementation of Vietnam-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement had opened a great opportunity for Vietnamese exports to enter this market, in which agricultural products and seafood had been given tariff preferences.

However, Japan is a market that demands high food hygiene and safety and implements many measures, as well as technical barriers to import agricultural products.

Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade (MoIT) Tran Quoc Khanh said Japan's standards of quality and food safety was almost equivalent to or even higher than normal international standards.

Khanh said what's important was that those standards were in line with the WTO's principles — it meant there was no discriminatory treatment between domestic goods and import products. All Vietnamese vegetables and fruits for export would have to undergo adjustment on import tax, as well as hygiene measures.



Technical standards

To push up trade, the Japanese government still cooperates with the Vietnamese government in raising the capacity to meet Japan's quality standards for import products.

MoIT said the implementation of the pilot project for self-certification of the origin of goods within ASEAN was a general trend in the current negotiations of free trade agreements, contributing to helping businesses minimise the waiting time for certificate of origin and creating conditions for trade and export of goods, not only for vegetables and fruit, but also other products.

The Ministry was pushing for reform in administrative procedures by issuing certification of goods through internet to help exporters save time.

<http://english.vov.vn/economy/vietnam-eyes-more-fruit-exports-to-japan-351113.vov>