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MEMORANDUM ORDER

No. 103
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SUBJECT: **Revised Protocol for the Export of Fresh Okra to Japan**

In view of the need to enhance the quality and safety of the Philippine fresh okra and to ensure its acceptance to Japan, a revised Philippines' Protocol for the Export of Fresh Okra to Japan is hereby issued for the guidance and strict compliance of all concerned.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

1. Assurance of the quality and safety of fresh okra produce for export to Japan requires a combine effort of everyone in the supply chain. This requires a comprehensive and integrated approach in which the producer, processor/exporter, transporter, and importer/distributor all play a vital role in ensuring the safety and quality of fresh okra.

Thus, the objective of reduced risk due to pesticide detections and contamination can be achieved most effectively by the principle of prevention throughout the production, processing and marketing chain. To achieve maximum consumer protection, it is essential that safety should be built into fresh okra products from production through to consumption.

For this purpose, an Accreditation Screening Committee (ASC) is created composed of BPI Personnel and Private Sector with the BPI-PQS Chief as Chairperson. The ASC shall act as recommendatory body to the BPI Director for the purpose of okra export accreditation.

2. At the farm level, fresh okra growers/farmers and workers must control pesticide and other chemical inputs and recognize potential sources of microbial contaminants from water, soil, animals and humans.

3. The fresh okra processors/exporters must assess where safety and hygiene may be jeopardized at critical points in processing, storage and transport to Japan and take appropriate measures to control these potential hazards. For the purpose, the policies on the Management & Use of Pesticides/Chemicals for okra production as promulgated by the Philippine Okra Producers & Exporters Association (POPEA), is adopted (Attachment A & B)
4. The enforcement of Plant Quarantine requirements on fresh okra for Japan shall be in accordance with the Plant Quarantine Law of the Philippines and regulations under the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority of the Philippines.

ACCREDITATION OF EXPORTERS AND FARMERS/GROWERS

- All exporters, growers and grower-exporters shall enlist for accreditation of their farms and designated packing stations at least sixty (60) days prior to start of the first export shipment.
- List should specify the name of farmer/grower, farm area/size covered (in hectares), and the specific location of the farms and estimated harvest of each listed farm per hectare per day.
- BPI-PQS shall assign code for each accredited farmer and each farm, which shall be reflected in the final cartons for export.

1. MONITORING OF PESTICIDE RESIDUE

- 1.1. Fresh Okra sample shall be randomly collected upon arrival at the packing facility by the BPI Personnel.
- 1.2. The BPI Pesticide Analytical Laboratory established by JICA shall immediately subject okra samples collected to pesticide residue analysis.
- 1.3. To ensure proper use and application of pesticides and insecticides in okra production, a person or persons designated by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) in close coordination with the Local Government Unit (LGU-represented by the Provincial Agricultural Officer), Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and Philippine Okra Producers and Exporters Association (POPEA) shall conduct random inspection of the accredited okra farms on a regular basis.
- 1.4. The inspecting Person(s) shall ensure that okra produced for export to Japan are within the Maximum Residue Limits required by the Food Safety Department of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan

- 1.5. The Provincial Agricultural Officer assigned in the region where the okra production areas are situated shall assist the inspecting person(s) who shall submit reports on the result of each inspection to the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) and Philippine Okra Producers and Exporters Association (POPEA).

2. PACKING AND QUARANTINE INSPECTION

- 2.1. A BPI Plant Quarantine Officer shall be assigned to supervise the whole packing process at the designated packing area.
- 2.2. All fresh okra obtained from the accredited grower/farmer shall be randomly collected with samples for Plant Quarantine inspection while sorting and packing.
- 2.3. An Individual Farm Harvest Form (Annex 5) should be accomplished by the accredited farmer/grower. This should be submitted to the packing facility together with the fresh okra subject to sorting and packing.
- 2.4. The BPI- PQ Inspector shall verify and record all the fresh okra received by each packing facility, likewise a summary report form (Annex 6) should be accomplished.
- 2.5. The BPI Plant Quarantine Officer shall carry out inspection of five percent (5%) of the total cartons packed.
- 2.6. All okra fruits found infested with pest shall be rejected and will not be allowed for packing.
- 2.7. BPI - Plant Quarantine Officer shall verify that all cartons bear the code of exporter and farmer/s. The final inspection report (Annex 7) will be accomplished as the basis for the issuance of the Phytosanitary Certificate.
- 2.8. Any farmer/grower found to exceed the maximum estimated harvest per hectare per day would not be issued Phytosanitary Certificate. The same farmer shall be requested to explain within twenty-four (24) hours, the reasons for the increase in harvest.

3. Phytosanitary Certification

Upon completion of the inspection and verification of all packed okra, a Phytosanitary Certificate will be issued.

GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION OF OKRA EXPORTERS AND FARMERS/GROWERS FOR JAPAN

I. EXPORTERS

REQUIREMENTS

1. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Registration or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Business Permit/Name, whichever is applicable.
2. Accomplish Application Form (Annex 1)
3. Latest Mayor's Permit from where the business is located.
4. Two copies of 2 x 2 photo of the owner or representative. Representative must have duly signed and notarized authorization letter or board resolution.
5. The exporter must not have any violation of all existing regulations of the Philippines and of the country of destination for three (3) consecutive years prior to accreditation.
6. Certification under oath and duly notarized indicating/containing the following:
 - 6.1 List of Personnel directly involved on the okra export, their qualifications and training certificate on proper pesticide usage for those personnel directly involved on farm production.
 - 6.2 Farm Manager and Spraying Team which will directly supervise the registered farms of the exporter's accredited farmers
 - 6.3 Pesticide Management Manual recommended by BPI-NPAL (Bureau of Plant Industry – National Pesticide and Analytical Laboratory)
 - 6.4 Packing Facility - Each Exporter should have their own designated packing facility to avoid conflicts. However, sharing of packing facility will be allowed only if there is no commingling of okra fruits or other materials (packaging/label etc.) and must be clearly identifiable to the authorized exporter/grower.
 - 6.5 Exclusive use of authorized crates/ plant equipment/implements (Exporters must not accept A-1 plastic crates or any other containers from growers which are not issued by them).

PROCEDURES

1. All interested exporters of fresh okra should go to the Bureau of Plant Industry-National Pesticide Analytical Laboratory (BPI-NPAL) for the evaluation of their Pesticide Management Manual.
2. After the approval and recommendation of BPI-NPAL. The applicant must file application for accreditation as exporter to the ASC and submit all the requirements.
3. The ASC will inform the exporters in writing or by telephone the schedule of interview of the exporter or representative. The exporter will also be notified to bring all the original copies of the documents for authentication during the interview. During the interview the exporter will be informed of the following information:
 - Plant Quarantine Law, rules and regulations
 - Protocol for the export of fresh okra and the requirements of Japan
 - Importance of the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) of pesticide on fresh okra
 - The need for an appropriate packing house
 - Accreditation of fresh okra farm/farmers
4. Upon completion of the interview and completion of the requirements, the ASC will schedule an inspection of the packing facility to determine its compliance to the basic requirements on plant quarantine, food sanitation and safety.
5. After the inspection and approval of the packing facility, the ASC will recommend the exporter to the BPI-Director for accreditation.
6. Exporters are also required to keep a farm spraying record (Annex 8) for each accredited farmer and registered farm under their company, which will be regularly audited by BPI-NPAL.
7. All forms (Spraying Reports and Harvest Reports) should be properly recorded and documented by each exporter in coordination with their farmers, failure to do so will result to at least seven (7) day suspension and until the said documents are updated and found in order/acceptable to BPI-NPAL.

II. FARMERS/GROWERS

REQUIREMENTS

1. Two copies of 2 x 2 photo of the farmer/grower.
2. Certificate of Training on the proper usage of pesticide
3. Certified copy of Birth Certificate and or other identification such as drivers license, voters ID or PRC ID
4. Accomplished application form for accreditation (Annex 2)
5. Certification by Concerned Exporter under oath and duly notarized that the farmer/grower must not have any violation for three (3) consecutive years prior to accreditation.
6. Copy of the Exclusive Supply Contract/ Production and Marketing Agreement by and between the Grower and the Exporter. (The farmer/grower shall be under an exclusive supply contract with only one exporter. Cross supply, meaning a grower supplying several exporters, is absolutely not allowed.)
7. Each farmer/grower should be accredited by BPI-PQS and no sub-farmer will be allowed to export

PROCEDURES

1. Any farmer grower under direct supervision of the accredited exporter shall be endorsed to the ASC.
2. Each endorsed farmer/grower must successfully complete an orientation/training on good farm production practices and tips on proper chemical handling based on the approved/standard pesticide management manual.

III. FARM ENROLLMENT/REGISTRATION

REQUIREMENTS

1. The applicant should be an accredited farmer/grower of BPI-PQS
2. Accomplish Application Form (Annex 3)
3. Provide sketch map of the area applied for
4. Must pass the Farm Enrollment/Registration Criteria (refer to Annex 5)

PROCEDURES

1. Only accredited farmers can apply for farm registration to be endorsed by their exporter to the ASC
2. Every farm area of each accredited farmer/grower should be registered to BPI prior to planting
3. Evaluation and verification of the farm area will be conducted by the ASC.
4. After evaluation exporters will be required to provide a signage on the farm stating the name of the exporter, name of the farmer, the land area, date of planting, date of start of harvesting and last day of harvest for proper identification and for monitoring purposes.
5. Each area is required to have proper markings as boundaries from the adjacent farms.
6. An orientation will follow prior to the issuance of the farm registration.
7. No planting will be allowed for unregistered farm even if it was handled by an accredited farmer or exporter. Unregistered farm will not be allowed to be harvested for export.

IV. REVALIDATION OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation of the fresh okra farmers/growers and farms shall be revalidated every cropping season through the endorsement of the accredited exporters.

V. PENALTIES

1. Any accredited exporter and farmer who violates the Plant Quarantine Law, rules and regulations and this protocol will be delisted, as accredited exporter and its Certificate of Accreditation will be revoked.
2. Any farmer/grower whose fresh okra produce are detected by BPI-NPAL through the periodic and regular samplings exceeding the Japan MRL will be promptly banned/suspended.
3. Okra Export that has been detected to exceed Japan MRL at the Port of Entry will result to the immediate cancellation of the Exporter's accreditation to export and delisting of all of its registered Farmers.
4. Any Exporters found to be buying okra from unaccredited farm or suspended farmer/grower or from other farmer/growers who are not registered as the exporter's exclusive supplier will be suspended.

5. Any Exporter found to be using or accepting the use by their growers of A-1 crates, plastic containers or any other plant implements other than theirs will be suspended.

EFFECTIVITY

This Order supersedes all Orders inconsistent herewith and shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of issuance by the BPI Director and shall remain valid unless otherwise amended, revoked or superseded.


JOEL S. RUDINAS, CESO IV
Director 

Annex 1 Accreditation Form for Exporter
Annex 2 Accreditation Form for Farmer/Grower
Annex 3 Farm Registration
Annex 4 Criteria for farm registration
Annex 5 Individual Harvest Report
Annex 6 Summary of Received Okra
Annex 7 Final Inspection Report
Annex 8 Farm Spraying Report

September 5, 2008

POLICIES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF PESTICIDES/CHEMICALS FOR OKRA PRODUCTION

To ensure the quality and safety of all Philippine okra for export to Japan and comply with Japan's food safety law, rules and regulations, as well as, the Philippines' Plant Quarantine laws and regulations, all producers/exporters of okra have agreed to adopt the following policies on the management and application of pesticides/chemicals on okra production, thus, totally eliminate any incidence of pesticides/chemical detection:

1. Only recommended and approved pesticides and chemicals are allowed to be used in Fresh Okra production (Refer to LIST OF APPROVED CHEMICALS). The application of pesticides/chemicals shall be done only as necessary, meaning only during the occurrence of plant pests or disease infestation.
2. Pesticides/fungicides with maximum residue limits (MRLs) below 1.0 PPM shall only be used. For herbicides, only those with MRLs below 0.2 PPM shall be used. Each brand of chemicals must be properly registered with the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (i.e. with FPA Registration No. for each brand).
3. The use of CHLORPYRIFOS, FLUAZIFOP, METAMIDOPHOS, TEBUFENOZIDE AND DIFENOCONAZOLE is absolutely and totally not allowed.
4. To closely monitor and ensure the quality of the pesticides/chemicals, POPEA shall screen and accredit the suppliers of these pesticides/chemicals. POPEA members shall only purchase from these accredited suppliers.
5. Only the authorized Spray Teams organized by each processor/exporter are allowed to facilitate application of pesticides/chemicals at any stage of Okra production. (A list of individual members of the authorized spray team shall be submitted to POPEA not later than 15 days prior to planting. All spray team members must be properly oriented and trained on the Okra Pesticides Management Manual and Policies prior to mobilization and deployment).
6. Only Power Mist Blowers are allowed for use during harvesting stage. Manual Knapsack Sprayers are used during vegetative stage.
7. Only the amount of pesticides/chemicals used as approved for the corresponding farm shall be charged to the farmer.
8. Okra farmer/grower must be at all times present during the pesticides/chemicals application.
9. Presence of any pesticides/chemicals in the farm which are not in the approved list is not allowed.
10. All pesticides/chemicals shall be properly labeled and stored in chemical storage cabinets allotted for each farm. Chemical storage cabinets shall be securely locked. Chemicals not used for okra production should not be found in the chemical storage cabinet.

11. All empty chemical containers shall be returned to the concerned processor/exporter for proper disposal.
12. Any violation of the abovementioned policies shall result in the termination of contract with the concerned processors/exporters and/or suspension.

Guiding Principles

In addition, the following guiding principles are adopted as basic code of conduct toward achieving the safety and quality of fresh okra:

1. Prevention of pesticides/chemical residues and microbial contamination of fresh okra is favored over reliance on corrective actions once contamination has occurred.
2. To have zero chemical detection and minimize microbial food safety hazards in fresh okra, farmers/growers, processors/exporter should use good agricultural and management practices in those areas over which they have control.
3. During processing, fresh okra can become microbiologically contaminated at any point along the farm-to-table food chain. The major source of microbial contamination with fresh okra is associated with human or animal feces.
4. Whenever water comes in contact with produce, its source and quality dictates the potential for contamination. Minimize the potential of microbial contamination from water used with fresh okra.
5. Practices using animal manure or municipal biosolid wastes should be managed closely to minimize the potential for microbial contamination of fresh okra.
6. Worker hygiene and sanitation practices during production, harvesting, sorting, packing, and transport play a critical role in minimizing the potential for microbial contamination of fresh produce.
7. Strictly follow all applicable local and national laws and regulations, or corresponding or similar laws, regulations, or standards for agricultural practices.
8. Accountability at all levels of the agricultural environment (farm, packing facility, distribution center, and transport operation) is important to a successful food safety program. There must be qualified personnel and effective monitoring to ensure that all elements of the program function correctly and to help track produce back through the distribution channels to the producer.

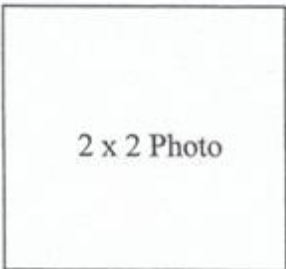
POLICIES TO BE OBSERVED BY SPRAY TEAMS

All okra producers/exporters shall organized and maintain specialized and dedicated spray teams to ensure the control and proper application of pesticides/chemicals.

1. Always wear appropriate personal protective gears and equipment.
2. Always wear proper prescribed uniform.
3. Be courteous and honest in performing the task.
4. Always be on time.
5. Never spray pesticides/chemicals without the approval of the okra farmer/grower.
6. Strictly follow the pesticide/chemical application policy.
7. Follow the recommended dosage indicated in the working instruction given by the Technician.
8. Never mix pesticides/chemicals during spraying without proper approval from the Technician.
9. Always keep and maintain the spray record of each farm (in-placed, safe and complete).
10. Always properly account the pesticides/chemicals actually applied/used in each farm. (Brand/generic name, quantity, application rate, dosage, etc.)
11. Always retrieve and return all empty containers of pesticides/chemicals used for proper disposal.

ANNEXES

**Application Form
ACCREDITATION FOR OKRA EXPORTERS**



NAME: _____ AGE: _____ SEX: _____

ADDRESS: _____

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN OKRA EXPORT INDUSTRY: _____

Have you undergone training on proper okra production? YES: _____ NO: _____

I promise to abide by the protocol, rules and regulations governing the okra export to Japan.

Signature

Printed Name

Date: _____

Declared Estimated Shipments Per Season

Peak Season: _____

Off Season: _____

Additional Requirements:

- SEC Registration or DTI
- Mayor's Permit
- Pesticide Management Manual
- Packing Facility
- Accredited Okra Farmers

Republic of the Philippines
Bureau of Plant Industry
Application Form
ACCREDITATION FOR OKRA FARMER/GROWER

2 x 2 Photo

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ SEX: _____

ADDRESS: _____

FARM AREA: _____

FARM LOCATION: _____

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN OKRA EXPORT INDUSTRY: _____

Have you undergone training on proper okra production? YES: _____ NO: _____

Is there a okra farm adjacent to your farm? YES: _____ NO: _____

List of pesticides being used:

Name and Address of Your Exporter(s):

I promise to abide by the protocol, rules and regulations governing the okra export to Japan.

Signature

Printed Name

Date: _____

Declared Estimated Harvest Per Season

Peak Season: _____

Off Season: _____

Republic of the Philippines
Bureau of Plant Industry
Application Form
REGISTRATION FOR OKRA FARM

NAME OF FARMER:

FARMERS CODE:

NAME OF EXPORTER:

Planting patterns	Date of Planting	Farm Location (please attach sketch map)	No. of Has.	Crops planted on adjacent farms	Crops previously planted on the area (when?)	Estimated harvest
1 st planting						
2 nd Planting						
3 rd Planting						

I promise to abide by the protocol, rules and regulations governing the okra export to Japan. And strictly follow my Exporter's Pesticide Management Manual.

Signature

Printed Name

CRITERIA FOR FARM ENROLLMENT /REGISTRATION

Farmlands that are being applied for fresh okra plantations for export to Japan must pass the following criteria:

1. Identified fresh okra farms must be accessible and situated in the designated fresh okra production sites such as Tarlac, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, General Santos City and must be near existing fresh okra packing facility.
2. Okra farms must be suitable for okra production such as clay loam to sandy loam soil, adequately served with irrigation, free from soil-borne diseases and not located in a flood prone/low lying areas.
3. Okra farms, as much as possible, must not have immediate neighboring farms that are planted to other crops such as rice, corn, sorghum, mangoes etc. The distance from each boundary must at least be five (5) meters to avoid chemical contamination due to spraying. If this can not be avoided, the immediate neighboring owners/farmers planting other crops must be identified and registered. They must also be oriented on proper handling and usage of chemicals/pesticides.

