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Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform

NAPC

National Agricultural Policy Center

POLICY BRIEF No 26

European System Related to Good Agricultural Practice (EUREPGAP)

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1. Introduction

Standards and technical regulations are increasingly prominent part of the international trade policy debate. In particular, there is a wide range of different standards and regulations in the food sector like hygienic standards, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, or maximum levels related to the content of aflatoxin or pesticides.

A more comprehensive approach to standards is certification consisting of a number of different standards and regulations concerning food quality, environmental or social issues. Certification generally aims at providing consumers with better information about the characteristics and quality of food products, thus enhancing market transparency.

Many companies take for example the EUREPGAP standards as the baseline for doing business in the food sector. In addition, traceability has been added as a component to certification.

2. What is EUREPGAP?

EUREPGAP is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products around the world. It consists of an equal partnership of agricultural producers and retailers who want to establish certification standards and procedures for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), that is, pre-farm-gate-standards covering the process of the certified product from before the seed is planted until it leaves the farm.[1]

Once the product leaves the farm it goes under the control of other Codes of Conduct and certification schemes relevant to food packing and processing (in that way the whole chain is assured right through to the final consumer).

EUREPGAP sets a framework defining essential elements for the development of good agricultural practices (GAP) for the world production of chosen food products. EUREPGAP also provides a long-term, sustainable framework for agriculture and rural development in Europe and supports the principles of HACCP[2] and encourages its use. The first standard issued was EUREPGAP Fruit and Vegetable, which was harmonized with EUREPGAP IFA (Integrated Farms Assurance)[3], a modular standard covering c0mbinable crops and breeding.

[1] http://www.globalgap.org/cms/front_content.php?idcat=9
[2] Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
[3] IFA standard is divided into three Base Modules and five Sector Modules .

History of EUREPGAP Fruit and Vegetables

All the food chain operators – from the farm to the fork - need to improve their capability to compete in a very hard market, offering, first of all, confidence to the consumers about food safety and food quality.

To assure food safety and to control relevant environmental and social issues, the European group of representatives from all stages of the food chain in the fruit and vegetables sector, with the support of producer organizations outside the EU, originated the "EUREPGAP (Euro Retailer produce working group-Good Agriculture Practices) Fruit and Vegetables".

The Version 2 (January 2004) of the EUREPGAP Reference Standard Fruit and Vegetables has been unveiled at the fourth Conference "Towards Global Harmonization 2003", held in Madrid on 10-12 September 2003. The EUREPGAP TSC for Fruit and Vegetables has evaluated and approved the new versions of the normative documents for fruit and vegetables - the EUREPGAP General Regulations for Fruit and Vegetables, the Control Points and Compliance Criteria, and the Checklist. After the 1st of January 2005 only Version 2 certificate became valid.

The new version (V3.0-Mar07) of General Regulations shall only be used together with the new version of Control Points and Regulations and is valid from 1 March 2007. Certification against any valid previous version can take place until 31 December 2007, using the General Regulations and Control Points and Compliance Criteria of that specific version[4].

3. The Implementation of the Certification Standards

EUREPGAP is one of the very few globally operating standardization organizations that enjoy a high level of political and financial independence from the public sector as well as from individual member influence and shareholder agendas. To keep its independence EUREPGAP does not conduct the certification process itself. Farmers or farmer groups can only be certified against the EUREPGAP criteria by authorized Certification Bodies (CB). A EUREPGAP Certification Body is a company fulfilling the requirements for approved EUREPGAP CBs to grant EUREPGAP certification in the relevant product scope. Currently EUREPGAP is working with over 100 CBs in more than 70 countries.

4. The aims of EUREPGAP

The EUREPGAP standard is primarily designed to keep up consumer confidence in food quality and food safety. Other important goals are to minimize detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations and optimize the use of inputs and to ensure worker's health and safety.

5. The Good Agricultural Practices Standards Items

- Following up
- Documentation and internal review.
- Varieties and stocks for plantation.
- Website update and management.
- Soil management.
- Fertilizer application.
- Irrigation.

[4] http://www.eurepgap.org/Languages/English/index_html

- Crop protection.
- Harvesting.
- Post-harvest treatment.
- Lose and pollution management and reuse.
- Workers health and safety.
- Environmental issues.

6. Who are the EUREPGAP members and what is EUREPGAP STRUCTURE?

EUREPGAP members include: [5]

- Retailers and Foodservice organizations interested in supporting and developing EUREPGAP standards. Members can be nominated and elected to the Board or the Sector Committees.
- Producer and farmer are interested in showing more commitment to EUREPGAP than receiving certification, for the scopes of Crops and Livestock. Members can be nominated and elected to the Board or the Sector Committees.
- Associate members include Certification Bodies, Consulting companies, Plant protection or Fertilizer Industries, Universities, etc. and their associations. Members can be nominated and elected to the Certification Body Committee (the figure below show the EUREPGAP Board structure.

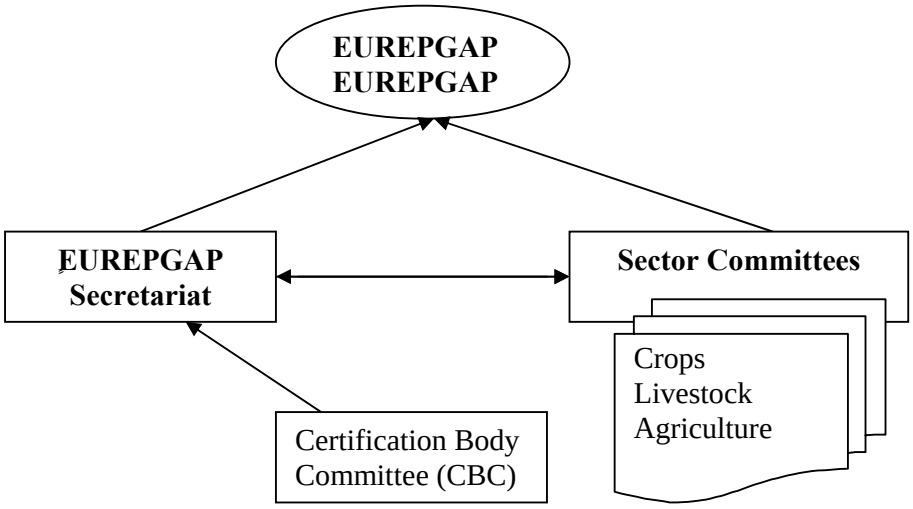
Governance

Governance [6](see the figure below is by the EUREPGAP Board, elected by the retailer and supplier members and is chaired by an independent chairman.

All members participate actively in the review phase and can comment on benchmarking proposals. Supplier members enjoy the right to vote on and send supplier representatives to Steering Committee and Technical and Standards Committee.

[5] http://www.eurepgap.org/Languages/English/index_html

[6] **http://www.globalgap.org/cms/front_content.php?idcat=15**



Committees

Besides the EUREPGAP Board and the EUREPGAP Secretariat, three other committees have a special importance for the conceptual development of EUREPGAP:

1. The Technical Standard Committee (TSC): In 2007 the TSC was replaced by the Sectors Committees (SCs), which elected by the retailer and supplier members.These sector committees work mainly on the technical side of the standard, and together with input from the Certification Body committee, develop and maintain the Control Points and Compliance Criteria.

2. The Certification Body committee (CBC) members are elected by their peers (Certification Bodies who are EUREPGAP members) . The main function of this committee is to discuss EUREPGAP implementation issues and provide feedback, as well as represent the CB activity within the EUREPGAP. The CBC works mostly independently from the SCs but is supported and facilitated by the EUREPGAP Secretariat. Any proposals for change that has been put forward by the CBC needs to be finally approved by the Sector Committees.

3. The National Technical Working Groups

National Technical Working Groups are established voluntarily by EUREPGAP members in a country where there is a need for clarification of implementation of EUREPGAP locally. The groups work in close cooperation with the EUREPGAP Secretariat and the TSC and support the EUREPGAP implementation and continuous improvement based on the specific interest area needs.

Committees working in each product sector have 50% retailer and 50% producer representation, thus creating an effective and efficient partnership in the supply chain.

7. What are the products covered by this standard

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) can be applied both to crop farms and wherever animals are reared. They are applied to:[7]

- Vegetable and fruit production

[7] http://www.standard-team.com/

- Flower and houseplant production (Ornamentals)
- Agricultural plant production
- Livestock and Combinable Crops
- Fish breeding
- Coffee shrub production (Green Cof.)

The most important requirements making the companies eligible for the EUREPGAP certification are laid down in three scheme documents:

- **The EUREGAP General Regulations** provides instructions on how the certificate can be applied, in addition to duties and rights of the EUREPGAP Secretariat, Certifiers and farmers applying for certification. Also, describes the requirements of the farmer Group Quality Management System.

- **EUREGAP Control Points and Compliance Criteria** (CPCC) is the standard which the farmer must comply with, and gives specific details on how the farmer comply with each of the scheme requirements.

- **The EUREGAP Checklist** which forms the basis the farmer must use to fulfill the annual internal audit requirements. It contains the control points, used for the self-inspection by the farmer and for inspecting and evaluating compliance.

The control points that the applicant is required to undertake in order to obtain recognition are divided into three types: Major Must, Minor Must and Recommendation activities. To obtain a EUREPGAP certificate the company has to meet 100% of the Major Must and 95% of the Minor Must requirements. Also, the companies need to undertake a residue analysis of their registered crops (immediately after the crop is harvested) and possible analysis of the irrigation and/ or washing water. For the first inspection visit, it is necessary to keep record since three months before the date of inspection.

If the farmers want to get what degree of their current farming system meets the EUREOGAP requirement, they can make a self-assessment with the official EUREPGAP Checklist. In addition, the Control Union Certification Skal International[8] can offer pre- scoping visit to farmers as an additional service to make sure that everything is settled before the first inspection (audit). This visit will give the farmers an opportunity to realize all insufficiencies before the inspection.

8. Why does one need a EUREPGAP system?[9]

- To Maintain consumer confidence in food quality and safety and to increase consumer's satisfaction
- To achieve minimum consumer requirements
- To minimize detrimental impact on the environment, whilst conserving nature and wildlife
- To assure long-term maintenance of agriculture
- To ensure a responsible attitude towards worker health and safety
- To obtain loyal customers

[8] Is an independent, international inspection and certification body and a member of the world EUREPGAPEUREPGAP network and officially approved EUREPGAPEUREPGAP certification body. It always has a branch office in the regions

[9] http://www.standard-team.com/

- To improve the efficiency of natural resource use; and
- To reduce the use of chemical products in agriculture.

9. **What factors led to the development of EUREPGAP**?

EUREPGAP was driven by the desire to reassure consumers. Following food safety scares such as BSE (mad cow disease), pesticide concerns and the rapid introduction of GM foods, consumers throughout the world are asking how food is produced and they need to be re-assured that food is both safe and sustainable. Food safety is a global issue and transcends international boundaries. Many EUREPGAP members are global players in the retail industry and obtain food products from around the world. For these reasons a need has arisen for a commonly recognized and applied reference standard of Good Agricultural Practice which has at its centre a consumer focus.

9 Suggestions

In the shade of mergence which Syrian economy witness with the global markets , this paper contributes in giving more attention to the products quality by:

- Making producers and retailers recognize the European standard requirements, so to be able to export to the EU especially after the Syrian and European Association Agreement will be in force.
- Raising awareness among consumers concerning the importance of applying such standards
- Organizing workshops for stakeholders to clarify the importance of standards existent in international markets and their effect on trade especially on agricultural trade.
- Adopting EUREPGAP standards for some important products to improve their quality and compliance with European standards.

Note:

In the conference was held in September, 2007 (Thailand) EUREEPGAP has announced changing its title and logo GLOBALGAP (Global Good Agricultural Practices).

The decision reflect expanding international role between multiple retailers and their suppliers and clarify far wider role at a time when both producer and retailers are operating on an international level across national boundaries.

Currently GLOBALGAP covers over 80000 certified producers in no less than 80 countries

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