

Country Report: Philippines
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1. General Information

The plant protection function in the Philippines is largely under the auspices of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI). Two (2) important divisions under BPI are undertaking the plant protection and plant quarantine. The BPI-Plant Quarantine Service has direct technical supervision over regional and provincial quarantine stations nationwide while the Crop Protection Division has collaborative arrangement with the Regional Field Units of the Department of Agriculture.

The BPI as the NPPO is the primary implementer of the SPS Agreement when it relates to plant health and pesticide residues. However, another agency is involved in the implementation of the international pesticide convention, which is the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA).

The BPI is currently undergoing various important programs and institutional strengthening which focuses on public image, efficiency and technical excellence to cope up with the challenges of economic globalization.

2. Plant Quarantine

The Plant Quarantine Law of the Philippines remains unchanged since its passage in 1978. Although various rules and regulations have been issued to suit the current conditions and also align with ISPMs approved by the IPPC. Philippines is one of the most IPPC and ISPM compliant country, it also makes use of the IPPC portal to upload new information or regulation.

To date there are two (2) pest free areas in the country and there is an ongoing national survey to establish the Philippines (except Palawan Islands) as mango pulp and seed weevil free area.

3. Surveillance, Pest Outbreaks and Invasive Species Management

The discovery of Hispine beetle (*Brontispa longissima* Gestro) in Coconut in 2005 led to the issuance of BPI Special Quarantine Order No. 3, series of 2005 to regulate the movement of coconut and other palm plants and some products, it also provided measures to prevent the spread. Despite the issuance of the regulation, the BPI encountered difficulty in controlling the pest.

4. Pest Management

The present national policy is for the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), however, the implementation is decentralized to the different local government units with the Department of Agriculture (including BPI) providing the direction. The IPM strategy is now coupled with massive training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to address the concern on food safety and environmental protection.

5. Pesticide Management

The Philippines pesticide registration system has been designed to ensure proper pesticide use through proper labeling with the end objective of protecting the applicator, public and the environment. As of December 2006, there are 227 active ingredients in 1,090 formulations registered for agriculture and household use.

At the moment, pesticide residue monitoring is done both for local and international market. There are current initiatives to strengthen further this area in anticipation of the increase in the volume of commodities that will need pesticide residue testing. In sum, pest management and pesticide management are directly complementary to achieve the end objective of controlling pests while protecting human and environment.

6. Additional Information and General Comments and Conclusion

The Philippines recognized that implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) with emphasis on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the only sustainable way of protecting crops, human health, and environment. Various strategies were already undertaken including the use of GM (e.g. BT Corn to reduce pesticide use) crops that passed through very stringent regulations prior to approval. GAP is also the main strategy now to ensure that Philippine products meet SPS requirements of importing countries.

On another front, being an archipelago with 7,107 islands, the Philippines has a huge task of protecting its borders from regulated pests that may be carried by the increasing volume of international trade. These are challenges the Philippines would willingly take.