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GLOBALGAP for Greater Market Access for Agrifood Products

Asian countries produce a wide range of agrifood products that have great potential in global food markets such as Germany and neighboring EU members. However, products from many developing countries cannot penetrate this huge potential market because of environmental, health, safety, and hygiene risks associated with current production systems. By January 2012, GLOBALGAP implementation will become mandatory for those producers of crops, livestock, and aquaculture targeting the wholesale/super food markets of EU countries. Implementation of good agricultural practice (GAP) protocols therefore will be critical in gaining access for agrifood products to German and other EU markets.



Udo Rindsfusser, Horticulture Advisor of the Federal Agricultural Agency of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, explaining the process of herb production and processing in the greenhouse of QS GAP- and IFS-certified Dreesen Frische Kräuter GmbH & Co. APO/M. Saeed

Implementation of the GAP approach, however, can be challenging because of the diversity of codes, guidelines, and definitions within the agriculture sector. There is an urgent need to harmonize GAP concepts and guidelines at the international level. GLOBALGAP (formerly known as EUREPGAP) is a single, integrated standard that has become established as a key reference for GAP in the global marketplace. GLOBALGAP is an internationally used management system for GAP. The GLOBALGAP standard is primarily designed to reassure consumers about how food is produced on the farm by minimizing the detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations, reducing the use of chemical inputs, and ensuring a responsible approach to worker health and safety as well as animal welfare.

In view of the immense importance of GAP for enhancing the productivity of safe agricultural produce in sustainable, socially acceptable ways and as a strategy to capture a greater share of the developed international food market, the APO organized a study mission on GLOBALGAP for Greater Market Access for Agrifood Products, 25–29 October 2010, in Germany, especially in and around Frankfurt, Cologne, and Kerpen. Munich-based Organic Services GmbH implemented the mission. The objective was to learn about the latest trends and developments in GAP and GLOBALGAP standard implementation and certification through direct exposure to successful examples in Germany and to identify the best practices of GAP and GLOBALGAP applications that can be promoted in Asia-Pacific countries.



Participants examining vegetable seedlings at family-run Vegetable Farm Boley certified by the German equivalent of GLOBALGAP. APO/M. Saeed

Sixteen participants from seven APO member countries attended, comprising government officers, managers of private companies, researchers, agricultural extension workers, and officers of standards and certification bodies. The mission was a blend of interactive lead presentations, guided site visits, and sharing of knowledge and information among the participants.

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Lead presentations by seven German experts covered GLOBALGAP intent and requirements; trends in implementation of GAP and GLOBALGAP in German agriculture and their impact on farm incomes and farm productivity; drivers of GAP and GLOBALGAP in Germany and the EU; policy, regulatory, and institutional settings for promoting GAP and GLOBALGAP; small-sized producers and GLOBALGAP implementation and certification; quality and safety standards and assurance systems required by fresh produce importers in Germany; situation of egg and poultry meat markets in Europe and future prospects including requirements for imported meat; introduction of the flower label program of FLP e.V.; Software for GLOBALGAP implementation and certification; and how to promote GAP and GLOBALGAP implementation and certification in Asian countries.

Site visits were made in the vicinities of Frankfurt, Cologne, and Kerpen where the participants had guided tours of five QS-GAP/IFS/GLOBALGAP/organic standard-certified farms/companies: 1) Vegetable Farm Boley; 2) Plug Verpackungs GmbH, a vegetable and fruit producer, processor, and trader; 3) Dreesen Frische Kräuter GmbH & Co. KG, an herb producer and processor; 4) the pig-fattening family farm Aehling; and 5) Finkes Hof, an organic vegetable, poultry, and pig family farm. Participants also visited two wholesale markets: Lehmann Natur, one of the largest German wholesalers of imported and locally produced

organic fruit and vegetables meeting requirements for organic standards, GLOBALGAP, and IFS; and Frischezentrum Frankfurt, a wholesale market for imported and local fresh produce and specialty items such as fish, meat, and poultry. In addition, participants toured two supermarkets in Kerpen where they observed the packaging and labeling of eco-friendly and organic fresh fruit and vegetables, along with other food products such as organic chocolate and organic coffee.

The numerous site visits exposed participants to several successful examples of GAP and GLOBALGAP implementation; the requirements of German wholesalers for agrifood products; grading, packaging, and labeling techniques for eco-friendly and organic food; and most importantly the passion of German farmers and entrepreneurs for promoting GAP and GLOBALGAP to ensure the production of safe food in a sustainable, socially acceptable manner. On the last day of the mission, participants, facilitated by two German resource persons, identified lessons and insights learned and formulated action plans to utilize them for promoting GAP in their countries. There was general agreement that the diverse codes, guidelines, and definitions of GAP existing within the Asian agriculture sector needed to be harmonized to comply with GLOBALGAP, and that certification of Asian farms in GLOBALGAP would be a critical prerequisite for international exports of agrifood products, especially to EU markets, in the near future. 