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Notes from 2020 Food & Agriculture Committee Workplan Discussion Call

8 January, 2020

Dear Members,

Thank you to those of you who joined our **2020 Food & Agriculture Committee Workplan Discussion Call** on January 7, 2020 (SGT).

During the meeting, the Committee agreed on the following key action items:

- Members to provide additional background information to USABC on the Crispr system, Indonesia production and distribution of veterinary drugs regulations including the technology transfer provision, and other issues of interest.
- USABC to update the Committee workplan with the new issues and suggestions raised by members.
- USABC to organise a planning call for the Food & Agriculture Industry Mission to Indonesia held on February 25-27, 2020.
- The Committee to develop a Petcare subgroup.
- Scoular to join the Agricultural Trading subgroup.

Please find the meeting notes below and the updated 2020 Workplan attached.

For any inquiries and inputs, please contact Sunita Kapoor at skapoor@usasean.org, Hai Pham at hpham@usasean.org and Thao Nguyen at tnghuyen@usasean.org.

1. Roll call (Thao Nguyen, USABC)

- **Members:** ADM, Bayer, BowerGroupAsia, Cargill, Corteva, Nestlé Purina PetCare, Pepsico, Scoular, Yum!Brands
- **US-ABC:** Amb. Michael Michalak, Marc Mealy, Shay Wester, Sunita Kapoor, Hai Pham, Thao Nguyen, J-Ren Ong

2. Welcome Remarks (Amb. Michael Michalak, USABC)

- Welcome Thao Nguyen as new Manager based in Singapore Office covering Food and Agriculture as well as Health and Life Sciences and Customs.
- Many things are happening in the region such as free trade agreements (FTAs) and the US-China trade tensions. Look forward to continue working with members to implement the Committee's workplan including work on fall armyworm, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), development of new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and cross sectoral collaboration among others.

3. Committee Leader's Opening Remarks (Pushpanathan Sundram, Elanco Animal Health)

- Welcome to the first call. Need to identify country issues we want to prioritize, make sure the workplan is practical and doable, and look at potential cross-sectoral collaboration on some cross-cutting issues.

4. Review of 2020 Food & Agriculture Workplan (Sunita Kapoor, USABC)

- **Overall**
 - This is a living document so expect updates every quarter in advance of committee quarterly calls.
 - Currently three subgroups - Plant Science, Agricultural Trading and Animal Health comprises the committee leadership. Want to work on developing a Petcare subgroup in 2020.
 - Statistics show fast-growing agricultural trade between the U.S. and ASEAN. Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia are the top markets for U.S in ASEAN with Vietnam taking over Indonesia as the largest market since 2018. This trend is reflected in the Council's 2020 industry mission programming which focuses on Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines.
 - Overarching theme for 2020 is consistent with prior years i.e. continuing to advocate and support ASEAN governments to improve upon their food security goals through trade development.
- **Key advocacy issues**
 - **ASEAN-wide**
 - Continue to monitor issues around FTAs such as CPTPP, RCEP and any potential bilateral FTAs or TIFA talks between the U.S. and specific ASEAN countries.
 - Continue to monitor and advocate for U.S. private sector solutions to issues such as climate change, fall armyworm, African Swine Fever, AMR and the Crispr system.

- Crispr is a new focus area for the committee. The Singapore government recently reached out to USABC, the U.S. Embassy and other trade organizations to gather more information on what the U.S. private sector is doing in the research area.
- **Country-level**
 - Continue to work on issues such as Indonesia Halal Law, Philippines Bill on Pet Food Additive, Singapore's Regulation on Bovine Imports for Petfood, Thailand's restrictions and ban on crop protection products, Vietnam's Law on Animal Husbandry, and re-export policy for wheat shipments with Canadian thistle.
 - Work on new issues such as Indonesia's Investment Restrictions on Storage, Import Tax on Dried Grains with Solubles (DDGS), Thailand's Fumigation Issue related to Khapra Beetle, and high tariff rates on raw materials and U.S. beef imported from the U.S. into Thailand.
- **Proposed activities**
 - **Activity 1 – Participation in official regional meetings**
 - Participate in the 42nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF), conduct bilateral meetings and participate in AMAF side-line activities.
 - **Activity 2 – Industry missions**
 - Indonesia (Feb 25-27, confirmed)
 - Vietnam (May)
 - Philippines (July)
 - **Activity 3 – MoU**
 - Encourage members to review 2019 MoU with the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development and suggest new programs that can be conducted under the auspices of this MoU.
 - Seek potential MoU with the Indonesia Ministry of Agriculture. Request to be made before and during the industry mission to Indonesia next month.
 - **Activity 4 – Cross sector collaboration with other USABC industry committees**
 - Work with Health & Life Sciences Committee to develop AMR program.
 - **Activity 5 – Roundtables and workshops**
 - To provide a platform for the public and private sectors to exchange information, and build coalitions with other like-minded organizations.
 - In 2020, continue to partner with the EU-ASEAN Business Council (EUABC), and CropLife Asia to conduct the Indonesia Segment of the ASEAN Safe, Nutritious Food PPP Initiative Workshop alongside the industry missions.
- **Intelligence and promotion**
 - Continue to provide biweekly Food & Agriculture Updates.

5. Comments and Feedback

ASEAN-wide issues

- **Participation in regional meetings**
 - Would like to be also involved in other regional meetings such as the ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting (AEM) to raise our issues and recommendations

- *USABC response:* Will get the dates for AEM and include in the workplan.
- **FTAs**
 - Need more information and advocacy around regulations on raw materials import/export in and out of ASEAN.
- **Crispr system**
 - Glad that Singapore government shows interest. In ASEAN, Philippines might be the most advanced in setting a policy framework on this. Important to ensure that this system is not regulated as a GMO because this will limit the opportunity for Crispr to be used in R&D to develop new products especially in responding to climate change. Happy to provide additional background and contribute to this work of the Committee. We can have a separate discussion on this.
- **Halal law**
 - Is there a possible harmonization of testing methodology in ASEAN with a focus on Indonesia and Malaysia?
 - *USABC response:* We can check with our ASEAN Committee's Standards subgroup.

Country-wide issues

- **Indonesia**
 - Can USABC provide more information on the **Food & Agriculture Industry Mission to Indonesia?**
 - *USABC response:*
 - Confirmed dates: Feb 25-27
 - Workshop on ASEAN Safe, Nutritious PPP Initiative on Feb 25:
 - In partnership with EUABC and CropLife Asia
 - Format: Dialogue between companies, government officials, and local trade associations and organisations
 - Will send out the invitation and organise a separate planning call on the mission to discuss issues and targets.
 - What is the content of the **MOU** with Indonesia?
 - *USABC response:* Model after the Vietnam MoU format i.e. categorizing collaboration into 3 areas – Plan Science, Animal Health, and Agricultural Trading; proposing programs under these 3 areas such as workshops on Low Level Presence initiative, AMR, responsible use of pesticides. The Vietnam MoU has been useful. We have been able to conduct 2 consultative workshops and follow up with Vietnam on the Animal Husbandry Law.
 - *Member comment:* Suggest to also consider the Indonesia government's perspective e.g. their priorities to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and develop human capital. Make sure to consult with the government when drafting MoU. Propose to do training/workshop on food safety.
 - *USABC response:*
 - Will certainly conduct consultations with the government. Will discuss this further during the planning call for the Indonesia industry mission.

- Taken note of suggestion to support the Indonesia government on attracting FDI and developing human capital. These will be key messages of the Mission.
 - Monitor the issue of production and distribution of veterinary drugs, especially the **transfer of technology** provision.
 - Monitor the **biotechnology regulation**. Waiting for it to be signed off soon. If it is not signed off by the end of the Indonesia mission, hope to include this issue in the messaging.
- **Thailand**
 - Continue advocacy on the **restrictions and ban on crop protection products** issue.
 - Advocate to reduce **import tariffs on raw materials**.
 - Monitor the **animal vaccines issue**. Thai FDA has adopted EU standards for approving manufacturing facilities which are not aligned with US FDA requirements.
 - *USABC response*: We will bring this up to our ASEAN Committee's Standards subgroup.
 - Advocate to improve **product registration process** which is currently complicated and time consuming. It takes 9-12 months for a product to get registered and approved for import and sale into Thailand. Tariffs on US cheese and French fries are 30% compared to 0% duty for New Zealand products under Thailand - New Zealand FTA.
- **Vietnam**
 - Work with U.S. and Vietnam governments and domestic industry on the **re-export policy for wheat shipments with Canadian thistle**.
 - *USABC response*: We can review the MOU with Vietnam and see where we can include this.
 - Would like to provide input on what products should have **tariff reductions**.
- **Philippines**
 - Monitor the FDA reform including **rice and corn investment law**.
 - Continue advocacy on **petfood additive bill**.
 - Encourage the government to expand the **U.S poultry imports quota** which has been the same amount since 2005 and not kept up with business growth which requires increased supply of poultry meat.
- **Cambodia**
 - Advocate to reduce **import tariffs** for agricultural products.

Committee development and relationship building

- Propose to form a **Petcare group** within the Food & Agriculture Committee
 - *USABC response*: We will set up an off-line discussion on this among Nestlé Purina PetCare, Elanco Animal Health, Cargill, and other interested companies.
- USABC invited **Scoular to join the Agricultural Trading subgroup**.
- Improve **working relationships between members and APHIS**

- *USABC response:* The Council has started to invite APHIS representatives to industry missions.

6. Summary and Next Steps (Thao Nguyen, USABC)

- Overall, members agreed on the draft workplan.
- New issues were raised and some key issues were highlighted. USABC to incorporate members' inputs in the workplan:
 - **ASEAN-wide:**
 - The development and implementation of FTAs and how USABC and members can leverage on their benefits and resolve protectionist issues across ASEAN, e.g. tariffs and other restrictions on various agricultural products in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines.
 - Monitor the possibility on harmonization of standards in ASEAN on issues such as halal certification, Crispr system, and animal vaccinations.
 - More engagement between members and ASEAN through participation in ASEAN regional meetings such as AMAF, AEM.
 - **Country-level issues**
 - **Indonesia:** regulations on production and distribution of veterinary drugs including technology transfer provision; biotechnology regulation; MOU development in consultation with the government.
 - **Thailand:** restrictions and ban on crop protection products; import tariffs on raw materials; product registration process.
 - **Vietnam:** re-export policies for wheat shipments with Canadian thistle; discussions on tariff reductions for agricultural products (i.e. Decree 125).
 - **Philippines:** petfood additive bill; poultry imports quota; rice and corn investment law.
 - **Cambodia:** import tariffs on restaurant products.
 - **Increased cross-sector collaboration** with other USABC industry committees.

7. Closing Remarks (Amb. Michael Michalak)

- Thanks everyone for a productive discussion and good suggestions.
 - USABC will present some issues to other industry committees for further discussion. We have a few new committees and subgroups, including an Innovation committee and subgroup on Standards and Testing within our existing ASEAN committee. Will see how useful these committees can be in helping to address some of the issues raised.
 - Thank you and wish everyone a great 2020.
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