Implementing a Self-Assessment Guide for the Cocoa Industry in Ghana: Benefits and Challenges

By

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Ghana’s economy hinges so much on cocoa hence, the need to ensure that the cocoa industry survives and grows in the dynamics of the emerging concerns for food safety compliance. Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), with the support of COLEACP/EDES, has therefore come out with a document (self Assessment Guide) that will help the industry to comply with international food safety regulations and legislations.
This will ensure market accessibility and eventually increase Ghana’s cocoa market both locally and internationally.

To ensure sustainable cocoa trade, Ghana must comply with the global cocoa market which now requires minimum residue levels of contaminants like:

- Pesticide residues
- Mycotoxins
- Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH)
- Heavy metals
- Microbiological agents etc. in cocoa.
Self Assessment Guide (SAG)

SAG is basically a document that guides all the players along the value chain to carry out a risk based assessment of their processes and practices, and come out with what to do, what not to do and endeavour to comply with them.

All the stages of production are critically analysed and measures put in place to mitigate risks identified.
Composition of the Cocoa Industry in Ghana

- The Cocoa Industry in Ghana is operated by identifiable groups of players at the various stages.
- Each identifiable group plays a specific role along the value chain.
- COCOBOD ensures compliance with regulations and procedures at each stage.
Composition conts.

The various identifiable players include:
- Farmers
- Input Dealers
- Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana
- Seed production Unit
- Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease Control Unit
- Cocoa Marketing Company (warehousing, Shipment, etc)
- Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs)
- Transporters (Hauliers)
- Inspection Body Viz. QCC
- Shipping Companies
- Civil Society

All these groupings have some form of Associations and Leadership
Road Maps to Implementation of SAG

During the preparatory stage of the guide, the identifiable groupings of the various players were included; for them own it.

Their concerns were taken on board and members apprised on proceedings.

The players therefore realized the need for the guide even before its completion and implementation.
Implementation of the Guide

The Guide will be inaugurated in the third week of January, 2014.

Representatives of the identifiable groupings of the players in the industry are actively involved in the preparations towards the inauguration.

Copies of the Guide will be distributed for testing on the field.

Workshops will also be organised to evaluate the result of the field tests and amendments made, where necessary.

- Every player along the value chain will be given a copy of the Guide eventually for adoption.
- COCOBOD will develop official control documents to be used to monitor or regulate each stage along the value chain.
- Members at the various stages will embark on peer reviews occasionally to ensure the right thing is done.
Benefits:

Successful implementation of the guide will help all the players along the value chain to comply with international food safety requirements and regulations.

This will give the international community the assurance and confidence that their health needs would not be compromised when they consume products made from Ghana’s cocoa.
Eventually Ghana will maintain and even increase her market access.

The Cocoa Industry in Ghana will continue to provide livelihood for the smallholder farmer and others who depend on cocoa directly or indirectly.

In the same vein job opportunities will be provided to the millions of Ghanaian in the cocoa Industry.
Benefits Conts.

- Poverty alleviation programmes embarked by the Ghanaian government will be sustained.
- There will also be sustainable cocoa production since the right processes will be used.
- The environment and health of the player along the value chain will also be protected.
Challenges

- Effective implementation of the Guide requires record keeping. However, majority of cocoa farmers are illiterates and hence will find it difficult to keep records.
- Traceability in the cocoa industry in Ghana is not completely to the farm level.
Challenges Conts.

Change management-
- People find it difficult to change from doing what they are used to.

Funds to:
- organise workshops and trainings on effective use of the Guide
- sensitise stakeholders to adopt it wholly etc.
- Evaluate the impacts of using the Guide
Conclusions

- The benefits inherent in the adoption and effective use of the SAG far outstrips the challenges.
- Implementation of the SAG will drastically reduce MRL violations if not entirely eliminating them.
Thank You