



Quality & Conformity Fruit & Vegetables

PIP Magazine

www.coleacp.org/pip

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The PIP training programme: sowing the seeds of food safety

→ In its efforts to increase food safety, the European Union has drawn up legislation with stringent food safety and traceability requirements. Complying with these requirements calls for due diligence at every step of the production and export chain, a sizeable feat which requires adequate capacity on the part of producers. The PIP programme contributes extensively to the development of training programmes for the horticultural sector of ACP countries. These programmes aim to help ACP companies adapt their working practices in line with European food safety and traceability requirements.

EDITORIAL

In light of food safety issues the evolution of the European market has created new human resource needs across the entire horticultural industry. Production and export companies from ACP countries must adapt to this reality. This is why the PIP gives such importance to training mid-level managers of ACP companies given the fact that these managers represent the backbone in the implementation and management of food safety and traceability systems. They also serve as agents for passing on know-how within their companies. PIP also provides support to these mid-level managers to train staff and small-scale producers by helping them to lay down the foundations of an on-going training programme within each firm. The sustainability of PIP's actions lies in the commitment of ACP producers and exporters in bringing their staff and small-scale growers up to par. The PIP is also intent on building the capacity of local service providers, thus giving ACP companies access to consultants and institutions which are competent and economically affordable.

Guy Stinglhamber
Good Company Practice Component



→ News



PIP holds regional workshops in Kenya, Senegal and Ghana

In September and October 2003, PIP held a number of regional workshops in East and West Africa, namely in Kenya (9/09/03), Senegal (2/10/03) and Ghana (16/10/03). The idea was to brief companies and other programme beneficiaries, together with the local public authorities, on the progress of the programme in each region, to allow exchanges between PIP and its beneficiaries, and to build contacts with potential new partners.

In **Nairobi, Kenya**, the session was organised in collaboration with FPEAK (Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya), a local professional organisation. Around 40 participants took part in the workshop, among them many company directors from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The Kenyan authorities attending included members of the National Pesticides Steering Committee. The European Delegation in Nairobi was also represented, along with fund donors active in Kenya. The event was covered on TV and in the national press.

In **Dakar, Senegal**, nearly 40 people took part in the information day, which was attended by the Agriculture Minister's Head of Cabinet and Horticulture Director, as well as the European Delegation representative. Some 20 company directors from Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, together with representatives of professional organisations from the first two countries, attended the presentations by PIP experts and took part in the experience sharing and follow-up discussions. National television, radio and the major newspapers covered the event.

Some 30 people attended the third information day in **Accra, Ghana**, in the presence of the Deputy Minister for Agriculture and the EU representative. More than 15 companies (from Ghana and one from the Gambia) were represented, along with SPEG (Sea Freight Pineapple Exporters of Ghana), a professional organisation, and important fund donors. National television and newspapers reported on the meeting.



PIP sets up task forces

PIP is in the process of setting up task forces in the ACP States. They will serve as a framework for consultation, bringing together the PIP partners – both private and public – directly involved in issues relating to compliance with EU regulations. Each task force will be composed of a core group that includes: 1) professional organisations that are programme beneficiaries, 2) the public institutions that provide support to the sector, which can also be capacity-building beneficiaries. The task force may also turn – on a one-off basis – to resource persons with related expertise (trainers, other fund donors, service providers, suppliers of products, etc.).

With its cross-section position in the programme, it is PIP's Capacity Building service that will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the task forces. This service provides direct support to players in the sector. What capacity building needs are of common interest? How are priorities identified? Which local resources can be mobilised and how? The task forces will help answer these questions and more. Each task force will organise its work based on criteria developed jointly with PIP's Capacity Building service. If needed for that purpose, PIP can provide human resources for the task force secretariat as well as logistics support. The national task forces are expected to monitor regulations and commercial requirements on a long-term basis. Little by little, these structures could train regional task forces with representative powers and entitled to negotiate issues of common interest.

In time, the regional task forces could be grouped into a central representative structure on major export markets. Task forces have already been set up in Kenya, Senegal, Ghana and Burkina-Faso.



EUREPGAP Conference: PIP details problems of ACP exporters

PIP representatives addressed the EUREPGAP conference held in Madrid, Spain, on 12 September 2003. They stressed the difficulties small-scale producers experience in trying to meet the requirements of EUREPGAP certification. PIP called for a realistic assessment of the growing practices used in the ACP countries. Indeed, EUREPGAP's requirements and their implementation do not always factor in the geographical characteristics or the economic and social context in these countries. Adding to these difficulties, the cost of the certification procedure is generally far too high given the level of earnings of small-scale producers.

Among the ideas put forward to cut the cost of meeting the criteria of the EUREPGAP protocol was that of setting up groupings of small-scale producers, without this necessarily involving the formation of a company or complex bureaucracy. Such groupings would reduce the number of plots to be audited. This solution obviously does not rule out a price cut by EUREPGAP. Finally, PIP proposed that the external audit – conducted annually at present – be carried out at longer intervals.



For more information:

► <http://www.eurep.org>



For more information, see the PIP Info issue as mentioned, see on our website the issue of the PIP Info as mentioned: www.coleacp.org/en/pesticides/brevs/infopip.html

Senegal: developing exports



Yasmine Hachem, manager of Niram Maraïcher



"We can always try to produce more, but what interests us is producing better. Because there's no point in producing tonnes of fruit and vegetables that are unmarketable!" explains Yasmine Hachem, manager of Niram Maraïcher. *"We know that if we want to keep exporting our products, we have to respect the MRLs [Ed: Maximum Residue Limits]. But to do so, our staff has to know exactly which pesticides to use and the conditions for their use. We are still seriously handicapped by a lack of training."*

Based in Senegal, SARL Niram Maraïcher produces and exports green beans (very fine and fine), melon and mango. In 2002, Niram Maraïcher exported 300 tonnes of produce to the European Union, mostly green beans. In 2003, the company began diversifying its production, testing mange-tout and cherry tomatoes. The firm has 25 permanent employees, hiring 300 day labourers in peak periods (from December) for harvesting and packaging. It owns 50 hectares and works with and provides support for 10 external producers.

Becoming more professional to stay in business

"It is precisely to help us provide more support for all the people involved, to train them and bring them up to scratch that we need a programme like PIP", continues Yasmine Hachem. Niram Maraïcher signed a memorandum of agreement with PIP in October 2002. In addition to gaining access to information on European food safety and traceability regulations, working with the programme has enabled Niram to set up a new green bean crop protocol. *"All the company's work methods were reviewed and improved with the help of PIP experts, the idea being to introduce best practices. If we want to survive in this sector, we simply have to become more professional"*, insists Yasmine Hachem. *"I now have a dialogue with my European partners, whereas before we didn't understand why a particular lot of merchandise could be rejected or why it failed to meet importers' expectations."* After the training of mid-level managers and application agents, Niram now wants to invest in setting up a traceability system.

PIP in Senegal

From November 2001 to October 2003, PIP experts conducted seven missions to Senegal to present the programme (to companies, professional organisations, fund donors and other institutional partners), to prepare the revision of crop protocols (green beans, cherry tomatoes and mango), to set up food safety and traceability systems, to prepare the launch of field tests, to create a national task force, and so on. Six Senegalese firms have signed memorandums of agreement with PIP, and another 13 intervention applications are being reviewed. The applications are not only from producers-exporters but also concern local capacity-building support.

Looking beyond her own firm, Yasmine Hachem thinks the more the skills of ACP exporters are upgraded, the more the companies will consolidate their position and boost their profit margins. This in turn could help raise the standard of living of the whole agricultural sector. She adds: *"Phytosanitary quality does not concern Europe alone: a good share of the fruit and vegetables is sold in Africa. By teaching producers to use pesticides correctly today, the health of our populations will be improved in the long run."*

The fruit and vegetable sector in Senegal

In 2002, Senegal exported a little over 10,000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables to the European Union (particularly to France, Belgium and the Netherlands), of which around 5,700 tonnes of green beans. In the last few years, the country has diversified its sources of export with cherry tomatoes and mango, which in 2002 accounted for around 2,700 tonnes and 1,600 tonnes respectively. Production and export involve different players:

- big export firms, like Safina and Sepam, which alone account for 55% of the country's horticultural exports (statistics for 2000-2001).

- small and medium-sized producers-exporters, who work with small producers often located near their own production areas.

The industry also includes two types of professional organisations (PO):

- the POs of small-scale market gardeners, a large proportion of whose members produce for export (e.g.: the Federation of Market Gardeners of Niayes – FPMN)
- the exporters' POs, ONAPES and SEPAS.

Soleil Vert, another Senegal-based company, exported around 1,000 tonnes of produce to the European Union in 2002, of which 600 tonnes of green beans and 320 tonnes of mango. Trials are under way with melon for the moment. Soleil Vert has not yet signed a memorandum of understanding with PIP, but its General Manager Christophe Marrucci is very interested: *"We have already invested a lot in modernising our installations, but it is clear that the support of experts like those of the PIP would help keep us informed of changing European regulations and enable us to train the technicians and all the people who work with us. I'm convinced that if we do not meet European demands, we will not be able to export any more at all. So we have no choice: we need to react fast."*

The PIP training programme: sowing the seeds of food safety

To reconcile their production methods with increasingly stringent European food safety and traceability regulations horticultural companies from ACP countries must reinforce the capacity of their staff and the small growers they work with. In order to assist ACP companies in that endeavour the Pesticides Initiative Programme (PIP) supports capacity building and training projects in ACP countries.

As regards producers of fruits and vegetables, complying with European food safety and traceability rules implies having control over the entire production chain, from sowing the seeds in the ground to preparing produce for export. Due diligence is required at every step of the process and only those companies which have adequate capacity can manage to do so.

Identifying the needs of ACP producers

"Introducing good agricultural and exporting practices requires having staff that is adequately trained to take in and deal with the information it receives as well as being prepared for any contingency in the years to come," says Guy Stinglhamber, the head of PIP's Good Company Practice Component. *"Yet, when we began receiving intervention applications from ACP companies we quickly realised that in addition to lacking the capacity to identify their needs as regards European food safety requirements they weren't able to comprehend nor apply the recommendations of the international consultants sent to help them."* The PIP therefore had to carry out an analysis of ACP producers' needs and subsequently began designing a training programme that would reinforce producers' capacity to work towards implementing appropriate food safety and traceability systems.

Building capacity at multiple levels

To properly implement food safety and traceability systems all levels of a company's chain of command must be adequately qualified. To begin with, general



Food, Safety and Traceability Managers workshop in Gembloux, Belgium

managers must be made aware of the strategic issues at stake in complying with European food safety and traceability regulations. To this end, the PIP organises awareness raising workshops for general managers of ACP producers of fruits and vegetables. One such workshop was held in Gembloux (Belgium) in January 2003 while another was held in Brussels (Belgium) in June.

Having apprised the general managers of the issues at hand, we then come to those that are more directly involved in the implementation and the day-to-day management of food safety systems; these include 1) the managers who deal directly with these matters,

such as production, traceability and quality managers, who are in fact the highest ranked technical managers in a company; and 2) other managers who are responsible for the quality and traceability of a specific crop or particular stage of the production chain, such as crop and packhouse managers. These two levels – which we refer as middle management – are the spearhead of PIP's training programme because they are able to grasp highly technical concepts discussed in training workshops and can transfer that know-how to the lower ranks of the company, eg. farm and packhouse workers, small producers, etc. In essence, they serve as qualified repositories and conveyors of information and know-how.





Henry Wainwright, coordinator and provider of training services

Organising collective workshops

Training represents virtually half of most companies' request for intervention in their application with the PIP. Answering their call for staff training, the PIP has set aside substantial funds for reinforcing the capacity of ACP producers and will contribute towards two types of training sessions: collective training workshops and in-company training sessions.

"The objective of collective workshops is to prepare food safety managers in setting up control systems and ensure the continuity of the system," states Guy Stinghamber. These workshops are generally organised for food safety managers from a particular country or from a group of countries sharing linguistic and/or geographical proximity. Three such workshops have been organised in ACP countries thus far, two in September 2003 (Kenya and Senegal) and one in October (Ghana). The PIP, in partnership with other organisations, co-ordinates the entire training session, including the logistics and the themes to be covered in the workshops. The content of each workshop depends on the level of the participants, but will most likely be drawn from the seven thematic modules the PIP has specially put together for the workshops. The modules cover a range of topics related to food safety, comprising themes such as food safety procedures management,

EU regulations, the safe use of pesticides, hygiene, traceability and production management tools, pest recognition and crop protection, and access to information.

To ensure the consistency of its training activities the PIP programme has called upon the assistance of external service providers to co-ordinate the work of trainers and the drafting of training modules. Whenever possible the PIP will strive to use local instructors and other service providers who have the required competence.

"I co-ordinated and was a trainer in the Kenya and Ghana workshops," says Henry Wainwright, a provider of training services based in Kenya. *"In the Kenya workshop all trainers were based in Kenya."*

The number of participants in a workshop will vary – previous workshops have had between 15 and 35 participants – but it will remain limited to allow discussions and experience sharing to take place during the course of the workshop. The contents of these collective workshops are highly technical, it is therefore important for food safety managers to have a chance to ask questions and discuss these concepts with the trainers.

After each workshop, the participating trainees are given the opportunity to evaluate the training session and the teaching material for quality and relevance.

"In the evaluation we ask them to score the workshops

with marks such as very good, good, average, and poor, to which we attribute a value of 4, 3, 2, 1, respectively. We then calculate the average," mentions Henry Wainwright.

In-company training

Once food safety managers have had some training it is hoped that they will use the tools they have acquired to put in place comprehensive training programmes for their own farm workers and the small growers they work with. Small growers and farm workers are a difficult category to train because they tend to be diverse and scattered but they play a key role for the PIP since its success depends largely on their good practices in the field. In addition to conducting collective training workshops, it is therefore important to organise in-company training sessions if companies are to properly implement lasting food safety and traceability systems. The PIP actively supports in-company training sessions and, for companies which request it, PIP experts will help them organise and implement a customised training programme designed to reflect the companies' working conditions and progress in improving or implementing control systems. The training is usually conducted on the companies' premises. When appropriate and feasible, training sessions may be organised for several companies located within the same geographical area with a view to benefiting from economies of scale and fostering exchange of practices. →

What Food Safety Managers have to say

"I found the PIP workshop to be very useful," says Enoch Mobisa, the Food Safety and Traceability Manager for Sunfresh Farm Produce in Kenya, *"it will help me train our outgrowers."* For his second training session, Eric Koko of Farmapine in Ghana claims that *"this time around we went into greater detail and there was hands-on training on topics like HACCP, traceability, and safe pesticide use."*

The two managers work for companies which directly provide farmers with pesticides for their crops. *"I choose and buy the pesticides,"* says Enoch Mobisa, *"and advise the small growers on how and when to use them."* Enoch believes it is vital keep abreast of the latest European regulations, pesticides in use, etc. He takes it upon himself – of his own volition and means – to check out the World Wide Web in search of information befitting his company's interests. *"It's important to be able to keep the company managers informed."*



Enoch Mobisa, Food, Safety and Traceability Manager of Sunfresh Farm Produce

Shifting into high gear

In addition to the seven training modules, the PIP has and continues to develop training methods likely to respond to the needs of ACP growers and exporters. The PIP has, for example, put in place a question and answer system that can be accessed either via e-mail or the Coleacp's website. By being able to directly ask questions to the PIP, ACP growers are provided with an information lifeline which in the future should become one of the main vehicles for transferring knowledge between the PIP and ACP producers. The PIP also intends to develop other innovative training products using multimedia or audio-visual media.

While several workshops were held in 2003, the focus for the year was to conceive, build and test PIP's training programme. By the end of the year the PIP is due to unveil its 2004 programme of collective training workshops. The number of workshops to be held in ACP countries is due to dramatically increase, perhaps up to as many as six series of collective workshops per country in 2004. Each workshop series will cover one or several of the seven thematic modules to varying degrees of depth; a number of them will be repeated to accommodate companies that have joined the PIP during the course of the year. The training schedule will, of course, cater for different types of crops in various regions and countries by holding workshops according to crops' seasonality.

The PIP training programme in 2003

Food Safety Manager workshops

July – Gembloux, Belgium

September – Nairobi, Kenya

(For participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia)

September – Dakar, Senegal

(For participants from Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Togo)

October – Accra, Ghana

(For participants from Ghana and the Gambia)

Capacity building for ACP service providers

Whilst the PIP makes every effort to use local ACP service providers whenever it can, it continues to rely to a great extent on European service providers to carry out its daily activities. However, in order to guarantee the long-term viability of its current training programme, the PIP will also contribute to building the capacity of local ACP service providers so that in due course these local consultants may take over most of the PIP's activities. These service providers may either be private service companies or public bodies specialised in horticultural issues, either way the aim is to contribute to more local expertise being made available to horticultural companies in ACP countries.

Currently, when the PIP is about to conduct a training session, either collective workshops or in-company training sessions, it searches for qualified local service providers capable of setting up food safety systems and train staff. If the qualifications of interested local service providers are deemed adequate they may be asked to conduct training sessions. If the local providers qualifications are not completely up to par, he or she may be teamed up with an international expert to carry out a session or asked to attend a training session to become familiar with the subject matter. If required, supplementary training may be provided in the EU – through internships or intensive thematic training – to further enhance the service providers' knowledge and expertise.

While Kenya is by far the best endowed with qualified service providers, other ACP countries like Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire are not far behind. Much work will be required, however, to bring other countries up to par. Contacts have been made with a number of professional organisations, public services, independent consultants, and training centres and in all likelihood many capacity building actions for these service providers will be set in motion in 2004.

Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire: field trials get off the ground

Following a PIP expert mission to Senegal in July 2003, field trials for green beans and cherry tomatoes started up in that country in November. The trials are part of crop protocols that include several active substances meeting European requirements.

Trials also got under way in November in Côte d'Ivoire for pineapple, focusing on the active substance ethephon (European MRL of 2 mg/kg). Field trials are an important step in the process of establishing or revising crop protocols. They enable the experts to analyse the level of residues of a given pesticide found in fruit and vegetables at different stages of the growth process. The results of field trials are compared to the conditions for use and doses prescribed in the protocol for the crop, then revised from the dual standpoint of meeting the European MRL and providing effective treatment.

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Five crop protocols are ready

Five crop protocols were recently finalised: green bean, cherry tomato, pineapple, papaya and avocado. The green bean crop protocol contains data specific to Senegal and Burkina Faso. Two PIP experts travelled to Kenya in the latter half of November 2003 to complete the protocol with the climatic and geographical data specific to that country.

The crop protocol for okra is being finalised and those for mango and passion fruit are expected to be ready between the end of this year and early 2004.

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Useful sites and links

Updated list of active substances available on PIP's website

The PIP website now includes the new list of active substances that are authorised or that have been notified or withdrawn in the EU. Updated to 31 August 2003, the list includes all fungicides, herbicides and insecticides concerned by Directive 91/414/EC. This Directive aims to guarantee that phytopharmaceutical products released on the market in the Union have no harmful effects on human or animal health or unacceptable effects on the environment.

► <http://pesticides.coleacp.org/fr/ma.phtml>

World Health Organisation (WHO) site

The site contains links to the description of activities, reports, news and events, and to contacts and partners from different WHO programmes and offices working on pesticides issues. Another link leads to information on the WHO programme known as the Pesticide Evaluation Scheme (WHOPES) and from there to the text of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides as well as recommendations concerning obsolete products, among other things.

► <http://www.who.int/en/>

Pesticide Management Unit of the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

The FAO Plant Protection Service (AGPP) site contains a link to its Pesticide Management Unit, which contains news on its activities, the latest information on pesticide management, special fact files, and links to partner sites, both institutional and private.

► <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/AGRICULT/AGP/AGPP/Pesticid/Default.htm>

► http://www.fao.org/index_en.htm

Diary

4-5 December 2003

Brussels, Belgium: International conference organised by the European Commission's General Directorate for Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO) and titled "Perception of risks: Science, public debate and drawing up policies."

10 December 2003

Brussels, Belgium: Fifth PIP Consultative Committee.

21-22 January 2004

Windhoek, Namibia: Regional workshop on Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) organised by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Directorate for Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources.

For more information: <http://www.sadc.int>

27-29 January 2004

Paris, France: "Traceability 2004", first event entirely dedicated to traceability.

More information available at: <http://www.tracabilite2004.com>

Senegal

October 2003

- The PIP set up a task force attached to the existing National Intrinsic Quality Committee and established contacts with institutions that provide support for the sector.
- The PIP organised a regional information workshop on the progress of the programme. The participants (growers/exporters, professional organisations, local public authorities, and EU representatives) came from Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Togo.

Côte d'Ivoire

November 2003

- PIP experts met with representatives from Plantations Dam, an exporter of pineapples to the European Union, to help them implement a food safety and traceability system. The experts analysed the needs of the company and drew up an action plan.
- Two papaya experts travelled to Côte d'Ivoire to collect information with a view to revise the papaya crop protocol and identify the actions needed to make papaya production comply with European MRL regulations.

Kenya

Septembre 2003

- The PIP organised a technical workshop in Nairobi on the revision of the avocado crop protocol in the presence of company representatives and national authorities.

• A green bean workshop was held to compare the West Africa and East Africa crop protocols.

- The PIP organised a regional information workshop on the progress of the programme. The participants (growers/exporters, professional organisations, local public authorities, and EU representatives) came from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

November 2003

- Two experts travelled to Kenya to complete the green bean crop protocol with the climatic and geographic specifications for Kenya; they also discussed with local producers the technical aspects of the field trials (green bean and avocado) that are due to take place during the first quarter of 2004.

Ghana

October 2003

- The PIP organised a regional information workshop on the progress of the programme. The participants (growers/exporters, professional organisations, local public authorities, and EU representatives) came from Ghana and the Gambia.

Burkina Faso

September 2003

- A PIP expert met with the professional organisation (PO) APEX (Professional Association of Exporters) to discuss

setting up a task force in Burkina Faso. The expert also analysed the PO's capacity building programme and identified local resources that could be built upon.

Guinea

November 2003

- Two PIP experts visited the mango exporter SIPEF to help it implement the action plan specifically designed to strengthen its safety and traceability system; they also presented the documents and teaching material drawn up to train the company's small-scale producers, harvesters and packaging operators.

Madagascar

Septembre 2003

- A PIP expert met with the CHTT horticultural technical centre in Tamatave to lay down the foundation of a traceability system; 2003 was designated as the pilot phase of the project which aims to identify the route followed by lychees from their arrival at packhouses up to loading in vessels in the port of Tamatave; the PIP expert drew up a product specifications and process dossier to develop a computerised tool for the collection, entry and use of data on the sector; the mission identified local or regional intermediary structures that can play a relay role for the PIP programme.
- Two PIP experts met with Lecofruit, a producer and exporter of vegetables to the EU, to help them study the feasibility of becoming EUREPGAP certified.

Source: PIP Management Unit, October 2003.

*Not available

1 - Producers, exporters, professional organisations, intermediary structures.

2 - For producers and exporters which have signed a protocol or have applied for PIP support. Professional organisations and intermediary structures not included.

PIP Intervention requests¹

UGPIP statistics as of 31 October 2003

Country	Signed protocoles	Protocoles under review	Tonnes exported ²	Number of producers
Kenya	10	11	37 255	5 723
Ghana	10	2	15 230	364
Côte d'Ivoire	8	7	290 140	1 071
Senegal	6	13	11 698	1 125
Uganda	5	11	1 422	570
Burkina Faso	4	9	13 999	4 132
Cameroon	2	4	1 600	205
Jamaica	2	2	3000	1
Guinea	2	2	1 100	380
Tanzania	1	0	600	10
Madagascar	0	4	2 700	7500
Mali	0	3	460	180
Togo	0	1	200	ND*
Congo Brazzaville	0	1	ND*	ND*
	50	70	379 404	21 261

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