Risk assessment for food and agricultural products

With growing consumer awareness of food safety in both domestic and export markets, farmers, the food manufacturing industry and other stakeholders in food supply chains are increasingly required to pay more attention to measures for ensuring the safety of their products. Governments are also expected to implement more stringent food safety policies to protect consumers. However, these food safety policies and measures must be based on sound scientific risk assessment. Recognizing that many Asian developing countries are not necessarily competent in undertaking the risk assessment of food and agricultural products, the APO organized a training course on Risk Assessment for Food and Agricultural Products, 18–23 July 2011, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Malaysia Productivity Corporation was the local organizer. The course was attended by 18 international participants from 12 countries and six Malaysian participants.

The training course kicked off with a two-day workshop focusing on Risk Assessment and Management of Microorganisms led by Dr. Fumiko Kasuga of the National Institute of Health Science, Japan. The participants studied many types of foodborne pathogen, basic methodology for risk assessment of microorganisms, and practical examples of risk assessment using a statistical model. The subsequent three days were devoted to a mini course on risk assessment and management of pesticide residues conducted by Denis Hamilton of Australia, which taught the basic theoretical framework to determine maximum residue levels (MRLs) of pesticides and how to interpret data observed in field trials. The final day was spent learning about the risk assessment and management of veterinary drugs from Dr. Koji Oishi of the National Veterinary Assay Laboratory under Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery. The participants gained knowledge of how to determine MRLs of veterinary drugs and about the registration and management system of veterinary drugs through Japanese case studies. *Contributed by Y. Endo/APO Agriculture Department.*

Hamilton guiding a group exercise on pesticide residues in the training course on Risk Assessment of Foods and Agricultural Products. Photo APO/Y. Endo.