



1 October 2014

(14-5525)

Page: 1/3

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: Spanish

ACTIONS AIMED AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO AGREEMENT ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE (IICA)

The following communication, received on 30 September 2014, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to promote understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The IICA wishes to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

1 SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CAPACITY BUILDING AND RELATIONSHIP WITH MULTILATERAL FORUMS)

2. **Codex Commission:** As part of the Programme to Promote Participation in the Codex Alimentarius in the Americas, the IICA provided support in enabling 17 Latin American or Caribbean countries to take part in the meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, thus ensuring 90% representation of the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC). This meeting provided the region with an opportunity to state its interests and to consolidate its regional position. The participation of these countries was made possible thanks to contributions from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Canadian Ministry of Agriculture.

3. **Codex Colloquium:** The IICA assisted the USDA in implementing this year's second Codex Colloquium, held in Chile from 20 to 28 August and attended by 20 countries. Discussions focused on matters of interest to the Committees on Food Hygiene, Labelling, and Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification.

4. The Colloquium had the following objectives:

- To promote technical dialogue between the attending CCLAC countries, in order to help them identify cross-cutting issues and adopt a negotiating position aimed at increasing the region's weight in the relevant Codex Committees.
- To promote dialogue between the attending CCLAC countries and the United States, in order to strengthen the technical analysis of agenda items for Codex meetings and identify joint positions.
- To promote capacity building in some of the countries through technical exchanges with other delegations having more extensive experience of Codex Alimentarius management.

5. **CCLAC coordination:** The IICA continues to support coordination videoconferences for Latin American and Caribbean countries within the Codex Alimentarius framework. These sessions provide a virtual platform for coordinating the various agenda items of Codex meetings and identifying issues or positions of common interest to the region.

6. **Examination of phytosanitary standards:** As part of the IICA and IPPC Secretariat plan of action, a regional workshop to consider proposed phytosanitary standards took place in Jamaica from 22 to 25 September. The workshop was attended by delegates from 13 Caribbean countries, who examined a vast number of proposed phytosanitary standards for consideration in the Standards Commission in 2015.

2 SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND TECHNICAL STRENGTHENING

7. **Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) instrument for national plant protection organizations (NPPOs) and food safety systems:** From 25 to 29 August, the IICA hosted a session, at the request of the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), aimed at consolidating the common vision that emerged as a result of implementing the PVS tool for NPPOs and national food safety services at the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA). A plan of action was established to strengthen the ICA in both respects. The plan will be presented to the IDB as part of an enhancement initiative.

8. **New legislation in Canada:** In order to help disseminate current regulatory changes in Canada, the IICA organized a conference on Canada's new regulatory framework for federal food inspection, and on 13 August the Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Programme, in cooperation with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the IICA Canada Office, conducted the second out of three videoconferences on the subject, aimed at spreading awareness of the mechanisms that will be implemented with a view to modernizing the CFIA.

9. **Microbiological criteria for unprocessed foods:** On 2 and 21 July, the AHFS Programme took part in two regional videoconferences on the Proposed Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA) of Microbiological Criteria for Unprocessed Foods. These were held in support of the Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SECAC), in the framework of the Central American Customs Union.

10. **Caribbean Week of Agriculture:** The Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2014 was held in Suriname from 6 to 12 October. It brought together delegates from political, technical and academic circles as well as the private sector, who examined a wide range of topics of interest to the Caribbean region. The event was organized with support from the IICA, in conjunction with a large number of regional and international organizations (e.g. FAO, Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), and PAHO).

3 PROJECTS

11. **Virtual school for food safety inspectors:** This project funded by the STDF promotes ICTs in order to increase the safety of fresh or processed foods from the Central American region, thereby facilitating trade and improving public health by applying up-to-date and harmonized inspection procedures carried out by a pool of properly trained food inspectors in all countries of the region.

12. A whole series of activities aimed at developing the virtual platform and teaching materials have been implemented this year. The participating universities are partners in this project and play a leading role in organizing the virtual courses and tutorials. The virtual courses are scheduled to start in February 2015.

13. **Strengthening regional capacity to meet pesticide export requirements based on international standards:** As part of STDF project 436, the first meeting with national partners took place in June and led to the establishment of the Steering and Technical Committees for the project. Tests have been completed in several countries, and data concerning various chemical combinations and products are being assembled.

14. **FEEDLATINA (Latin American and Caribbean Feed Industries Association) FEED&FOOD assurance programme for the regulatory coherence and safety of animal feed in Latin America and the Caribbean:** As part of STDF project 345, the IICA took part, as a member of the Technical Steering Committee, in the two meetings held this year and has supported the association's efforts to present the initiative in regional and international forums. The project's training activity coordination process is due to begin next year.

15. The purpose of this project is to harmonize regulations, improve feed safety and foster regional integration through cooperation between the public and the private sector, based on the recommendations of the relevant international organizations.

16. **EU-CARIFORUM SPS project:** This project, financed with funds from the European Union includes, *inter alia*, harmonization of animal and plant health and food safety legislation, modernization of AHFS services, participation in international SPS standardization processes, and a strong component on training in good practices (GAPs, GLPs, GMPs, and HACCP) for the public, private and academic sectors.

17. The project is now being implemented, after the Steering and Technical Supervision Committees met in July to approve the budget and draw up a work plan for 2014-2015. Consultants have been convened and their work will begin shortly.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Agricultural Health and Food Safety
<http://www.iica.int>
