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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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ACTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO AGREEMENT ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (WTO-SPS)

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

The following communication, received on 17 June 2016, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

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 the understanding and implementation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). The IICA would like to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

1 EFFORTS TO MAKE GREATER USE OF MULTILATERAL AND REGIONAL FORUMS

1.1 Codex Alimentarius

1.1. Programme to develop Codex Alimentarius-related priorities: The IICA is implementing this programme in order to create a process with the various Codex actors for identifying priorities that can help countries to focus resources on strategic Codex Alimentarius-related issues of major interest to their sectors. The activity took place in Paraguay last April, and served as a basis for the development of an annual work plan.

1.2. Codex Colloquium Programme: Codex Colloquiums are events which bring together a large number of countries in the Americas for face-to-face discussion of matters on the agenda of the Codex Alimentarius Committees. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the IICA organized an interregional colloquium in Atlanta, United States, on 29 and 30 April, with the participation of more than 50 representatives of the Codex Coordinating Committees for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) and Africa (CCAFRICA). The aim of this event was to provide the Latin American, Caribbean and African countries with an opportunity to identify topics of common interest and to agree on common positions prior to the 30th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles.

1.3. Participation Programme: This programme is a competitive fund to facilitate participation by some countries in selected committees. It has recently provided support for the Committees on Contaminants in Foods and on General Principles, and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

1.4. Programme to support institutional strengthening in Codex Alimentarius in Caribbean countries: In July, the Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Quality (ACHIPIA), together with the IICA and with financial support from the USDA, organized a series of technical missions to launch a programme that will support institutional strengthening in five Caribbean countries: Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. These missions pursued two different objectives, with two different types of activities in each country: (i) raising awareness of the Codex Alimentarius among decision-makers; and (ii) institutional capacity building with the Codex community at the national level in order to strengthen the Codex National Committee.

1.5. These activities benefitted from the financial support of the USDA, Canada and the IICA's own resources. In addition, they were or will be supported by officials from the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

2 SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL, TECHNICAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

2.1. During the months of May and June, the IICA launched a pilot project in seven Caribbean countries (Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) to set up antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance programmes.

2.2. The initiatives formed part of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures project, which receives support from the 10th European Development Fund, under the programme "Support to CARIFORUM States in the Implementation of the Commitments Undertaken under the CARIFORUM-European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA): Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures", which is implemented by the IICA with support from the European Union.

2.3. This initiative was developed on the basis of the specific needs identified by the region, in collaboration with the College of Veterinary Medicine of Ohio State University (OSU).

2.4. **Virtual workshops on the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA):** With a view to making government officials, the private sector and the IICA technical staff in the Americas aware of the final regulations of the FSMA, on 11 and 18 May and 2 June, the IICA and the US FDA held three virtual workshops covering the state of implementation of the FSMA; the Final Rule for Produce Safety; the Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Foods; the Foreign Supplier Verification Program; and the Final Rule on Accredited Third Party Certification. Overall, there were more than a thousand connection points for the series of workshops.

2.5. **Workshop on good poultry farming and processing practices:** Lessons drawn from avian influenza. The event took place from 8 to 10 March in Valencia, Venezuela. Its purpose was to update knowledge and establish criteria to guarantee the quality and safety of poultry foods from the beginning to the end of the chain. The workshop promoted the application of good poultry practices as a strategy for preventing avian influenza and other diseases in the production units, with emphasis on the importance of complying with poultry production requirements in order to guarantee food safety, animal health and welfare, the security of workers and respect for the environment, and also encouraged integration between the public and private sectors and academic circles. Thirty people participated in the workshop.

2.6. **Project for the creation of a Virtual Regional Food Inspectors School:** More than 400 food inspectors from Central America and the Dominican Republic successfully completed the second instalment of the food inspectors course conducted from 20 October 2015 to 30 April 2016. A face-to-face meeting was held on 23, 24 and 25 of May in order to train the representatives of the Academic Council and the public sector from the Ministries of Agriculture on food safety auditing with the support of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Approximately 40 professionals were trained in this area. In addition, discussions were held at the Central American level on the development of a strategy to make the initiative sustainable once the project came to an end on 30 June.

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