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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**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 13 October 2017, 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. The third Codex colloquium of the year was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 19 to 21 September. The event brought together 71 delegates from 18 countries, a cooperation organization (IICA), the Chair of Codex Alimentarius, and members of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. The colloquium examined the agenda items of the Codex Committees on Food Hygiene, Food Labelling, and Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.

1.2. The goals of the colloquium were to foster technical discussions on each Codex Committee's various agenda items; to discuss issues of future strategic interest to the region and to Codex Alimentarius; to promote the identification of issues common to or of interest to the Latin American and Caribbean region and the United States; and to build capacity among delegates from participating countries.

1.3. Over the past four years, 11 Codex colloquia have been organized with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Three of them were interregional (with countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and from Africa participating). Just over 600 delegates from some 45 countries have taken part.

1.4. **Programme to promote participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings:** The IICA supported participation in the following Codex Committees:

- a. CCFFV20: Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, October 2017, held in Uganda. Support was provided for the participation of Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay in this meeting;
- b. CCFL44: Codex Committee on Food Labelling, October 2017, held in Paraguay. Support was provided for the participation of Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador and Nicaragua in this meeting;

- c. CCFH49: Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, November 2017, to be held in the United States. Support was provided for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

1.5. For each Codex Alimentarius meeting, the IICA supports the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean through virtual sessions to coordinate and examine agenda items. These sessions help the countries coordinate before each meeting and exchange views. The participation programme is funded by the USDA and implemented by the IICA.

2 OTHER ACTIVITIES

2.1. With respect to the modernization of national food safety systems, the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool for National Food Safety Monitoring Systems and Services was implemented in Chile. This provided an opportunity to present and discuss the results obtained, as reported in surveys, and to create a dialogue among the various participants in the National Food Safety System. It also allowed participants to identify constraints and opportunities and to propose strategies for reaching levels of performance deemed acceptable for the various elements assessed by the tool.

2.2. With respect to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the IICA recently worked with Colombia, Ecuador and Paraguay to standardize the steps that should be included in an animal health AMR surveillance plan. The IICA helped the countries set up their surveillance systems in accordance with WHO and OIE recommendations and in an integrated manner across institutions (Ministries of Agriculture, Ministries of Health and others). The primary aim behind this work is to help countries begin the process of standardizing imports so as to reduce the risk of introducing multi-resistant pathogens and their genetic determinants. The IICA has already worked with Ecuador and Paraguay, and work with Colombia is planned for November.

2.3. Also with respect to AMR, the IICA worked with the member countries of the Standing Veterinary Committee (CVP) of the southern region of the Americas (Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) on an AMR risk management strategy, with the following being achieved:

- information-sharing on the AMR situation worldwide;
- the current state of affairs in the region with respect to PNV AMR in the veterinary and food production sectors was discussed and analysed;
- the countries took note of and analysed the situation, identifying the needs in AMR research within the region's agricultural research institutions;
- the technical and operational needs for the implementation of national plans were determined;
- the structure and basic features of national AMR surveillance plans for the sector were discussed;
- national counterparts strengthened their relationships with each other and with the relevant international, cooperation and research organizations;
- consideration was given to the need for inter-institutional integration (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, the private sector and others) within each country so as to facilitate joint work on the issue.

2.4. Training of Preventive Controls Qualified Individuals: More than 65 participants were trained as preventive controls qualified individuals under the United States Food Safety Modernization Act in Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica. Their responsibilities, as set out in the Preventive Controls for Human Food regulation, include carrying out or overseeing: (1) the preparation of the food safety plan; (2) the validation of preventive controls; (3) the examination of records; and (4) a new analysis of the food safety plan. The events were organized and led by the USDA and the IICA with financial support from USAID.

2.5. The USDA, the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA) and the IICA held two workshops on quarantine fumigations in San José, Costa Rica. The workshops aimed to train technical personnel from Central American countries in the quarantine fumigation procedures on the basis of the USDA's Treatment Manual. A total of 79 Central American technical personnel with responsibility for fumigation operations at quarantine control points participated.

The workshops were conducted by experts from the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) and the practical component was coordinated by OIRSA technical staff.

2.6. The IICA trained 39 Caribbean professionals in ensuring compliance with safety standards for fresh agricultural exports in a subregional workshop held in Jamaica from 22 to 25 August. Twenty-four representatives from Jamaica participated, as did ten from Trinidad and Tobago, three from Barbados, one from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and one from Dominica.

2.7. Training Workshop on Good Agricultural Practices: From 7 to 11 July more than 50 members of the government, private and academic sectors were trained as trainers in good agricultural practices, with a focus on United States food safety legislation. Professionals from the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) led the initiative with support from the IICA and the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS).

2.8. The IICA trained more than 50 Latin American technical personnel in phytosanitary risk management from 3 to 5 October, using resources from USDA/APHIS. The overall objective of the workshop was to reinforce technical capacity in risk management so as to promote capacity building in National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). The specific goals were to promote interaction among professionals from NPPOs in the region and knowledge of the procedures they use, with an emphasis on border procedures; to identify best practices for reaching risk-management decisions on the basis of risk assessment; and to increase understanding of the responsibilities of the NPPOs, as an interrelated system, with a focus on the importance of effective channels of communication among risk analysis, surveillance, risk management and export certification departments.

For further information, please contact Robert Ahern (Robert.ahern@iica.int).

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