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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 31 January 2018, 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 CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

1.1. Technical training to enhance the political capacities of the JMPR: This activity was held in Ottawa, in Ontario, Canada, from 27 November to 1 December 2017. The technical training provided sought to enhance capacity and awareness in respect of the approaches and policies of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR), and to build LAC and international expert capacities through training on the joint WHO/FAO scientific advice programme. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and FAO funded and supported training for 17 technical experts in the area of pesticide and risk assessment. The training was given by four instructors, and a FAO representative was present at the meetings. Thirteen countries benefited from the training sessions: Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Greece, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Finland, Japan and the United Kingdom. The instructors were from Brazil, the United States, New Zealand and Canada.

1.2. Nicaragua – Chile twinning programme: Two events aimed at strengthening and raising awareness of the Codex Alimentarius in Nicaragua were held in Managua from 29 January to 1 February 2018. The events received technical support from the Government of Chile and funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

1.3. A risk assessment workshop was organized with a view to enhancing basic knowledge of food safety risk analysis. A second workshop on promotion and political positioning took place in the presence of high-level delegates.

1.4. Costa Rica – Brazil – PAHO twinning programme: In November 2017, the IICA held a Codex Alimentarius twinning programme event in Costa Rica. The event received technical support from PAHO and the Government of Brazil, and funding from PAHO and the USDA.

1.5. Veterinary service representatives from Costa Rica, public and private sector agri-food professionals, industry members, and academics met at the headquarters of the IICA to receive training and to discuss the importance of international food safety standards for public health and international trade.

1.6. Over five days, participants focused on exploring the implications of risk analysis in respect of veterinary drug residues, pesticides and contaminants in foods for human consumption, in accordance with the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) established in the Codex Alimentarius. Their aim was to identify existing information barriers and gaps with a view to ensuring that JECFA – JMPR have the scientific studies and data required to evaluate or re-evaluate a veterinary drug, pesticide or contaminant. The event was broadcast online to 158 viewers in 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

1.7. Virtual coordination sessions within the CCLAC framework: Thirteen virtual sessions have already been planned for 2018 as part of IICA support to CCLAC for communication and coordination activities. These sessions will take place prior to Codex meetings. All 33 CCLAC country members will be able to participate in the coordination sessions, and simultaneous interpretation will be available. The sessions seek to promote regional coordination and the identification of issues and common positions. The IICA technological platform used for these sessions was activated for the first time at a meeting of a Codex Alimentarius physical working group, thereby giving countries unable to attend the meeting physically the opportunity to do so remotely. The meeting in question was held in December in Santiago de Chile, within the framework of a CCFICS working group. The IICA very much looks forward to supporting this type of initiative more frequently and in an increasingly effective manner.

1.8. Virtual coordination sessions: In collaboration with the USDA, the IICA, through the Agricultural Health and Food Safety programme, will be holding four virtual preparatory sessions for Codex Alimentarius meetings. The aim of these sessions is to encourage technical discussion on the agenda items to be addressed at Code Alimentarius meetings. On this occasion, four events will be held: CCFA - 20 February 2018; CCCF - 1 March 2018; CCRVDF - 20 March 2018; and CCPR - 22 March 2018.

1.9. Codex Alimentarius meeting participation programme: In 2017, the IICA supported participation in nine Codex Alimentarius committees, providing 49 participation grants and support payments to a total of 22 countries. The participation programme is funded by the USDA and implemented by the IICA.

2 OTHER ACTIVITIES

2.1. In the area of national agricultural health and food safety system modernization, the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tool for national food safety monitoring systems, national plant health services and national animal health services was implemented in Jamaica. This provided an opportunity to present and discuss the results obtained from surveys, and helped generate dialogue among the various stakeholders. It also enabled participants to identify constraints and opportunities and to propose strategies for achieving the levels of performance deemed appropriate for the various elements assessed by the tool.

2.2. Capacity-building with a view to ensuring compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): The IICA, with the support of the USDA/FAS and USAID, continued to support this process by holding training workshops for trainers in Guatemala, Peru and Colombia. 130 professionals received training in this area and, in turn, undertook to train at least 15 participants per country free of charge.

For further information, please contact Robert Ahern (Robert.ahern@iica.int)
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), <http://www.iica.int>
