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Page: 1/2

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 28 October 2019, is being circulated at the request of 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). IICA would like to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

1 SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL FORUMS ASSOCIATED WITH SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

1.1 Private Sector Virtual Codex colloquium

1.1. A virtual Codex colloquium on issues covered by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) was held on 18 October 2019. Private sector representatives from ten countries participated in the event and discussed technical criteria with a view to improving understanding of the issues to be covered at the next CCFH meeting in Australia from 4 to 11 October 2019. This is the first time that IICA has hosted a colloquium exclusively for representatives of the private sector. The event was organized in partnership with the Food Industries Codex Coalition (FICC), which represents over 70 US food companies, beverage companies and trade associations keenly interested in the science based international standard setting activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). Once again, the event demonstrated how new information and communication technologies make it possible to hold events that while costing little, produce significant results.

1.2 Face-to-face Codex colloquia

1.2. A face-to-face colloquium was held in Brazil from 1 to 3 October 2019. Delegates from 18 countries discussed issues of strategic importance for the Latin American and Caribbean region and Northern region. Participants examined issues that were to be the focus of three upcoming meetings: (i) Food hygiene; (ii) Nutrition and foods for special dietary uses; and (iii) Antimicrobial Resistance.

1.3 Support for participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings

1.3. In the second half of this year, IICA will provide support through a competitive fund to facilitate participation in the meetings of the Codex Committees on Food Hygiene; Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses; and the meeting of the Ad hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance. Latin American and Caribbean countries participated in this fund.

1.4 Virtual coordination sessions

1.4. The support that IICA provides to countries of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) in the area of communication and coordination includes, prior to each Codex meeting, the provision of a virtual communication platform to enable coordination between the countries.

1.5 Workshops and courses

1.5. In Costa Rica, IICA hosted a workshop on scientific justification issues arising from the application of the WTO SPS Agreement. Representatives of nearly twenty countries attended the event organized in partnership with USDA and with the valued support of the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR). Matters related to the interpretation and practical implementation of the WTO SPS Agreement provisions related to risk assessment and determination of the appropriate level of protection by member countries were examined in depth by countries delegates to the WTO SPS Committee and SPS experts. Practical examples on the application of the WTO SPS Agreement on the proper definition of maximum residue levels (MRLs) of pesticides and measures applied to the control of antimicrobial resistance were also explored in the workshop. Considering the positive feedback received from participants, other editions of the event will be considered.

2 OTHER ACTIVITIES

2.1 International standards and regulations in regard to SPS measures

2.1.1 Strategy Session on OIE Guidelines

2.1. Aiming at improving coordination and promoting the development of harmonized comments on the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters, IICA will host the 4th edition of its Strategy Session organized in partnership and sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). All IICA member Countries are invited to send representatives to the Session which will take place in San Jose, Costa Rica, 13-14 November 2019.

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>
