
Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English/
Spanish

**ACTIONS AIMED AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO AGREEMENT ON
THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES
(SPS AGREEMENT)**

Information Submitted by the Inter-American Institute for
Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

1. The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) are invited to submit reports on activities they have carried out to contribute to the understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. Below are some of the initiatives that the IICA has undertaken, or will undertake in the near future, in pursuit of this objective.

Support for the active participation of the countries of the Americas in the SPS Committee

2. In conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the IICA carried out the first stage of the activity aimed at strengthening the active participation of Latin American and Caribbean countries in the SPS Committee. The second stage will begin with the twenty-eighth meeting of the SPS Committee and is aimed at achieving the level of interlinkage required to implement the SPS Agreement (see document G/SPS/GEN/427).

Actions directed at the Caribbean Region

3. Through the *Strengthening Agricultural Quarantine Services (SAQS)* project, Caribbean countries have become more aware of the complex nature of agricultural health and food safety services and of the need for all stakeholders to be involved in their management. The IICA has encouraged the creation of multi-sectoral committees, which will eventually lead to the establishment of national bodies. These committees are currently at various stages of development.

4. Through the SAQS project, consultations are under way on the possibility of establishing National Risk Management Units. Countries are being assisted in the development of action plans to respond to animal and plant health emergencies.

5. All CARIFORUM countries received training aimed at strengthening enquiry points and notification procedures. The training sessions were held in St. Kitts in July 2003, in collaboration with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the WTO.

6. Training courses were offered in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), traceability and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP). An externally funded project enabled the OECS to publish manuals on traceability and the GAPs of the OECS, as well as protocols for the operation of a National Certification Scheme for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. (For further information, contact Everton Ambrose: iica@candw.lc)

Support for international organizations

7. The IICA lent its support to the WTO SPS Committee at the regional workshop held in Uruguay from 21 to 23 July 2003. (For further information, contact Michael Bedoya: mbedoya@iica.org.ar.)

8. The IICA was involved in organizing and running the Regional Technical Consultation on Phytosanitary Measures, under the aegis of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The meeting, which was attended by many Latin America and Caribbean countries, was held in Bogota, Colombia, from 26 to 29 August. (For further information, contact Javier Esparza: jesparza@iica.org.co.)

9. The IICA is supporting the organization of an event on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), coordinated by OIE Americas, in conjunction with the IICA and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and scheduled for December 2003. (For further information, contact Michael Bedoya: mbedoya@iica.org.ar.)

HACCP training

10. The IICA continued its HACCP training programme, holding a further course in the Dominican Republic in August 2003. Furthermore, a number of instructors received training in this field and will, in turn, give courses in Guatemala, Panama, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. A CD-ROM on HACCP was also produced; it has been translated into English and will soon be ready for distribution in the Caribbean.

Information

11. Press releases, publications and weekly bulletins with information on animal and plant health and food safety are disseminated via the Andean Agricultural Health Information Network (<http://www.iicasaninet.net/>) and the AgriHealth Network (Red Agrosalud XXI at www.infoagro.net/salud). The websites of these two networks currently receive more than 3,000 hits per day and have some 4,000 registered users from 48 countries. (For further information, contact Eric Bolaños ebolano@iica.ac.cr, Dennis Bolaños dennis.bolano@iica.ac.cr or Juan Francisco Bolaños jfbolanos@iicasaninet.net.)

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Agricultural Health and Food Safety
<http://infoagro.net/salud>
