

**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)

The following communication, dated 10 March 2004, is circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

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 and in cooperation with other countries, the IICA continues to implement measures aimed at reinforcing the active participation of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in the SPS Committee. Among the main results of this activity is the continued strengthening in those countries of the institutional base for the administration and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The creation or strengthening of formal or informal national coordination committees is contributing to the sustainability of active participation by the countries in the SPS Committee (further information can be obtained from Eric Bolaños at erick.bolanos@iica.ac.cr, or Marianne McElroy at marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov).

Actions directed at the Caribbean region

3. Through the Strengthening Agricultural Quarantine Services (SAQS) project:

- (i) In Belize, a regional workshop known as Risk Analysis for Animal Health has been organized. This activity has involved the production of synchronized procedural manuals and the training of quarantine staff in risk analysis. Participants provided feedback on the manual prepared by the international consultant and provided input for the preparation of a final version.
- (ii) In Trinidad and Tobago, a regional workshop was organized on the subject of plant quarantine. Training was provided in the application of harmonized quarantine procedures and pest and disease surveillance systems, as well as certification and inspection procedures. The work was conducted using a training CD-ROM on the subject. A further workshop was organized on accreditation of private and professional animal health laboratories in Trinidad and Tobago.

- (iii) A regional workshop was held in Guyana on inspection and certification of live animals and animal products and bi-products. As in the case of other workshops, the work was carried out on the basis of a CD-ROM specially produced by the consultant.
- (iv) A regional workshop was held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on the accreditation of private professionals in the field of plant health. This activity focused on the regulation of programmes that were being developed so as to enable private professionals to perform certain functions under the supervision of the Government. More information can be obtained from Everton Ambrose at iica@candw.lc.

Training in HACCP

4. The IICA has maintained its training programme in the HAACP through video conferencing, face-to-face courses and the use of CD-ROMs. The strategy has been directed towards training instructors in order to enhance the course's outreach while at the same time maintaining special programmes for the private sector. The beneficiary countries have included Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Panama, Nicaragua, Peru and Mexico. Further information can be obtained from Karina Ramírez at karina.ramirez@iica.ac.cr.

Other Activities

5. Support for the international meeting on the cotton boll weevil (*Anthonomus grandis* Boheman) in the framework of the Southern Cone Phytosanitary Committee (COSAVE) for certain countries of the southern American region. Further information can be obtained from Graciela Gómez at ggomez@iica.org.py.

6. Training Seminars for technical coordinators of vaccination programmes in the context of the campaign to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease in Paraguay, organized by the National Animal Health Service (SENACSA) with the technical support of the IICA. Further information can be obtained from Graciela Gómez at ggomez@iica.org.py.

7. Together with the Pan American Health Organization, the IICA has supported a hemispheric workshop on challenges, prospects and development of capacities in the countries of the Americas with respect to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy as an emerging disease. Further information can be obtained from Patricia Pentney at ppentney@iicacan.org.

Information

8. 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, 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 erick.bolanos@iica.ac.cr, dennis.bolanos@iica.ac.cr or Juan Francisco Bolaños at jfbolanos@iicasaninet.net).

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