

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

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

The following communication, received on 29 September 2006, is being circulated at the request of the 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. Accordingly, the IICA wishes to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

**I. SPS INITIATIVE FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS**

2. In conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and with the collaboration of six countries that serve as a steering committee (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, United States and Mexico), the IICA continues to implement the SPS Initiative of the Americas (the Initiative).

3. This Initiative, which came into force in October 2002, has now contributed to 13 consecutive SPS Committee meetings, supporting the active participation of the countries of the Americas and helping them build their capacity in the SPS area. For this particular meeting, the Initiative enabled 28 capital-based experts from 28 countries of the Americas to participate.

4. Through its network of offices in its member countries, the IICA promoted the establishment of national forums to follow-up the agendas of the SPS-related international organizations, in particular the SPS Committee. In this connection, we would like to share information concerning three activities conducted in Honduras, Paraguay and Venezuela.

5. A workshop was held from 23 to 25 August in Honduras to draw up the agenda of the National SPS Committee. It was attended by the representatives of different government ministries, academic circles, and the private sector. As a result, the National Committee now has a list of subject areas and priority activities, as well as officials responsible for these subject areas and activities in the different sectors and institutions, with a view to improving the implementation of the SPS Agreement.

6. It should be noted that the Agricultural and Livestock Service of Chile cooperated in this activity by providing an expert to exchange experiences on SPS matters. This partnership between

those requesting technical cooperation, the cooperation agencies and cooperating countries is useful for capacity-building at the institutional level.

7. In Paraguay, the National Technical Committee on SPS drafted and approved its internal Rules of Procedure with the support of the IICA for the technical secretariat. Moreover, the National Technical Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the IICA organized and implemented, in the framework of the STDF-19 Project, an SPS training seminar for all of the Committee members and other public sector officials directly involved in the implementation of the SPS Agreement. The event took place in August of this year.

8. As reported at the last meeting of this Committee, the WTO Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation, working with the Agriculture and Commodities Division and the IICA, held a session to follow up the First Specialized WTO Course on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, enabling participants to provide feedback on the content of the workshop and the challenges and successes encountered in implementing the projects in their respective countries. Once again, the Agricultural and Livestock Service of Chile provided support in the form of an expert. This follow-up session was attended by 16 countries.

9. For further information on the Initiative, contact: [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int) (Eric Bolaños), [marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov](mailto:marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov) (Marianne McElroy) or [henry.schmick@usda.gov](mailto:henry.schmick@usda.gov) (Henry Schmick). For further details concerning the follow-up event, contact [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int) (Eric Bolaños) or [Joao.Magalhaes@wto.org](mailto:Joao.Magalhaes@wto.org) (Joao Magalhães).

## **II. STRENGTHENING OFFICIAL AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SERVICES BY DEVELOPING A COMMON VISION AND JOINT ACTION**

10. As a follow up to the institutional modernization measures that the IICA continues to implement in its member countries, the common vision and joint action approach was applied in a number of cases.

11. In Paraguay, the National Plant and Seed Quality and Health Service (SENAVE), with the technical support of the IICA and the participation of the private sector, embarked on a process of institutional modernization and adjustment of its organizational structure, and on the preparation of operational and procedural manuals.

12. In Paraguay and Uruguay, the methodology developed in connection with the Performance, Vision and Strategy Instrument (PVS) developed jointly with the OIE was applied. In Ecuador, the food safety tool was applied in cooperation with PAHO.

13. For further information contact [ana.cordero@iica.int](mailto:ana.cordero@iica.int) (Ana Cordero).

## **III. SUPPORT FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION**

14. The IICA has various bulletins and channels of communication to promote the exchange of information on SPS matters and the work of the WTO, the relevant international organizations, and the regional organizations.

15. The electronic bulletin CODEX-MSF *Opinion Forum* specializes in the events taking place in the Codex Alimentarius and the SPS Committee. The bulletin reports and analyses standards and activities that have taken place, and aims to enhance the dissemination and study of these matters. Its readership comprises first and foremost the countries of South America, but it is available to all members at [www.iica.org.ar](http://www.iica.org.ar). For further information contact [mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar](mailto:mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar) (Lourdes Fonalleras).

16. The information system AGROSALUD is dedicated to the distribution of information on agricultural health and food safety, and the areas it covers include standards and actions carried out at the WTO and relevant international organizations. It is available at [www.infoagro.net/salud](http://www.infoagro.net/salud) in Spanish, and [www.agrihealth.ws](http://www.agrihealth.ws) in English. For further information, contact [ericka.calderon@iica.int](mailto:ericka.calderon@iica.int) (Ericka Calderón).

#### IV. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

17. In the countries of the Andean region (Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru) an analysis has been undertaken of the current situation with respect to the issue of traceability for certain agri-food chains that are considered to have priority. The process involves considerable public/private coordination. An investment project is also being prepared with the view to implementing a "country project" in this area. The Government of Brazil has been an important partner in implementing the workshops at the national level. For more information, contact [jflores@iica.int.ve](mailto:jflores@iica.int.ve) (Jaime Flores).

18. The IICA Office in Argentina continues to lend technical support to the Secretariat for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food of Argentina (SAGPyA), specifically to the Chair of the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), and the SPS Enquiry Point in Argentina. For more information, contact [mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar](mailto:mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar) (Lourdes Fonalleras).

19. With resources provided by the USDA, the IICA supported the FAO and the IPPC for the workshop on the review of plant health standards, held on 21 and 22 August in Santiago, Chile. The participants who received funding were urged to coordinate with their countries' representatives on the SPS Committee and to give particular attention to the draft standard on regionalization. The objective of this effort was to promote the joint work by specialists covering the relevant international organizations and the SPS Committee. For further information, contact [maureen.obando@iica.int](mailto:maureen.obando@iica.int) (Maureen Obando).

20. From 30 October to 2 November, the IICA will be working together with the OIE, the IPPC and the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission in a regional workshop organized by the WTO in Colombia. The workshop will be attended by ten countries of South America. For further details contact [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int) (Eric Bolaños).

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