

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

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

The following communication, received on 22 June 2010, is circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to promote understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The IICA wishes to present some of the actions or activities it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

I. TRAINING IN RISK COMMUNICATION

2. The IICA held a series of workshops on risk communication as part of the IICA/STDF-108 project, based on countries' requests and their capacity-building needs in this area.

3. A good risk communication strategy in emergency situations can have positive repercussions both in the sanitary field and for trade. Accordingly, the workshops were so designed and run as to provide participants with methodological tools focussing on the merits of a good strategy. The workshops adopted a very practical approach and targeted technical staff members of ministries of agriculture.

4. The workshops were held in Colombia (March, 50 participants), Ecuador (June, 20 participants) and Peru (June, 19 participants).

Further information can be obtained from Amy Delgado (amy.delgado@iica.int) or Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.molins@iica.int).

II. PROJECT TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION IN CODEX ALIMENTARIUS MEETINGS

5. The IICA implemented the second chapter of the project to support participation by the Americas in Codex Alimentarius committees. This chapter included the meetings of three Codex committees: General Principles, Pesticide Residues and Contaminants in Foods. The countries that qualified for the meeting of the Codex Committee on General Principles were Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Peru; for the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues, the countries were Ecuador, Uruguay, Peru, Paraguay, Guatemala and Ecuador; and for the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods, the countries were Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru and Argentina.

Unfortunately, only some delegates were able to attend the meetings of the Pesticide Residues and Contaminants in Foods committees owing to the situation caused by the volcano in Iceland.

6. We hope to continue the programme in the second half of the year, along with capacity-building efforts in Codex committees at national level.

Further information can be obtained from Ricardo Molins (ricardo.molins@iica.int) or Eric Bolaños (erick.bolanos@iica.int).

III. INSTITUTION BUILDING FOR NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES

7. As support for countries' participation in the Codex committees, the IICA assists institution-building efforts by implementing information systems that make it easier for the national committees and sub-committees to manage information and promote national positions.

8. The Codex information management system has now been adapted for Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala and El Salvador. Ecuador was the first country to implement it, both for the Codex Alimentarius and SPS. These information systems are available to any country interested in adapting them.

9. In addition to these information systems, the IICA is in the process of producing a handbook of good practices for the management of Codex Alimentarius national committees and technical sub-committees.

Further information can be obtained from Ricardo Molins (ricardo.molins@iica.int) or Ericka Calderon (Ericka.calderon@iica.int).

IV. TRAINING IN INTERNATIONAL STANDARD-SETTING PROCESSES

10. The IICA held workshops to raise awareness of SPS and provide training in international standard-setting processes in Jamaica, Barbados and Bahamas/Belize, and will shortly be holding another workshop in Trinidad and Tobago in which Suriname and Guyana will participate. So far, 150 people have received technical training and senior officials have taken part in raising awareness about the importance of investing in SPS.

11. The workshops have focussed on good practices for participation, the importance of international organizations, their standard-setting processes and the benefits to be reaped from such organizations.

12. The courses benefited from the support of specialists from Canada, United States, Belize, Argentina and Uruguay who presented cases of success and recounted their countries' experiences in participating in and benefiting from international bodies.

13. It should be noted that funding provided by the United States enabled Tonga, Somoa, Fiji and the Cook Islands to take part in the Jamaica workshop, which focussed on the benefits of economies of scale and the similarities between the island nations of the South Pacific and those of the Caribbean.

Further information can be obtained from Carol Thomas (carol.thomas@iica.int) or Ana Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int).

V. HANDBOOKS OF GOOD PRACTICES FOR PARTICIPATION

14. The IICA has published handbooks of good practices for participation in the WTO SPS Committee, Codex Alimentarius and the IPPC. The Andean Region and Central Region countries will be holding workshops on this topic on 27, 28 and 29 July. The handbooks are intended as a management tool to assist officials with little experience in representing their governments. The handbooks can be found at <http://www.iica.int>.

Further information can be obtained from Ricardo Molins (ricardo.molins@iica.int) or Eric Bolaños (erick.bolanos@iica.int).

VI. ELFS PROGRAMME: EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN FOOD SAFETY SERIES

15. The second module of the Executive Leadership in Food Safety (ELFS) Series was given in Minnesota, United States. The main focus of the module was public/private linkage and the objectives included:

- Understanding the main concepts of *One Health Leadership* (including how they can work in a government context).
- Identifying key principles and practices for forging successful partnerships with the private sector.
- Building capacity for evaluating the effectiveness of food safety management.
- Identifying essential principles and practices for involving the citizenry in food safety issues.
- Understanding all the corporate operations involved in agricultural production.
- Identifying key principles for coordinated responses to outbreaks of food-borne diseases.

16. Thirty-four representatives from 20 countries in the Americas took part in this module, which is being implemented in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the University of Minnesota.

Further information can be obtained from Ricardo Molins (ricardo.molins@iica.int) or Ana Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int).

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