

**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 14 June 2011, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations to 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.

**1. Support for participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings**

2. Using resources from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the IICA is implementing a project to support participation by IICA member countries in Codex Alimentarius meetings.

3. The purpose of the project is to support active participation and strengthen common regional interests. Support is therefore given to initiatives that can be managed for that purpose by the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC).

4. The fourth phase of the project is currently being implemented as follows: Fresh fruit and vegetables; food import and export inspection and certification; and foods for special dietary uses. The end of the fourth phase in 2011 will see the culmination of three years of support for country participation in different Codex Committees.

5. In addition to facilitating participation in the work of the committees, the project uses the IICA handbooks on good practices for participation and also provides for biannual courses on the Codex regulatory process. As from this year, the handbook on management of Codex committees and subcommittees for institution building will also be available to countries. This will serve to combine active participation with capacity building.

6. It is hoped that more resources will be made available for continuation of the project, in order to promote capacity building as well as active participation. For further information, please contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int), Eric Bolaños (Erick.Bolanos@iica.int).

## **2. Support for the National Codex Committee in Uruguay**

7. With a view to supporting the repositioning of Uruguay's National Codex Committee as a provider of training and vehicle for channelling information on the national position, as well as that of the Technical Subcommittees as national experts in the operation, procedures and standards of the Codex Alimentarius, work proceeded between November 2010 and April 2011 on the framing of a multimedia communication plan (comprising an external communication and an internal communication plan) and a training plan.

8. The aim of these plans is to lay the foundations and serve as guides for further work in the inter-institutional sphere, covering a broad range of internal and external communication activities; those already implemented include:

- Awareness workshop: "*La importancia de Comunicar lo que hacemos*" (The importance of communicating what we do), 15 November 2010;
- Internal communication workshop: "*La Comunicación pide la palabra*" (Communication requests the floor), 15 March 2011;
- Course No. I: "*Gestión del Codex Alimentarius en Uruguay*" (Managing the Codex Alimentarius in Uruguay), 17-18 March 2011;
- Course No. II: "*Gestión del Codex Alimentarius en Uruguay*" (Managing the Codex Alimentarius in Uruguay), 22-23 March 2011;
- Multi-topic workshop: "*La labor de Uruguay en el Codex Alimentarius*" (Uruguay's work within the Codex Alimentarius) (external communication workshop), 29 March 2011;
- Regional electronic forum: "*El Codex Alimentarius en el MERCOSUR Ampliado*" (The Codex Alimentarius in the enlarged MERCOSUR), 31 March to 15 April 2011.

For further information, please contact: Alejandra Bentancur (alejandra.bentacur@iica.int).

## **3. Support for Costa Rica's management of the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean**

9. Under the General Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Health and the IICA, the latter provided support in developing the profile of a project entitled "Strengthening of Costa Rica's National Codex Committee and Focal Point to fulfil the role of coordinator of the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC)".

10. The purpose of this project is to promote capacity building within the National Codex Committee and to support it in its future task as CCLAC coordinator. For further information, please contact: Eric Bolaños (Erick.Bolanos@iica.int) or Sacha Trelles (Sacha.Trelles@iica.int).

## **4. Study on the impact of private standards**

11. The study on the impact of private standards on the production and marketing of bovine meat in the Southern region of the Americas was completed in a joint effort involving the IICA, the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP) and the Agricultural Insertion Program (made up of the INAI Foundation - International Agricultural Negotiations Institute, the Dairy

Industry Centre (SIL), the Argentine Rural Society (SRA), the Argentine Rural Confederations, the Argentine Agrarian Federation, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF)).

12. The objectives of this study were: (i) To conduct in-depth qualitative research in order to identify the costs incurred by producers and exporting enterprises in the bovine meat sector in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Chile in implementing and demonstrating compliance with the private standards required by the retail chains and other food industries; and (ii) to determine the role of governments regarding private standards and the legitimacy of such standards.

13. The study can be downloaded from: <http://www.infoagro.net/salud>; <http://www.insercionagricola.org.ar/>; <http://www.iica.org.uy/> and <http://www.cvpconosur.org/>. For further information, please contact: Lourdes Fonalleras (Lourdes.Fonalleras@iica.int).

## **5. Drawing up a profile for a Food Inspectors School**

14. The IICA is currently preparing a project profile for a Regional Food Inspectors School for Central America. The project is based on two key pillars: (i) in terms of safety, the aim is to adopt risk- and process-based inspection in place of sanitary inspection; and (ii) from a commercial and regulatory standpoint, the project seeks to contribute to the opening and preservation of export markets and to reduce the "sanitary" gap between internal and external markets, as well as to expand the intra-regional market by introducing economic and customs integration schemes providing for harmonization of both regulations and protocols such as that governing the inspection process.

15. The advisory consortium of universities and other institutions that is to provide support in preparing the project document and assist with the subsequent running of the school has already been set up and presented to the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF). The consortium comprises the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (United States), the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain), the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the University of Costa Rica and the Santa Fe Food Safety Agency (Argentina). For further information, please contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int).

## **6. PVS implementation in the Dominican Republic**

16. The Agricultural Health and Food Safety Program implemented the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) tools for National Food Safety Services and the Plant Protection Organization in the Dominican Republic between 11 and 19 May. For further information, please contact: Ana Cordero (Ana.Cordero@iica.int).

## **7. Courses on animal health risk assessment**

17. The IICA, together with the University of California-Davis, organized a distance-learning course on animal health risk assessment for 17 countries of the Americas and 120 technical personnel. The course was held separately for the Southern, Andean and Central regions and took place between 9 May and 3 June (one week for each region). For further information, please contact: Ericka Calderon (Ericka.calderon@iica.int).

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