

**ACTIONS AIMED AT IMPLEMENTING 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 2 July 2012, is being circulated at the request of IICA.

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

Promoting participation in multilateral forums associated with the SPS Committee

2. In its previous communication (G/SPS/GEN/1146), IICA reported on the completion of the project "Promoting Participation of the Americas in Codex Alimentarius Committees", funded by the Government of the United States and IICA. We now wish to report on the contribution provided by the Government of Canada to support the participation of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in the meetings of the Pesticide Residues and Food Labelling Committees.

3. We also wish to inform this Committee that the Government of Brazil has expressed interest in carrying out a project aimed at strengthening and supporting, along with IICA, the Codex Committees of LAC. This project could be added to the efforts of the United States and Canada to support participation and capacity building in LAC.

4. Between March and July of this year, IICA continued to hold coordination events related to the Codex Alimentarius, supporting the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) with virtual meetings. These sessions have been of great benefit for the CCLAC, enabling it to identify topics of common interest and move forward in the formulation of regional positions. Recently, coordination sessions have been held in connection with Pesticide Residues, Food Labelling, General Principles, and the Commission.

5. Also, as part of the process of supporting the CCLAC, IICA coordinated and participated in a mission designed to establish closer relations and exchange experiences between Costa Rica (Coordinator of the CCLAC) and two countries of the Caribbean (Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago). The objective was to encourage closer ties between CCLAC Coordination and the Caribbean Region. The official from Costa Rica had the opportunity to meet with the national committees, focal points and high-level officials. A work plan was drawn up for improving regional cohesion.

6. IICA lent support to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in reviewing the virtual course on Pest Risk Analysis for the Andean Region and provided inputs to improve online materials. The IPPC received documents on how to adapt the course for the Southern and Caribbean Regions. For further information, contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int) or Eric Bolaños (Erick.Bolanos@iica.int).

Development of technical and institutional capacities

7. The IICA Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) instruments for Phytosanitary Services and Food Safety Systems were applied in Jamaica as part of the institutional modernization process under way in that country. For further information, contact: Carol Thomas (carol.thomas@iica.int) or Ana Marisa Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int).

8. For the second time, IICA applied the PVS instruments for Plant Health, Animal Health and Food Safety in Ecuador as part of the institutional modernization process under way in that country. The results of these applications were compared with those of the first application as a means of measuring the continuous improvement of the services. For further information, contact: Ana Marisa Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int).

9. In Costa Rica IICA is supporting two institutional modernization processes with the plant and animal health authorities, i.e. the State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) to develop the investment component of its strategic plan, and the National Animal Health Service (SENASA) to prepare its strategic plan. For further information, contact: Sacha Trelles (sacha.trelles@iica.int) or Alejandra Diaz (Alejandra.diaz@iica.int).

10. From 9 to 14 April, the fourth module of the Second Series of the Executive Leadership in Food Safety (ELFS) Program was held in Panama, bringing the series to a close; 34 professionals from 20 countries of the hemisphere were trained and educated in topics of leadership and food safety. The participants reached agreements aimed at consolidating the current network. The initiative received support from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Global Initiative for Food Systems Leadership of the University of Minnesota and IICA. For further information, contact: Ana Marisa Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int) or Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int).

11. A Regional Workshop on Inspection and Certification in Animal Health, Plant Health, and Food Safety was held in March and attended by 12 officials from each Andean country (Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia). The event was held jointly with the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and with support from Agriculture and Agrifood Canada (AAFC). In addition to receiving training in inspection procedures, the participants identified needs and opportunities for cooperation in these fields. For further information, contact: Jaime Flores (jaime.flores@iica.int).

12. A simulated roundtable exercise on foot and mouth disease was held for the Caribbean Region, involving online simultaneous participation in the following countries or territories: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Puerto Rico, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the US Virgin Islands.

13. The Standards and Trade Development Facility approved a novel project for the creation of a Virtual Regional Food Inspectors School for Central America and the Dominican Republic. Implementation of the project will begin in July 2012. For further information, contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int).

Publications

14. The following publications can be found at:

<http://www.iica.int/esp/programas/sanidad/Paginas/default.aspx>:

- (a) The Belize medfly programme. A case study on maintaining a medfly surveillance and eradication programme (available in English only);
- (b) COSAVE: *Una experiencia de integración regional* (A regional integration experience) (available in Spanish only);
- (c) *Incidencia de los requisitos privados para los alimentos en el cono Sur* (Impact of private food standards in the Southern Cone) (available in Spanish only).

Future projects

15. IICA will earmark resources in the near future to implement the following projects: (i) improvement of Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis control and eradication programmes by coordinating the work in animal health and public health and the use of innovative tools; (ii) introduction of sanitary early warning systems in territories susceptible to climate change; (iii) implementation of a group traceability system for beef in Bolivia, drawing on the experience acquired in Costa Rica through the STDF-funded project 116; and (iv) creation of a Virtual School for Phytosanitary Inspectors in South America. For further information, contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int).

Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Agricultural Health and Food Safety
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