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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**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 4 October 2013, is being distributed at the request of the IICA.

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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 the understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The IICA wishes to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

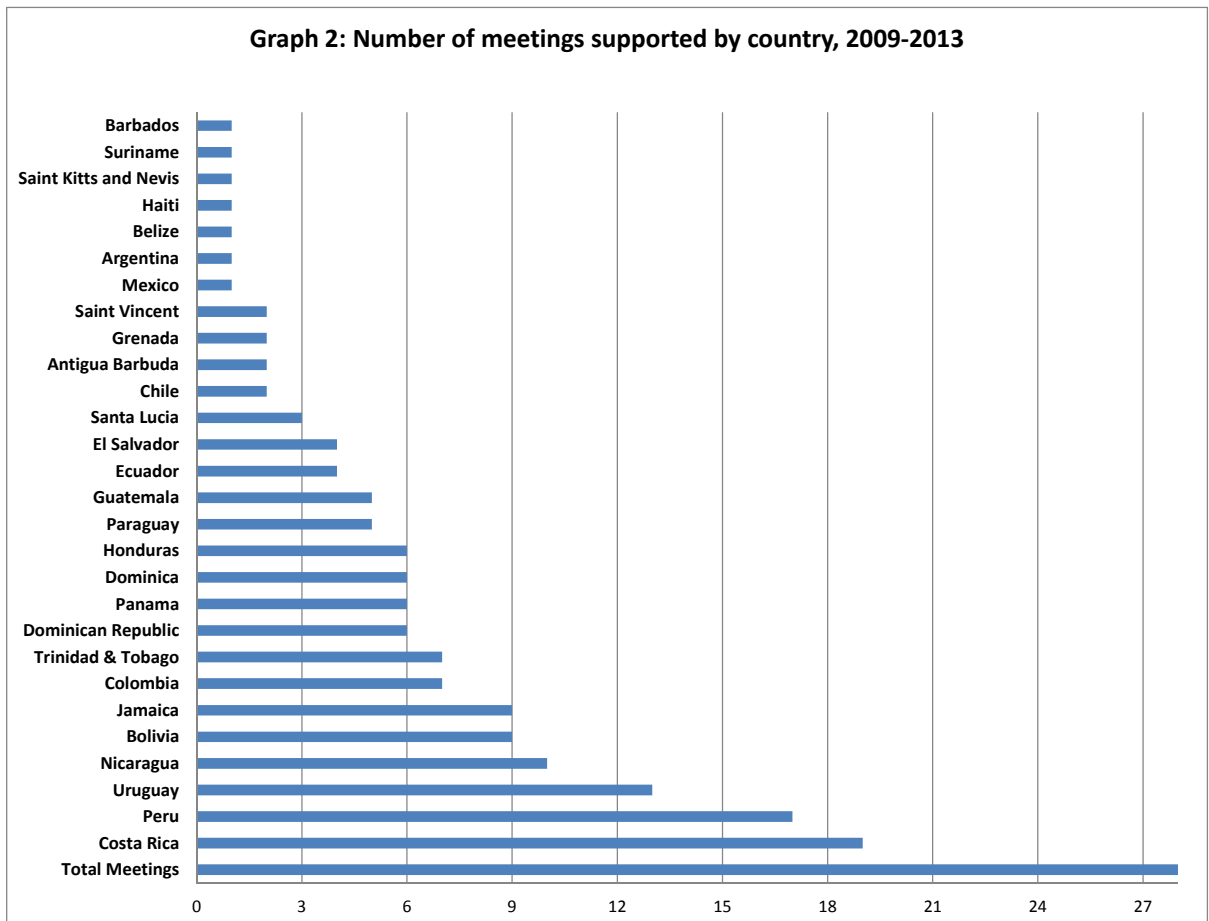
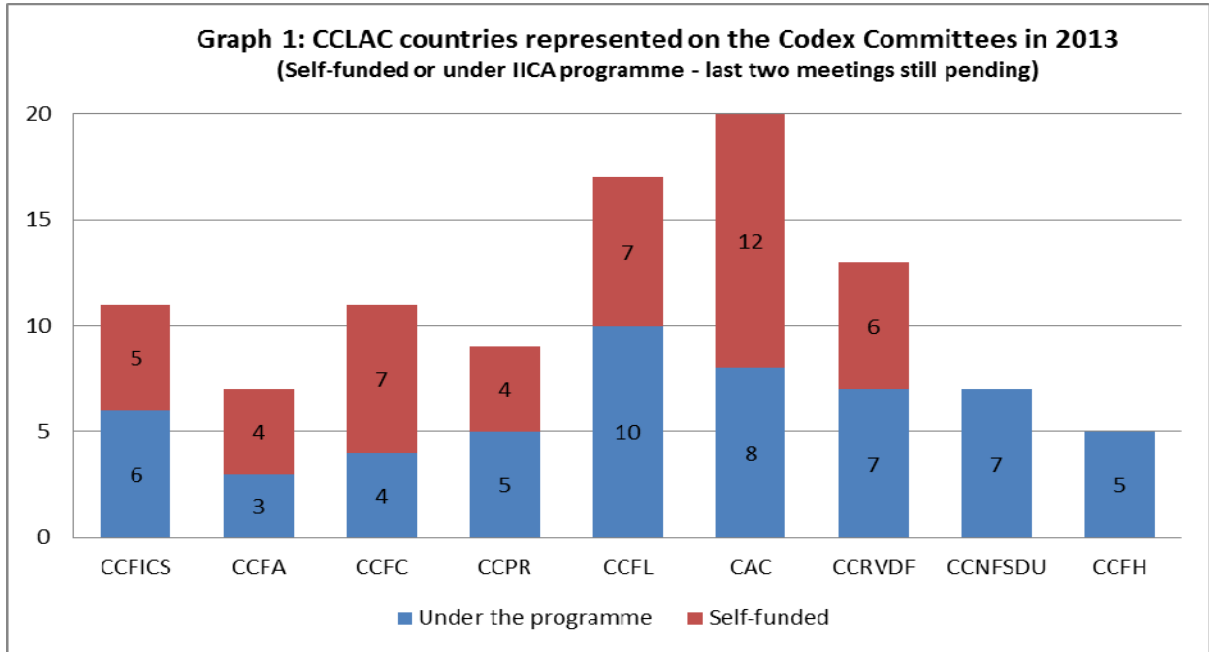
**1 SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (CAPACITY BUILDING AND  
RELATIONSHIP WITH MULTILATERAL FORUMS)**

2. As part of the Programme to Promote Participation in the Codex Alimentarius in the Americas, support was given during the last months of the year for participation in three Codex meetings: (i) Residues of veterinary drugs; (ii) Nutrition and foods for special dietary uses; (iii) Food hygiene.

3. In 2013, support was provided for nine Codex Committees, and 55 officials from 18 countries received financial support for participation. This year, the programme financed 35% to 60% of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean present at the meetings (Graph 1), contributing to a significant boost in the number of countries from the region participating. Data for the meetings on hygiene and special dietary uses are not yet available, since the meetings have not yet taken place.

4. At the end of this year, the programme will have supported in total 28 Codex meetings and 12 committees. Four countries have ten or more contributions, a group of ten countries have received between nine and five contributions, and 14 countries have received between four and one contributions (Graph 2).

5. In addition to the support for participation component, the IICA is conducting the following capacity building or standardization activities:



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- (i) Support for the drafting of a proposed regional standard for quinoa: in view of the importance of this crop for certain countries in Latin America added to the fact that the FAO has designated this year "International Year of Quinoa", it seemed appropriate to launch a support programme for the development of this standard;
  - (ii) Support to Peru for the launching of its Codex Strategic Plan and celebration of the Codex's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday: September saw the organization of a high-level event, well attended at the national level, with a view to raising the national community's awareness of the Codex;
  - (iii) A 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for the Codex is scheduled to take place in Costa Rica in November;
  - (iv) In October, the IICA will be supporting a Codex event in El Salvador with a view to raising the national community's awareness of the Codex.
6. The "IPPC Workshops for the analysis of draft international standards for phytosanitary measures for the Caribbean and Latin American regions" were conducted as part of the letter of understanding between the IICA and the IPPC Secretariat. These workshops have a number of objectives: firstly, to promote dialogue between the contracting parties and to encourage their active participation in the preparation of the ISPMs, and secondly, to assist the contracting parties in familiarizing themselves with the organization and functioning of the IPPC Secretariat and its subsidiary bodies.
7. Both events took place in September. The Caribbean region event took place in Trinidad and Tobago for English-speaking countries, and was attended by 13 countries and 18 delegates. The second one took place at IICA headquarters in Costa Rica for Spanish speaking countries, and was attended by 22 delegates from 16 countries.
8. The regional phytosanitary protection organizations (COSAVE, OIRSA) as well as the IPPC Secretariat and the IICA participated in the events and provided financial support.
9. These workshops examined the five phytosanitary standards currently under consultation, as well as the various IPPC Secretariat projects and other related matters:
- (i) management of phytosanitary risks in the international movement of wood;
  - (ii) movement of growing media in association with plants for planting in international trade;
  - (iii) phytosanitary procedures for fruit-fly management;
  - (iv) amendment to ISPM 5;
  - (v) preliminary draft standard: Minimizing pest movement by sea containers.
10. On 27 August 2013, a meeting of the Inter-American Group for Coordination on Plant Protection (GICSV), an organization which brings together the regional plant protection organizations (RPPOs) of the Americas, was held in Uruguay to review the results of the workshop on "Introduction to electronic phytosanitary certification under the IPPC (ePhyto)" and the 2012-2013 work plan. It was agreed that the annual meeting of the GICSV would be held on 21 or 22 November 2013 at IICA headquarters in Costa Rica.
11. From 26 to 30 August 2013, the IICA took part in the 25<sup>th</sup> IPPC Technical Consultation among RPPOs with the participation of the IPPC/FAO Secretariat and Bureau and the RPPOs of Asia and the Pacific, the Southern Cone, Europe and the Mediterranean, North America, Central America and the Dominican Republic, and the Pacific. The consultation focused, *inter alia*, on the main pests that are currently of concern and the emerging pests in each of the different regions, matters relating to national information requirements, electronic certification, and the establishment of the RPPO for the Caribbean.
12. From 27 to 29 of August 2013, the IICA conducted a workshop entitled "Managing International Trade Agreements". The event was designed for officials from the regional headquarters of the Ministry of Agriculture and Official Services, and addressed subjects relating to trade negotiations, agriculture, and the WTO SPS Agreement.
13. June 2012 saw the inauguration of a WTO Reference Centre at the IICA. Since then, the Centre has been working to promote and disseminate products and services and has been

engaged in technical assistance activities for the 34 IICA member States, including government, business and academic circles and the general public.

14. In the year following its entry into operation, it was the technical consultation service that was in highest demand. From June 2012 to June 2013, the WTO-IICA Reference Centre handled **352 technical consultations** on general WTO-related matters, specific trade dispute issues, trade databases, trade and tariff profiles, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, agriculture notifications, agricultural subsidies, etc. It also organized **54 dissemination and promotion sessions** for different sectors on the services offered by the WTO-IICA Reference Centre. During its first year, the Centre received a total of **56 visitors** from a variety of sectors in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Finally, the Reference Centre published **seven technical bulletins** on subjects such as WTO technical training resources, FAQs concerning the Reference Centre, WTO international trade glossary, etc.

## **2 SUPPORT FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

15. The IICA organized a training event in the Dominican Republic entitled "Introductory risk-based food inspection workshop for food inspectors". The event was held from 27 to 30 August 2013 at the Agricultural and Forestry Development Centre (CEDAF), and was attended by 27 inspectors from the official agricultural food inspection service of the Dominican Republic.

16. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional workshop on phytosanitary inspection and quarantine took place in Trinidad and Tobago from 5 to 16 August 2013, on the campus of the University of the West Indies. It was organized jointly by the University, USDA/APHIS and the FAO, and was attended by 23 participants from 16 countries in the region.

17. In August, the IICA organized two work sessions entitled "Microbiological criteria proposal for unprocessed foods" and "Proposed rules for Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA) of microbiological criteria for unprocessed foods" in support of the Central American Customs Union process. Both sessions were organized by the Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council.

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Agricultural Health and Food Safety  
<http://www.infoagro.net/salud>  
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