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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**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 28 June 2019, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

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

1 SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL FORUMS ASSOCIATED WITH SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

1.1 Codex colloquia

1.1. During the first half of 2019, the IICA, together with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) held six virtual Codex Alimentarius colloquia.

Subject of colloquium	Date of colloquium	Number of participating countries
General principles (31 CCGP)	21 February	29 countries
Food additives (51 CCFA)	28 February	22 countries
Pesticide residues (51 CCPR)	20 March	20 countries
Food labelling (45 CCFL)	26 March	24 countries
Contaminants in foods (13 CCCF)	29 March	21 countries
Methods of analysis and sampling (40 CCMAS)	10 May	13 countries

1.2. Countries from the Codex region of Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), the United States and Canada participated in the colloquia.

1.3. From 18 to 19 June, a face-to-face colloquium was held in Costa Rica, with the participation of 18 countries. The event focused on the agenda items discussed in the Executive Committee and the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the first half of July.

1.4. These activities were coordinated and financed by the USDA, with the collaboration of the coordinator of the CCLAC and the IICA.

1.2 Promotion of participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings

1.5. Under the Programme to Promote Participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings, the IICA, with financing from the USDA, promoted the participation of 12 countries from the CCLAC region and the Codex region of Asia (CCASIA) in the 42nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

1.3 Virtual coordination sessions

1.6. The support that the IICA provides to CCLAC countries in the area of communication and coordination includes, prior to each Codex meeting, the provision of a virtual communication platform to enable coordination between the countries. During the first half of the year, support was provided for 12 meetings.

1.4 Support for the study of OIE standards

1.7. From 24 to 25 April, a strategic session was held at the IICA headquarters for the analysis of several chapters of the OIE Terrestrial Code. The event was held for the third year in a row, and served as excellent preparation for participants prior to the World Assembly of OIE delegates. It was organized with funding from and in collaboration with the USDA.

1.5 Support for WTO training workshops

1.8. The IICA continues to provide support for and follow-up to the Advanced Course on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures held in November 2018, through the development of and assistance for country projects carried out by participants.

2 OTHER ACTIVITIES

2.1 Phytosanitary intelligence

2.1. During the week beginning 17 June, the first stage of a process to build phytosanitary intelligence capacities in Argentina and Chile was completed. Specialists from the National Agriculture and Food Quality and Health Service (SENASA) of Argentina and the Agriculture and Livestock Service (SAG) of Chile met in Mendoza to establish a framework for sanitary and phytosanitary intelligence systems, which will be implemented in parallel, with support from the IICA.

2.2. At the event, concepts and objectives were defined, tools were identified and preliminary work streams were developed, with a view to improving phytosanitary surveillance through the development of technology, preparing reports on international threats and developing epidemiological models for pests of concern.

2.2 Antimicrobial resistance

2.3. The IICA continues to support its member countries in the development of integrated antimicrobial resistance surveillance plans throughout the agri-food chain, with ongoing processes in countries such as Belize, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. From 17 to 21 June, another process was carried out in Jamaica.

2.3 Maximum residue limits

2.4. In May, the officials responsible for the registration of pesticides and the regulation of maximum residue limits (MRLs) in agricultural products for trade from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama examined the benefits of harmonizing the regulations at regional level.

2.5. This activity took place at a workshop in Antigua, Guatemala, which was organized by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA, with the collaboration of the IICA. In October, another event will be held in the Dominican Republic. The aim of the process is to build technical, regulatory and institutional capacity for the management of MRLs.

2.4 Leadership course on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS)

2.6. The IICA will organize a leadership course on SPS measures in 2019-2020. The FAS of the USDA is providing funds to support the programme, which is a collaboration between the IICA and the Executive Education Centre of the University of La Paz, mandated by the United Nations.

2.7. The course is open to plant health, animal health and food safety professionals who are directly responsible for the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. The objective of this programme is two-fold, as it aims to develop a cadre of leaders in Latin America with the skills to implement significant changes in the area of SPS, and also to promote intersectoral dialogue and collaboration to foster the effective implementation of standards at national, regional and global level.

2.8. The programme will be conducted in English and will consist of two face-to-face meetings (from 26 to 30 August 2019 and from 20 to 24 April 2020) in San José, Costa Rica, as well as monthly online training sessions.

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