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Page: 1/3

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 27 February 2021, is being circulated at the request of IICA.

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 Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). 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 FORA ASSOCIATED WITH SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

1.1 Codex Alimentarius Colloquia

1.1. The support that IICA provides to countries of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) 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. In preparation for the 32rd Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP23) and in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), IICA hosted an Interregional Virtual Colloquium for Countries of the Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA), the CCLAC and the United States, in January 2021. Additionally, in February 2021, another virtual colloquium was held exclusively for the CCLAC countries, in partnership with the USDA. These events provided an opportunity for delegates from these two regions and the US to analyse issues of common interest and develop regional participation strategies prior to the CCGP32.

1.2 Regional Virtual Workshop on Transparency and Good Practices of National Notification Bodies

1.2. Last December, representatives of 17 countries of the region were trained on WTO provisions applied to transparency and notification. This activity was jointly developed and implemented with the WTO and the authorities of the Government of Chile with the aim of: (i) deepening knowledge about the SPS Agreement, the principle of transparency and the responsibilities of the National Notification Authorities (NNA); (ii) sharing management experiences of the region's NNA; and (iii) detecting opportunities for the improvement of good management practices for the operation of NNAs. This activity culminated a process initiated in the 2019 WTO/SPS Advanced Course and has contributed to consolidating IICA's relationship with the WTO/SPS Secretariat.

2 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARD TO SPS MEASURES

2.1 Strategy Session on OIE Guidelines

2.1. Aiming at improving coordination and promoting the development of harmonized comments on the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters, IICA hosted the sixth edition of its Strategy Session, organized in partnership and sponsored by the USDA. Ninety-four participants from twenty-three IICA member countries were represented in the three sessions held virtually, between 7-10 December 2020. Regional positions on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE – Chapter 11.4), Contagious Equine Metritis (Chapter 12.2), Equine Piroplasmiasis (Chapter 12.7), Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Scrapie, Foot and Mouth Disease, Considerations on "Wild Life" (Chapter 3.1 – Quality of Veterinary Services) and Aquatic Code Diseases (Listing of TiLV, De-listing IHNV, Biosecurity for Aquaculture Establishments and Approaches for Demonstrating Disease Freedom) were discussed.

2.2 Project - Harmonization of Pesticide Registration Procedures and Maximum Residue Limits for the Central and Andean Regions

2.2. Following up to the information provided in October 2020 ([G/SPS/GEN/1832](#)), IICA and the USDA are taking specific actions to support the alignment of national pesticide registration systems and to harmonize maximum residue levels (MRLs) with the objective of facilitating trade in Central America and the Andean Regions. During the past three months, the project focused on implementing training sessions, for the Central Region, on topics related to pesticides registration, MRLs and bio-pesticides. The training sessions were held virtually on December 2020 and during the week of 25–29 January 2021. A new series of training sessions by IICA, the USDA and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will take place within the first semester of 2021.

2.3 Project - Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures

2.3. With the aim of assisting the region to modernise their AHFS systems for improved agricultural trade interventions, the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Programme SPS Measures Project builds on previous investments to strengthen SPS systems in the regulatory environment and in supply chain systems. The Project focuses on strengthening the SPS regulatory environment, public and private sector capacity to comply with SPS measures, standards, and procedures and SPS capacity in the fisheries sector. The beneficiaries of the Project include public and private sectors from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

2.4 Seminar "Adoption of an Electronic Phytosanitary Certificates System to Support Trade in Latin America and the Caribbean"

2.4. Last October, IICA in partnership Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), the Plant Health Committee of the Southern Cone (COSAVE), and the Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Protection (GICSV) organized this Seminar to promote the adoption of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) ePhyto system countries. More than 260 plant health professionals from the Hemisphere were able to share implementation experiences, lessons learnt and gaps that need to be addressed to increase the number of countries adopting the IPPC ePhyto system to sustain agrifood trade in LAC.

2.5 "SPS Leadership Program"

2.5. IICA, with the support of the Foreign Agricultural Service FAS/USDA and in collaboration with the University of Peace (UPEACE), concluded the 2019/2020 SPS Leadership Program. The program aimed at equipping public sector SPS leaders with the skills to promote the implementation of science-based policies and standards in Latin America and in the Caribbean and to develop a network of professionals working on leadership and SPS issues. Over a one-year period, and a series of physical and virtual sessions, each participant was given the opportunity to develop individual projects on SPS matters for further implementation in their countries. A total of twelve participants were formed under this program.

2.6 Methodology for socioeconomic impact evaluation of phytosanitary measures (MEIS)

2.6. With the objective of sharing this methodology and its application on phytosanitary measures applied to Huanglongbing disease (HLB) prevention, IICA and the GICSV organized the Webinar "Methodology for socioeconomic impact evaluation of phytosanitary measures" last November. The MEIS has been developed within the framework of the STDF 502/COSAVE Project and has proven useful for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs).

3 OTHER ACTIVITIES

3.1 Online Training on Transboundary Animal Diseases with emphasis on African Swine Fever for the CARICOM and CVP countries

3.1. IICA, in collaboration with the USDA APHIS and the Center for Food Security and Public Health (CFSPH) at Iowa State University (ISU), hosted two online self-paced courses for the Southern and Caribbean countries, aimed at increasing the competencies of veterinarians and other animal health professionals to identify, prevent, respond, control and eradicate African swine fever. For the Southern Region, the course was offered in Spanish from September to December 2020. For the Caribbean Region, the course was offered in English between October 2020 and January 2021. More editions will be available until 2022.

3.2 Regional Virtual Course Diagnostic and Surveillance Virtual Training – Tomato Leaf Miner, *Tuta absoluta*

3.2. Held last December, the regional Virtual Course aimed at strengthening safeguarding systems in the Region with the objective of reducing pest incursions that could potentially threaten agriculture production and trade, under the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI). Twenty plant health professionals from fifteen Caribbean countries were trained in the diagnostics and surveillance of *Tuta absoluta* and are now conducting surveillance activities for the pest. The initiative was held by IICA in collaboration with the University of Florida and with support from the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI), which is funded by the USDA-APHIS PPQ.

3.3 Virtual Regional School on Phytosanitary Inspection - ERVIF

3.3. Fifty-six new phytosanitary inspectors, from public and private sector, of seven South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay) were formed upon the conclusion of the International Module. The National Module of ERVIF Argentina with a Diploma degree was inaugurated in alliance with SENASA and the University of Lomas de Zamora with more than 30 students in its first cohort.

3.4 Development of the Integrated Surveillance Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) for the agri-food chain of Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Belize

3.4. IICA provide technical and logistical support to the official sector of Ecuador (Agrocalidad), Dominican Republic, and Belize, in the development of a Surveillance Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance throughout the Agri-Food Chain, integrating all the national agencies involved in AMR surveillance activities.

3.5 Support for the Implementation of the US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

3.5. IICA, in conjunction with the FDA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, continues to strengthen the capacities of professionals in the Hemisphere in the FSMA regulations on the safety of fresh agricultural products. To date, more than 50 Lead Trainers in the FSMA Standard on the safety of fresh agricultural products and more than 5,000 producers have been trained on the subject.

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