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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 14 October 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 collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the African Union's Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), IICA hosted the following Interregional Virtual Colloquium for Countries of the Coordinating Committee for Africa (CCAFRICA), the CCLAC and the United States Codex Office (USCO):

- August 2021 – 52th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA52);
- September 2021 – 35th Session of the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP35);
- September 2021 – 46th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL46);
- September 2021 – 8th Ad hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance (TFAMR8);
- October 2021: 7th Session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils (CCFO) (CCLAC and US Codex);
- October 2021: 44th Meeting of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC 44).

1.2. These events provided an opportunity for delegates from these two regions and the United States to analyze issues of common interest and develop regional participation strategies prior to those Codex Committee meetings.

1.2 Regional Workshop of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for Latin America in 2021

1.3. A regional IPPC workshop for Latin America was held by virtual means on 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 September 2021 under the theme "Legacy of the International Year of Plant Health". 154 representatives of 20 National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) from Latin America

participated. In addition, 26 observers participated, most of them from Regional PPOs, international institutions that acted as co-organizers, including IICA, and speakers. The Contracting Parties (CPs) examined the draft standards that are in the 1st and 2nd consultation period (ISPMs 4, 5, 20, 18 - audits in the phytosanitary context; ISPMs 5, 12 and product-based standards for phytosanitary measures). Additionally, they shared information on issues inherent to the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures, processes related to strategic issues and the generation and implementation of standards, as well as other topics of interest, including issues proposed by the CPs as of regional interest (ePhyto, Phytosanitary Intelligence and Fusarium - Foc R4T).

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 on-line, in July 2021, the eightieth edition of its Strategy Session organized in partnership and sponsored by the USDA. The ninetieth edition of the Strategy Session is programmed for December 2021.

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

2.2. Following up on the information provided in July 2021 ([G/SPS/GEN/1928](#)), 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.

2.3. The project is currently being implemented in the Central America Region (Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), and has initiated training actions for the Andean Region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru). The following actions should be highlighted:

- 10 training events on MRL issues for Central and Andean Regions;
- A training workshop on biopesticide concepts for Central and Andean Regions;
- A technical exchange workshop with representatives of the biopesticides private sector of Central and Andean Regions;
- Established baseline in biopesticides for the Central American Region;
- Revision of Central American Technical Regulations on botanicals and microbiology (ongoing);
- Harmonization of the definition and classification of bio-pesticides in the Central Region (ongoing);
- Revision of the draft Central American technical regulation on the registration of chemical pesticides for agricultural use (ongoing).

2.3 11th European Development Fund (EDF) – SPS Project

2.4. The actions of the SPS project seek to strengthen AHFS Systems in the CARIFORUM Region. During the past year, actions were undertaken to strengthen the SPS regulatory environment and build the capacity of public and private sector in SPS compliance requirements.

2.5. In relation to the strengthening of the regional and national policy framework, a situational analysis was conducted which provided an overview of the current status of AHFS services across CARIFORUM countries. Based on the information gathered, a Regional SPS Policy and Action Plan and a National SPS Policy Framework have been drafted. A Regional Validation Workshop is to be hosted in October. This activity is being implemented in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA).

2.6. Through a rigorous assessment process, three countries were selected to receive support to upgrade their national legislation in the areas of plant health, animal health and food safety. The countries selected include Belize, Guyana and St Lucia. It is hoped that these upgrades will allow countries to meet market requirements that are important for regional and international trade.

2.7. On SPS compliance through capacity building, an on-going activity seeks to strengthen the technical competence of public and private sector professionals in the areas of GAP Auditing. Currently, an e-course is being developed in the principles and practice of GAP Auditing targeted at main extension and field officers, producers. This course will be launched during the first quarter of 2022 and will be delivered through IICA's e-learning platform.

2.8. On strengthening capacities in the fisheries sector, training is being conducted in relation to improving compliance with sanitary regulations through the implementation of associated Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) Guidelines in two fishery operations. The operators were selected through an application and evaluation process open to all CARIFORUM sector operators during the first quarter of 2021. A series of train-the-trainer and general worker training activities have been conducted, as well as technical guidance provided. In relation to improving the laboratory testing capacity of the fisheries sector, two laboratories are currently being selected for upgrades in the areas of residue and environmental monitoring. These laboratories will receive training, technical guidance and equipment.

2.4 Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI)

2.9. Emergency response plans (ERPs) have been developed for the priority pests of the Caribbean and the United States including citrus canker and citrus leprosis. ERPs provide basic information on the biology, ecology, surveillance and management of the pest. It also provides an outline of the administrative responses to prevent the entry, spread and establishment of the pest. Specific sections include: summary of relevant pest biology; guide for the identification of the pest in the field; preliminary methods for surveillance and monitoring of the pest; an outline of possible eradication and control measures; and management actions that should be undertaken in the event of an incursion.

2.10. It is expected that the publications will contribute to: (i) preventing or delaying the entry of the pests into the Caribbean; (ii) protecting crop production from losses due to these pests; (iii) training technicians, producers and other key stakeholders in the prevention of the entry, spread and establishment of the pest, as well as management of the pest once it has become established; and (iv) reducing the potential impact of the pests.

3 OTHER ACTIVITIES

3.1 Online Training on Transboundary Animal Diseases with emphasis on African swine fever for Central America and the Andean countries

3.1. IICA, in collaboration with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Center for Food Security and Public Health (CFSPH) at Iowa State University (ISU), is currently hosting an online self-paced course for Mexico, Central America and Caribbean countries. The training is aimed at increasing the competencies of veterinarians and other animal health professionals to identify, prevent, respond, control and eradicate African swine fever.

3.2. In Mexico and Central America, the course had 150 and 174 approved participants, respectively. For the Caribbean countries, this course started on 6 September and ends on 11 November 2021; 99 professionals have registered for the course. This is the second edition of the course; the first was offered by the partners in August 2020 and was successfully completed by over 60 participants.

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

3.3. 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. The project *Food Safety Modernization Act: Building Competences in Latin America and the Caribbean* finished last August. Under this 3-year project, 262 professionals were trained as Trainers and Lead Trainers on the Produce Safety Rule and more than 123 grower training workshops were held with the attendance of more than 5,800 participants. In addition, 80 Lead Instructors on the Preventive Controls for Human Food were formed, and more than 1,200 were trained as Preventive Controls Qualified Individuals.

3.3 Virtual Courses and Manuals/Guides

3.4. The guide for the interpretation of the use of dairy terms was launched in the second semester of 2021 and is available at: <https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/17488>.

3.5. The Manual of Good Practices in the Dairy Sector to Prevent the Negative Impacts of COVID-19 (which includes infographic material and 17 posters) is available at: <https://repositorio.iica.int/handle/11324/17765>.

3.6. The virtual course on Anti-COVID-19 Prevention Measures in the Agriculture Sector is available at: <https://elearning.iica.int/course/view.php?id=430>.

3.7. The virtual course on Prevention Measures for the Agricultural Sector in the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic (second edition) is available at: <https://elearning.iica.int/course/view.php?id=429>.

3.8. The virtual course on Good Agricultural Practices for a Resilient Agriculture is available at: <https://elearning.iica.int/course/view.php?id=364>.

3.9. The virtual course on *Buenas Prácticas Agrícolas para una Agricultura Resiliente* is available at: <https://elearning.iica.int/course/view.php?id=354>.

3.4 African Swine Fever

3.10. In the framework of the Global Framework for the progressive control of transboundary animal diseases (GF-TADs) group, IICA is leading the inter-agency effort responsible for the implementation of a web-based and in-person capacity building initiative for the hemisphere. In this regard, an interdisciplinary group comprised of international agencies, regional bodies and delegates of veterinary services has been formed to identify the main priorities, and start working on the development of the plan. The use of tools such as Incident Command System (ICS) and the virtual training with Iowa State (developed under previous agreements with APHIS) will be part of this effort with the objective of strengthening the technical capabilities of the veterinary services.

For further information, please contact Ana Marisa Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int).

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Agricultural Health and Food Safety
<http://www.iica.int>
