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**Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

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**SPS ACTIVITIES OF THE CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH  
AND FOOD SAFETY AGENCY (CAHFSA)**

**REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

The following communication, received on 20 October 2022, is being circulated at the request of CAHFSA.

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) was established by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to perform a coordinating and organizing role in the establishment of an effective and efficient regional sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime and to execute on behalf of member States such SPS actions and activities that can be more effectively and efficiently executed through a regional mechanism.

1.2. CAHFSA is pleased to provide this report to the eighty-fourth regular meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, summarising key activities and providing updates on CARICOM SPS work programme.

**2 ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE**

2.1. CAHFSA is pleased to announce the appointment of two recruits to its staff complement. The new Plant Health Programme Officer and RPPPO Technical Secretary will support the work of the Plant Health Unit, particularly as it relates to the activities of the Regional Plant Protection Organization.

2.2. As the agricultural landscape within the CARICOM region grows and adapts to meet various SPS challenges and opportunities, CAHFSA recognizes the need to continuously assess its position and strategies. Therefore, in July 2022, the Board of Directors organized a retreat to discuss and agree on strategies to reposition the Agency to serve the Community better. As a result, the Board of Directors agreed to develop a new service portfolio that contributes to CAHFSA's financial and operational sustainability and improves the regional SPS environment.

2.3. On 29 July 2021, CAHFSA held its second annual symposium on the institution's mandate to "establish an effective regime of SPS measures" in the CARICOM region. This year the Symposium, CAHFSA – Continuing the Way Forward, provided an update on CAHFSA's activities since the last symposium and sensitized stakeholders on the Agency's vision for the foreseeable future and its relevance in the region.

2.4. On 19 September 2022, CAHFSA launched the Regional Food Safety Task Force. This task force is established as a Technical Advisory Committee to CAHFSA and will serve as a technical mechanism to coordinate agricultural food safety activities in the Caribbean.

**3 HARMONIZATION OF REGIONAL SPS POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

3.1. CAHFSA is very happy to announce that the CARICOM Council on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) has endorsed 19 Commodity-Specific SPS Guidelines developed to facilitate

intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities among member countries. The guidelines cover 14 plant and five animal products and provide information on regionally regulated pests and diseases and options for SPS measures. These commodity guidelines are available at <https://cahfsa.org/guidelines/>.

3.2. The COTED has also approved a Regional Policy on the Movement of Animal and Animal Products. The Policy, prepared with support from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), is intended to provide an enabling and effectively regulated environment for the trade and importation of animals and animal products in the Community. <https://cahfsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CARICOM-Policy-on-Trade-In-Animals-and-Animal-Products.pdf>.

3.3. At the 104<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the COTED (July 2022), the CARICOM region adopted a non-binding procedure to facilitate a rapid, science-based resolution to specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) trade concerns among the member States. The procedure, which CAHFSA developed, aims primarily to evaluate the technical aspects of SPS trade concerns. It applies to any dispute regarding the interpretation or application of the WTO SPS Agreement or where a member State considers that any action by another member conflicts with the obligations of this Agreement.

3.4. Also, under the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF project, CAHFSA is collaborating with IICA to support improvements of the SPS regulatory framework in the CARIFORUM member States. This project component aims to upgrade select SPS legislation to meet international standards, improve coordination that contributes to effective and efficient SPS control systems, and strengthen the policy framework that guides processes and plans for harmonising AHFS systems across the Caribbean Region.

#### **4 CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES**

4.1. On Thursday, 29 September 2022, CAHFSA, in collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), hosted a webinar on "Strengthening Food Safety in the Caribbean". The webinar sought to promote the engagement and participation of Caribbean countries in the Codex Alimentarius and to launch the Regional Food Safety Task Force.

#### **5 COLLABORATION WITH INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE AREA OF AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY**

5.1. On 16-18 August 2022, CAHFSA collaborated with the IPPC, IICA and the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean to organize and deliver the 2022 IPPC Regional Workshop for the Caribbean. As usual, the purpose of this workshop was to develop capacity in a range of areas related to the IPPC. In addition, the workshop serves to analyze draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and to formulate constructive comments on these drafts.

##### **5.1 Collaboration with the GICSV and the TC-RPPO**

5.2. CAHFSA actively supports the international and hemispheric phytosanitary Community in coordinated activities to prevent the introduction and spread of plant pests. The Agency continues collaborating with the Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Health (GICSV) and the Technical Cooperation on Regional Plant Protection Organization (TC-RPPO).

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