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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 22 June 2023, 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. IICA, in collaboration with the United States Codex Office, the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) and the African Union's Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), continues to support its member countries in their active participation in the Codex Alimentarius, through the implementation of an annual program of colloquiums aimed at the CCLAC and the CCAFRICA countries and the United States. In these colloquiums, both regions (43% of the Codex membership) discuss and exchange opinions on the various agenda items of each of the official Codex Alimentarius meetings. These meetings motivate and support developing countries to enhance their active participation both individually and regionally. The most recent colloquiums were:

- March 2023 - preparation for the 16th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF16);
- April 2023 - preparation for the 26th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS26);
- April 2023 - preparation for the 47th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL47);
- May 2023 - preparation for the 42nd Session of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS42);
- June 2023 - preparation for the 54th Session Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR54).

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

1.2 Codex Alimentarius Colloquia for the Private Sector

1.3. In partnership with the United States Dairy Export Council (USDEC), IICA hosted the following colloquiums aimed at private sector stakeholders, from Latin America and the Caribbean Regions, involved in Codex Alimentarius activities:

- March 2023 - preparation for the 43rd Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU43);
- May 2023 - preparation for the 47th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL47).

1.4. Those activities were held virtually, with simultaneous interpretation English/Spanish and counted with presentations from renowned experts from the Americas.

1.3 Regional Coordination Session on WTO SPS Matters

1.5. Adding to the regional efforts to strengthen capacities in the Hemisphere for the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and working in collaboration with several of its members IICA conducted in March 2023 its Sixth Coordination Session on WTO SPS Committee Matters. The meeting was hosted virtually with simultaneous interpretation for English, Spanish and French and was attended by approximately 150 participants from thirty-two countries. Considering the current prominent subjects under discussion in the WTO SPS Committee, the sixth coordination session addressed matters related to the Working Groups of the SPS Declaration for the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference ([WT/MIN\(22\)/27](#)), regulatory approach to veterinary products and MRLs determination to achieve environmental outcomes. The next coordination session on WTO SPS Committee matters will occur in July 2023 in preparation for the forthcoming 86th Session of the WTO SPS Committee.

1.4 Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Health (GICSV) recent activities

1.6. Since the constitution of the GICSV, IICA has exercised the Technical Secretariat on a permanent basis and currently hosts its [website](#). In recent years it has maintained an intense agenda and a work plan focused on institutional strengthening, coordination of activities and attention to the main emerging phytosanitary issues. The most relevant events and activities conducted during the period covered by this report were:

- April 2023 – ePhyto Regional Workshop;
- May 2023 – Working Groups dynamics and work plan meeting;
- June 2023 – GICSV Coordinating Committee meeting;
- June 2023 – "GICSV Declaration for lack of authorized phytosanitary products for locust control".

2 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARD TO SPS MEASURES

2.1 Strategy Session on the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) Guidelines

2.1. Aiming at improving coordination and promoting the development of harmonized comments on the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters, IICA hosted virtually, in May and June 2023, the thirteenth and fourteenth editions of its Strategy Session organized in partnership and sponsored by the USDA. Matters related to glossary/poultry definition; foot-and-mouth disease; bovine spongiform encephalopathy; access to WOAH delegate website; animal health economics collaboration centre; avian influenza (vaccination and trade); aquatic code issues; slaughter of animals (Chapter 7.5); scrapie and avian influenza.

3 OTHER ACTIVITIES

3.1 Latin American Trade Bloc Project (LAC)

3.1. In a partnership between IICA and the USDA, the LAC Project provides technical advice on agricultural health, food safety and food quality matters. With the support of certified lead instructors, it focuses primarily on companies, organizations, and producers in need for training on

the US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rules. Besides the face-to-face training, the technical assistance modality of the LAC Project consists of visits to production plants where the trainees can accompany audits.

3.2. From April to June 2023 a total of 20 initiatives were conducted. Of these 20 initiatives, 13 involved continuous technical assistance to government institutions in Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Peru for the development of pilot risk-based food safety inspection models. In addition, six official workshops with more than 200 agricultural producers trained in traceability regulations, HACCP, good documentation practices, and strengthening capacities on FSMA rules. Finally, the first Regional Meeting for the Strengthening of Technical Capacities was held this first semester of 2023, with the participation of more than 20 strategic actors in the region, including agricultural specialists and food safety directors. The event established a forum for the harmonization of food safety technical regulations, the promotion of intra and interregional trade and the facilitation of food exports to the United States.

3.2 African Swine Fever

3.3. Within the framework of the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), IICA has been leading training actions for the prevention of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the countries of the Americas and the Caribbean, which are still free of the disease. This coordination is being developed in conjunction with the different international agencies, as well as regional agencies (WOAH, FAO, CVP, CAN, CAFHSA, CaribVET, OIRSA, USDA, COPEG).

3.4. Continuing with the work plan for 2023, IICA recently hosted the following webinars:

- March 2023 - the fourth part of the ASF Risk Communication Webinar series - "Crisis Communication for ASF";
- April 2023 - Animal Health Education for Transboundary Diseases;
- June 2023 - Standardized Operational Manuals on Transboundary Diseases.

3.3 11th EDF Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures Project - 9th Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee

3.5. On 29 and 30 March, the 9th Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee of the 11th EDF SPS Measures Project was held. Day 1 covered progress and plans for year IV. On Day 2, participants discussed the way forward - gaps and key considerations for further strengthening SPS systems in the Caribbean. Technical presentations were provided by IICA, Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), the Ministry of Agriculture - Dominican Republic, Caribbean Agri-business Association (CABA), and Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO).

3.4 Cooperative Agreement between IICA and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - "Implementation of FSMA - Identifying, Researching, and Implementing Alternative Methods to Expand the Reach across the Global Supply Chain"

3.6. During the period covered by this report, five out of 12 webinars from an ongoing series were held. The webinars covered the Food Traceability Rule, the Agricultural Water Rule and Adjacent and the Nearby Land Use rule with the participation of subject matter experts. A total of 3,496 connections, from approximately 30 countries of the Americas and Europe, attended those first five webinars. The webinar recordings are available online in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

3.5 STDF Project: Piloting the use of Third-Party Assurance (TPA) Programme in Central America (Belize and Honduras) to improve food safety outcomes for public health and trade

3.7. This pilot project seeks to drive up compliance with national food safety standards and regulations through better targeting of official resources to facilitate improved public health outcomes and trade opportunities. Recently, virtual sessions and face-to-face workshops have been held in to evaluate and review existing government inspection procedures in the poultry, bean and coconut chains in the case of Belize, and aquaculture shrimp and fresh produce in the case of

Honduras. During these activities, the frequency of inspections, the risk profile and other relevant aspects have been analyzed to improve food safety results for public health and trade.

3.8. In addition, two evaluators from Belize participated in a workshop developed by UNIDO, where a joint session was held with Honduras to share experiences and knowledge acquired at the workshop. The main objective of this session was to provide an overview of the factors that Competent Authority regulators should consider when evaluating and using data from Third Party Accreditation (vTPA) programs. It also sought to encourage discussion on the use of vTPA programs in Belize and Honduras, in order to move towards their effective implementation.

3.9. We are currently in the final planning stage for a learning visit to the United Kingdom. The main objective of this visit is to learn how public and private sector organizations cooperate in the use of vTPA programs on food security in that country. This experience will provide lessons learned and good practices that will be of great value for the implementation and improvement of vTPA programs in Belize and Honduras.

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