

**ACTIONS AIMED AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO AGREEMENT ON  
SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Information Presented by the Inter-American Institute  
for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

The following communication, dated 24 January 2006, is being circulated at the request of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

1. The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to further understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement.

**I. SPS INITIATIVE FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS**

2. In conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and with the collaboration of six countries that serve as a steering committee (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, the United States and Mexico), the IICA continues to implement the SPS Initiative of the Americas (the Initiative).

3. This initiative, which came into force in October 2002, has now contributed to ten consecutive SPS Committee meetings, supporting the participation of the countries of the Americas and helping them to build their capacity. For this particular meeting, the Initiative enabled 36 capital-based experts from 26 countries of the Americas to participate, with the result that of the 34 IICA member countries 32 were present.

4. Through its network of offices in its member countries, the IICA promoted the establishment of national forums to follow up the agendas of the SPS-related international organizations. In this connection, we note the approval, in November 2005, of the Technical Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of Paraguay.

5. This Committee provides an institutional platform for the sustained follow up to SPS Committee activities. A document prepared by the IICA<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of guiding countries in the promotion and establishment of a national dialogue on these subjects, together with decrees from various countries formally setting up these committees, is available at <http://infoagro.net/salud/SaniyFito.cfm>

---

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary Guidelines for Institutional Support in the Area of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

6. For more information contact: [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int) (Eric Bolaños), [gregg.young@usda.gov](mailto:gregg.young@usda.gov) (Gregg Young), [marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov](mailto:marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov) (Marianne McElroy), [henry.schmick@usda.gov](mailto:henry.schmick@usda.gov) (Henry Schmick).

## **II. STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SERVICES THROUGH THE PREPARATION OF A COMMON VISION AND ACTION**

7. The IICA, together with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), has begun implementation of the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) instrument for the animal health sector in certain countries of South America. The PVS was developed by the OIE and the IICA.

8. This instrument helps bring together the public and private sectors to develop a common approach to the proper implementation of the SPS Agreement. Peru and Paraguay are the countries in which it has been applied over the past months.

9. For further information, contact: [ana.cordero@iica.int](mailto:ana.cordero@iica.int) (Ana Cordero).

## **III. SUPPORT FOR TRAINING IN THE SPS AREA**

10. Specialized SPS workshop: From 31 October to 11 November 2005 the WTO, in cooperation with the IICA, conducted the first specialized SPS workshop. It was conducted in Spanish, and attended by 23 specialists, each from a different country.

11. The workshop focussed on identifying practical solutions to the problems encountered by the developing countries in implementing the SPS Agreement. In order to encourage the exchange of experiences, each one of the participants explained what it had done in that area.

12. Each of the participants was called upon to adopt a practical approach (a project to be implemented in their country), which consisted in identifying a situation that could be improved within the limits of their true capacities and developing a work programme to that end.

13. The subjects selected by the participants for this exercise generally involved training programmes, the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for following up SPS Committee activities, the establishment of fluid and permanent channels of communication between the "capital" and their missions in Geneva, and capacity-building in the area of transparency.

14. The workshop was attended by a number of qualified participants from different organizations as well as representatives of developed countries, who helped to present different ways of approaching the implementation of the SPS Agreement.

15. Regional SPS workshop: From 30 November to 2 December, the IICA supported the WTO in organizing a regional workshop on the SPS Agreement in Managua, Nicaragua. Twelve Latin American countries participated, and it focussed on the application of SPS measures in the context of regional integration processes.

16. In addition to the IICA, the WTO was also assisted by the IADB/INTAL, the three sisters (CODEX, OIE, IPPC), the USDA, and the European Communities. More than 50 participants from different countries and sectors attended.

17. Sanitary and phytosanitary portal: The IICA lent its support to the FAO in the organization of regional workshops on training in the management and use of the sanitary and phytosanitary portal,

held in Argentina and Trinidad and Tobago in October and November respectively. Both workshops covered the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

18. Support workshop for enquiry points and notification: In the context of an activity organized by the USDA, the IICA lent its support for a workshop to strengthen enquiry points and notification in the countries of the Caribbean. The workshop provided a model for the management of information, and was attended by 24 specialists.

19. For more information, contact: [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int) (Eric Bolaños), [maureen.obando@iica.int](mailto:maureen.obando@iica.int) (Maureen Obando) and [quentin.kubicek@iica.int](mailto:quentin.kubicek@iica.int) (Quentin Kubicek).

#### **IV. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**

20. Avian influenza: In December, with considerable participation and support from hemispheric and international organizations, two events took place: the "Hemispheric Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture and Health on National Contingency Plans for Avian Influenza" and the "Hemispheric Conference for the Surveillance and Prevention of Avian Influenza". The issue of compliance with the SPS Agreement in emergency situations was reflected both in the objectives and the discussions that took place. The meetings were attended by experts and political representatives from the Americas. For more information, contact: [ana.cordero@iica.int](mailto:ana.cordero@iica.int) (Ana Cordero).

21. Argentina: The IICA office in Argentina continues to provide technical support to the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food (SAGPyA), which is directed to the Chairmanship of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) and the SPS enquiry point in Argentina. For more information, contact: [mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar](mailto:mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar) (Lourdes Fonalleras).

22. Ecuador: Support was provided for the creation of the International Relations Unit within the context of the restructuring of the Ecuadorian Agricultural Health Service (SESA), as well as for the development and implementation of a national information and notification system for sanitary and phytosanitary measures. In addition, the IICA, in coordination with SESA, the FAO and USAID, is promoting a project aimed at updating, systematizing, analysing and harmonizing, to the extent possible, national legislation in the sanitary, phytosanitary, and food health areas. For more information, contact: [paola.ramon@iica.int](mailto:paola.ramon@iica.int) (Paola Ramon).

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

---