

**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, received on 21 June 2006, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

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, Mexico, and the United States), IICA continues to implement the SPS Initiative for the Americas (Initiative).

3. The Initiative, which came into force in October 2002, has now contributed to twelve 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 27 capital-based experts from 27 countries of the Americas to participate.

4. Through its network of offices in its member countries, the IICA has promoted the establishment of national forums to follow up on the agendas of the SPS-related international bodies, particularly the WTO SPS Committee.

5. IICA wishes to report on an activity that complements the Initiative for the Americas, which is the follow-up of the first specialized SPS course, held in October-November 2005, in cooperation with the WTO. That follow-up event will take place immediately following the 36th meeting of the WTO/SPS Committee. The purpose is to monitor activities accomplished by the participants of the course and assess the impact and multiplier effect that technical cooperation has had in the countries that have benefited.

6. One of the main results of the specialized course has been a new practical approach developed by each participant. This practical approach will be presented and discussed with a view to

determining the problems that exist as well as opportunities that have emerged. The group discussion could be useful in identifying practical solutions to the problems raised.

7. For additional information, kindly contact the following people: Eric Bolaños at [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int); Marianne McElroy at [marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov](mailto:marianne.mcelroy@fas.usda.gov); and Henry Schmick at [henry.schmick@usda.gov](mailto:henry.schmick@usda.gov). For the specialized workshop [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int) (Eric Bolaños), [Joao.Magalhaes@wto.org](mailto:Joao.Magalhaes@wto.org) (Joao Magalhaes)

## II. STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SERVICES THROUGH A COMMON VISION AND JOINT ACTION

8. As follow-up to the institutional modernization in which IICA has been engaged in its member countries, we wish to report on the process carried out in June in Ecuador with respect to official food safety services, in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The process was coordinated with the private sector, the aim being to develop a common vision.

9. The process conducted in Ecuador will shortly be applied in Uruguay, in relation to animal health. The Performance, Vision and Strategy Instrument (PVS), developed in conjunction with the OIE, will be available for that process.

10. This instrument brings together the public and private sectors to establish a common vision for the appropriate implementation of the WTO SPS Agreement. Further information may be obtained from [ana.cordero@iica.int](mailto:ana.cordero@iica.int) (Ana Cordero).

## III. SUPPORT FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

11. IICA has various bulletins and channels of communication to promote an exchange of information on SPS matters and the work of the WTO, the relevant international organizations and regional organizations.

12. The **Electronic Bulletin CODEX-MSF *Opinion Forum*** specializes in events taking place in Codex Alimentarius and the WTO/SPS Committee. The bulletin reports and analyzes standards and activities and aims to enhance the dissemination and study of these matters. Its readership comprises first and foremost the countries of South America, but it is available to all members at [WWW.IICA.ORG.AR](http://WWW.IICA.ORG.AR). For further information, contact Lourdes Fonalleras at [mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar](mailto:mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar).

13. The bulletins **Access and Access Plus** specialize in subjects and information generated by the SPS Committee and the Codex Alimentarius, respectively. Both bulletins are intended to generate executive reports that make it possible to give follow-up to the two bodies. They have hemispheric coverage (the Americas) and are published electronically in English and Spanish. They are available to the public at [www.infoagro.net/salud](http://www.infoagro.net/salud). For further information, you may contact Tim O'Brien at [tim.obrien@iica.int](mailto:tim.obrien@iica.int) and Eric Bolaños at [erick.bolanos@iica.int](mailto:erick.bolanos@iica.int).

14. The bulletin CARAPHIN News, designed for the Caribbean, promotes an exchange of information on the presence of pests and diseases of commercial importance. The next edition will be published and distributed in July. For further information, kindly contact Carol Thomas at [carol.thomas@iica.int](mailto:carol.thomas@iica.int).

15. The information system **AGROSALUD** is dedicated to the distribution of information on agricultural health and food safety and the areas it covers include standards and actions carried out at the WTO and relevant international organizations. The Spanish version may be consulted at

[www.infoagro.net/salud](http://www.infoagro.net/salud) and the English version may be consulted at [www.agrihealth.ws](http://www.agrihealth.ws). For further information, consult Ericka Calderón at [consultor2@iica.int](mailto:consultor2@iica.int).

16. The **INFOAGRONEGOCIOS** information system is dedicated to promoting agribusiness in the Americas. One of its objectives is to facilitate access to import/export requirements for agrifood products on selected markets and access to the main sources of information related to the agrifood sector. The Spanish version may be consulted at [www.infoagro.net/agronegios](http://www.infoagro.net/agronegios). For further information, kindly contact Daniel Rodríguez at [daniel.rodriguez@iica.int](mailto:daniel.rodriguez@iica.int).

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

17. Argentina: IICA continues to provide technical support to the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food of Argentina and, specifically, to the Chair of the CODEX Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and the SPS contact point in Argentina.

18. IICA is also assisting SENASA and the governments of provinces and municipalities with a range of publicity activities in different locations aimed at sensitizing stakeholders in the agrifood chain about good agricultural practices (GAPS) in an effort to encourage the voluntary participation of these stakeholders in agrifood quality programs. IICA facilitates an understanding of good agricultural practices and international agreements, and the relationship between them. Examples are the WTO/SPS Agreement, the animal health agreements (OIE), plant protection (IPPC) and food safety (CODEX). For further information, contact Lourdes Fonalleras at [mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar](mailto:mlfonalleras@iica.org.ar).

19. Colombia: IICA develops projects that seek to certify the quality and safety of tropical fruits and poultry products on national and international markets. A Protocol of Good Practices for Poultry Farming aimed at improving sanitary and environmental conditions, conditions for rearing poultry, as well as safety conditions, has been developed jointly with the private sector, using the agrifood chain approach.

20. Along the same lines, IICA, in conjunction with the public and private sectors in Colombia, is implementing a Suppliers' Development Program. This initiative seeks to develop a program to enable a group of producers of promising fruits from cold climate (Cape gooseberry, "bananito", tree tomatoes, passion fruit and strawberry cactus) to meet quality and food safety requirements on international markets and, through the implementation of a good agricultural practices (GAP) protocol, to ensure EUREPGAP certification. The project also seeks to improve relations between international marketing firms and their respective suppliers through the use of business management tools and economies of scale to make it possible to lower production costs. For further information, please contact Pilar Agudelo at [pilar.agudelo@iica.int](mailto:pilar.agudelo@iica.int) (Pilar Agudelo).

21. Good agricultural practices in the Andean region: in Venezuela and Ecuador, GAP national committees have been formed with the participation of the public and private sectors. These national committees are working on preparing national GAP protocols or guidelines for fresh fruits and vegetables, in an effort to harmonize US (Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables) and EC requirements (EUREPGAP).

22. In Peru, a series of GAP guidelines have been developed for various products, such as olives, corn, etc. These have been circulated and made available to small- and medium-scale producers.

23. In Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador, a series of events have been organized to circulate information on the importance of GAP and sensitize small- and medium-scale producers so as to provide high-quality and safe food on the national markets.

24. In Venezuela, a series of training events have been organized for representatives of the various chains (e.g. coffee, cocoa, fruits and vegetables) regarding the importance of GAP in order to remain on or gain access to new export markets. Likewise, through the National CODEX Committee in Venezuela, information on the importance of the topic has been circulated in various fora in the interior of the country.
25. Caribbean countries: From April 3 through 7, a meeting was held in Trinidad and Tobago on animal diseases and how the countries need to exercise disease surveillance and prepare themselves to deal with them. The emphasis was placed on Avian Influenza in the Caribbean. IICA, CIRAD, CARICOM, CPA, PAHO, FAO and USDA, cooperated in this event.
26. In Guyana, IICA participated in a planning meeting with the Beef Improvement Committee and the IDB to develop a plan of action to improve the meat industry. A document on HACCP is being prepared for abattoirs.
27. Preparations are under way for the eleventh meeting of the Group to Coordinate the Caribbean Pest Control Boards. The meeting will be held in Barbados from June 20-22. The IICA Office in Saint Lucia is serving as secretariat for this group.
28. The IICA Office in Saint Lucie prepared a draft document on Good Practices for Pork Production.
29. IICA supported the creation of the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Committee of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
30. In the Dominican Republic, IICA participated in developing a National Avian Influenza Plan, creating an operations manual for the control and eradication of classic swine fever and preparing a memorandum of understanding between the Dominican Republic and Haiti on the harmonization of emergency criteria in the event of an Avian Influenza outbreak, how to exercise disease surveillance and respond accordingly.
31. IICA participated in the technical meetings of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), held in Trinidad and Tobago from 9-10 May.
32. In conjunction with the FAO, initial steps were taken to develop plans for a regional workshop on the implementation of ISPM 15 (guidelines to regulate the use of wood packaging in international trade) to be held in August this year.
33. Conversations were held with IICA staff in St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda and Trinidad and Tobago aimed at sponsoring workshop meetings to discuss relevant topics covered at the SPS Committee's meetings in Geneva. Further information is obtainable from Carol Thomas at [carol.thomas@iica.int](mailto:carol.thomas@iica.int).

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

---