

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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COMMUNICATION FROM ECUADOR

The following communication, received on 30 January 2009, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Ecuador.

On instructions from its authorities, the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the WTO is pleased to report that the Government of Ecuador, pursuant to Executive Decree No. 1449 of President of the Republic Rafael Correa Delgado, published in Official Journal No. 479 of 2 December 2008, has decided to reorganize the Ecuadorian Agricultural Health Service (*Servicio Ecuatoriano de Sanidad Agropecuaria*, SESA) and to rename it the Ecuadorian Agency for Agricultural Product Quality Assurance (*Agencia Ecuatoriana de Aseguramiento de la Calidad del Agro*, AGROCALIDAD). A technical body under public law, AGROCALIDAD has its own legal status, equity and capital, is decentralized, enjoys administrative, economic, financial and operational autonomy, has its headquarters in Quito and jurisdiction at national level and is attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries (*Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca*, MAGAP).

The aim of restructuring the official Ecuadorian authority in charge of regulating and controlling animal and plant protection and agri-food safety is to guarantee an appropriate level of consumer health protection, by ensuring the quality of the products available for their use and consumption, and to provide production chains with suitable technical support with a view to improving international market access.

By virtue of the above-mentioned Decree, AGROCALIDAD is taking on all of SESA's functions, powers, offices, mandates, rights, obligations, infrastructure, budgets and staff, as well as its resources, overall equity, assets and liabilities.

It should be noted that AGROCALIDAD is currently restructuring and that, for the duration of this transition process, it will continue to use the stationery, forms and certificates bearing the logo of the former SESA, stock which, by law, must be used up given that it is of value. The transition process is due to be completed on 1 June 2009.

Given the potential problems for the country's exports that could arise from this situation during the transition process, Ecuador asks WTO Members to be understanding and to pass this information on to their national sanitary and phytosanitary authorities.
