

**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 11 October 2011, is being circulated at the request of the IICA.

1. The observer organizations of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to promote understanding and implementation of the SPS Agreement. The IICA wishes to present some of the actions or activities it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

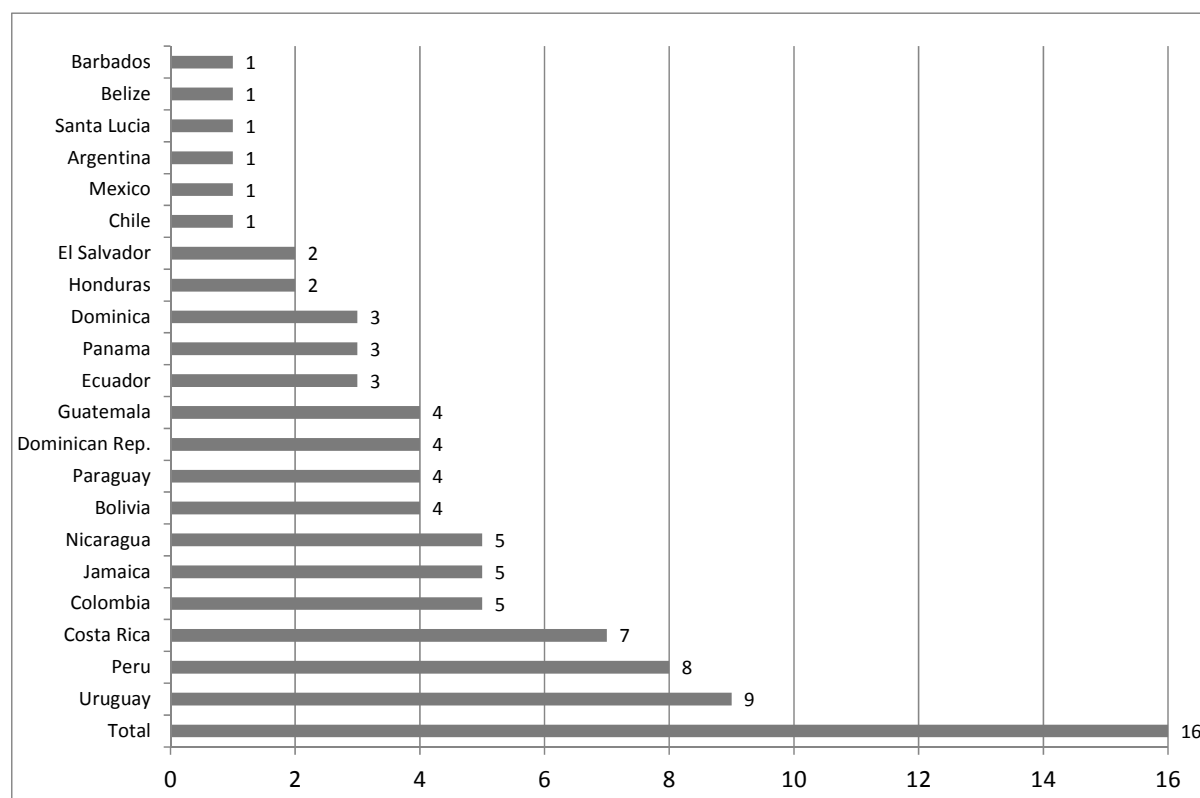
1. Support for participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings

2. The IICA has reached the final phase of the project to support participation in Codex Alimentarius meetings, set to end in December of this year with the Committee on Food Hygiene.

3. Resources for this project were provided by both the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the IICA itself. The project was launched in October 2009 and is scheduled to end in December 2011.

4. Support was provided for participation in 16 meetings of 9 Codex Committees, and there were 22 beneficiary countries. On average, there were 4.5 recipient countries per meeting, so that the project was clearly a competitive fund, and countries had to show that they deserved financing.

Table - Countries selected and number of meetings attended by them



Number of meetings

5. The purpose of the project is to support active participation and strengthen common regional interests. Support is therefore given to initiatives that are developed for that purpose by the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC). The project does not target capacity building, but seeks to support countries that demonstrate the need to be present at the meetings and do not have the financial means to participate.

6. Although 31 countries were eligible to benefit from the programme, nine countries did not apply.

For further information, contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int) or Eric Bolaños (Erick.Bolanos@iica.int).

2. Support for Costa Rica's management of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean

7. A project has been developed in the framework of the General Technical Cooperation Agreement between the IICA and the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and the Ministry of Health of Costa Rica, entitled "Strengthening of Costa Rica's National Codex Committee and focal point to fulfil the role of coordinator of the Codex Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC)".

8. In connection with this project the CCLAC has already received support in preparing the first virtual coordination session prior to the meeting of the Committee on Food Export and Import Inspection and Certification. More than ten countries participated in the session in Spanish, while

three countries attended the session in English. Further such coordination sessions are planned prior to the meetings of the different committees of the Codex Alimentarius.

For further information, contact: Eric Bolaños (Erick.Bolanos@iica.int) or Sacha Trelles (Sacha.Trelles@iica.int).

3. Regional Workshop to examine proposed International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs)

9. Organized by the IICA in conjunction with the IPPC and with the support of the Southern Cone Plant Health Committee (COSAVE) and the Regional International Agricultural Health Organization (OIRSA), the workshop was held in September. It was attended by 25 participants from 16 countries and the two Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs).

10. The resources for this event were provided by COSAVE, OIRSA, the State Phytosanitary Service of Costa Rica and the IICA. This is the second year that the IICA has had the opportunity to organize this workshop for the countries of Latin America and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean with a view to strengthening the participation of those countries in the process of preparing and adopting international phytosanitary standards.

11. The workshop served as a regional forum for the discussion of the draft standards and contributed to a better understanding of their national and regional impact while providing experience to help improve the way the countries developed and presented their comments. Delegates were able to familiarize themselves with the new IPPC On-line Comments System (OCS) and it was through this system that the comments on ISPMs that emerged from the workshop were made.

For further information, contact: Lourdes Fonalleras (Lourdes.Fonalleras@iica.int).

4. Presentation of the study conducted on the impact of private standards

12. Having carried out the study and submitted it to this Committee, the IICA, the Rural Association of Uruguay (ARU), the Uruguayan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and the Permanent Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP) organized a presentation of their work.

13. The event took place on 15 September in connection with the Rural Exhibition of Uruguay and was attended by more than 80 public and private sector participants.

14. The study can be downloaded from: <http://infoagro.net/programas/Sanidad/>, <http://www.insercionagricola.org.ar>, <http://www.iica.org.uy>, <http://www.cvpconosur.org>. For the moment, it is only available in Spanish, but thanks to the cooperation of the Government of Brazil, an English version will soon be available.

For further information, contact: Lourdes Fonalleras (Lourdes.Fonalleras@iica.int).

5. Technical forum on the new United States Food Safety Modernization Act

15. In order to encourage the examination of the new US Food Safety Modernization Act, the IICA organized a technical forum with the participation of a delegate from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The forum was transmitted to all Member countries of the IICA via the Internet in Spanish and English.

For further information, contact: Ricardo Molins (Ricardo.Molins@iica.int).

6. Traceability

16. An exchange of experiences in the area of traceability was organized between the IICA offices of Costa Rica and Honduras, and Costa Rica shared its achievements and experience in traceability through the *IICA-STDF 116 project: Development and implementation of a traceability system in the livestock sector in Costa Rica*, providing inputs for the development of a traceability proposal for staple grains for the World Food Programme's P4P (Purchase for Progress) Programme - Honduras.

For further information, contact: Alejandra Diaz (Alejandra.Diaz@iica.int).

7. Support for the Customs Union process in Central America

17. To follow up on the support provided by the IICA in the Central American region, the Agricultural Health and Food Safety Joint Work Plan 2011-2012 was drawn up between the IICA and the Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council, the purpose of which is to support the implementation of the Central American Agricultural Policy's agricultural health and food safety measures, to support the creation of the Central American Customs Union, and to make better use of resources and international cooperation.

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Agricultural Health and Food Safety

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