

**CENTRE FOR PHYTOSANITARY EXCELLENCE – CEF**

A Colombian Cooperation Initiative Pursuant to  
Article 5 of the SPS Agreement

*Communication from Colombia*

The following communication, received on 14 June 2006, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Colombia.

1. The Centre for Phytosanitary Excellence (CEF) is devoted to securing trade openings for fresh agricultural products from Colombia on international markets. It was set up in July 2002 under the Agreement between the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Its mission is to generate the preliminary studies needed to facilitate applications for the export of fresh Colombian agricultural products and to determine the distribution of pests limiting Colombian exports, as well as to propose strategies for their control, management and eradication.

2. The aim of the institution is to train a permanent interdisciplinary team of excellence, as a leader in the development of Colombian agriculture and trade, serving at the same time as a model for Andean countries and others in the hemisphere. The CEF has a steering committee and a technical committee to administer and establish priorities for the development of important documents.

3. The CEF is made up of a number of national and international cooperation agencies, which interact under the agreement. The participating agencies are the following:

- ICA: provides support to the CEF through its plant health professionals and the Risk Analysis Group; gives official approval to documents issued by the CEF, and also commits and covers certain expenditures. In conjunction with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the ICA is responsible for the technical coordination activity of the CEF.
- USAID: provides resources for implementation and workplace adaptation, in addition to the wages of technical staff recruited.
- APHIS: collaborates with the CEF by defraying administrative and service expenses for the place of work and is jointly responsible, with the ICA, for CEF technical coordination activity.

- IICA: responsible for CEF administrative coordination and USAID resources, hiring of qualified professional staff, as well as support and technical cooperation of national and international specialists.

4. The CEF has subcentres for pest risk analysis, geographical information systems and the pest mitigation centre.

- PRA Subcentre (pest risk analysis): responsible for promoting scientific studies on potential export products.
- GIS Subcentre (geographical information systems): responsible for collecting information and refining trapping strategies, organizing information on the basis of geo-referenced maps, analysing information with a view to identifying pest/environment interactions.
- Pest Mitigation Centre of Excellence: its objective is to propose "mitigation" measures for pests and diseases of quarantine significance identified through risk assessment studies.

5. The CEF has produced documents to facilitate openings for exports to the United States. They include studies on Cape gooseberry, dragonfruit (pitahaya), arandino, unripe grape, cucumber, tree tomato, cucurbits (ahuyama, pumpkin, squash and zucchini), arrúgala, papaya, chard, tomato, feijoa, lulo, spinach, passion flowers (yellow maracuya, purple maracuya, granadilla and curaba), celery, lemon grass, paprika and sage. Some of them have already been approved by the United States and others are under review and supervision by APHIS.

6. The Risk Analysis and International Affairs Group of the Colombian Agricultural Institute has had its work supplemented by CEF participation.

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