



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 3 March 2022, is being circulated at the request of IICA.

The observer organizations of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee) are invited to submit reports on the activities they have carried out to promote the understanding and implementation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). IICA would like to present some of the actions and activities that it considers relevant to the work of this Committee.

1 SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL FORA ASSOCIATED WITH SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

1.1 Codex Alimentarius Colloquia

1.1. IICA, in collaboration with the United States Codex Office and the AU-IBAR, continues to support its member countries in their active participation in the Codex Alimentarius, through the implementation of an annual program of colloquiums aimed at the CCLAC regions, CCAFRICA and the United States. In these colloquiums, both regions (43% of the Codex membership) discuss and exchange opinions on the various agenda items of each of the official Codex Alimentarius meetings. These meetings motivate and support developing countries to enhance their active participation both individually and regionally. The most recent colloquiums were:

- February 2022 – 52th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH52);
- November 2021 – 42nd Session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU42).

1.2. These events provided an opportunity for delegates from these two regions and the United States to analyse issues of common interest and develop regional participation strategies prior to those Codex Committee meetings.

1.2 Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Health (GICSV) recent activities

1.3. The GICSV is a collaborative arrangement of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs) of the countries of the American Hemisphere and the Caribbean (CAHFSA, CAN, COSAVE, NAPPO and OIRSA). It is a mechanism, with a hemispheric scope, for coordination and cooperation in the area of agricultural protection, according to the spirit supported by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). This Group was created with the purpose of promoting joint actions aimed at preventing the introduction and spread of pests in plants, plant products and other regulated articles, as well as promoting the adoption of appropriate measures for their control.

1.4. Since the constitution of the GICSV, IICA has exercised the Technical Secretariat on a permanent basis and currently hosts its [website](#). In recent years it has maintained an intense agenda

and a work plan focused on institutional strengthening, coordination of activities and attention to the main emerging phytosanitary issues. It currently has biannual work plans and has set up Working Groups on relevant topics such as Electronic Certification (ePhyto), Fruit Fly, HLB, *Tuta Absoluta*, Orthopteros Plague (Lobster) and FOC R4T. The most recent activities of the Working Groups were:

- February 2022 - Virtual Seminar "[Risk-Based Sampling-RMF: Available tools and their use](#)";
- February 2022 - Workshop "[Use of remote sensing in Orthopteran pests](#)".

2 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARD TO SPS MEASURES

2.1 Strategy Session on OIE Guidelines

2.1. Aiming at improving coordination and promoting the development of harmonized comments on the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters, IICA hosted on-line, in December 2021, the ninetieth edition of its Strategy Session organized in partnership and sponsored by the USDA. 64 veterinary officers from 21 countries of the hemisphere attended the session.

2.2 Project - Harmonization of Pesticide Registration Procedures and Maximum Residue Limits for the Central and Andean Regions

2.2. Following up on the information provided in July 2021 ([G/SPS/GEN/1965](#)), IICA continues with the implementation of the project "Harmonization of Procedures for the Registration of Chemical Pesticides for Agricultural Use (PQUA), Biopesticides and Alignment in the Establishment of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)". This project is carried out with the technical and financial support of FAS/USDA.

2.3. During this reporting period, an eleven-module training on basic aspects of registration was implemented, aimed at newly hired or inexperienced officials from Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia. This training effort was implemented in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Andean Community of Nations.

2.4. Additionally, progress was made in the preparation of the drafts that will serve as a basis for the establishment of regional regulations in the countries of the Central American Economic Integration System (SIECA), Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The project also included the Dominican Republic in this process. The drafts that are in preparation are for the three fundamental topics of the project (registration of PQUA, Biopesticides and MRLs), but additionally, work is being done to incorporate new topics such as early warning systems and monitoring programs.

2.3 11th European Development Fund (EDF) – SPS Project

2.5. The actions of the SPS project seek to strengthen Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Systems in the CARIFORUM Region. During this report period, the following actions were undertaken to strengthen the SPS regulatory environment and build the capacity of public and private sector in SPS compliance requirements:

- October 2021 - Capacity Building to Safeguard the United States and Caribbean Borders from Pest Incursions – Phase II. This activity sought to develop knowledge products that will assist with building the capacity of the Region to safeguard borders from priority pests. Three knowledge products were developed:
 - o National Emergency Response Plan for Caribbean Countries - Citrus Canker;
 - o National Emergency Response Plan for Caribbean Countries - Citrus Leprosis;
 - o Guidelines to Develop Tabletop Simulation Guidelines which will be used to evaluate the readiness of countries to respond to pest incursions.
- October 2021 - Development of Regional and National AHFS Policy.
 - o A validated Regional AHFS Policy and Action Plan and National AHFS Policy Framework for endorsement by Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED).
 - o A brief was also developed which will be used to sensitise policy makers on the importance of the AHFS Policy for improving SPS compliance.

- December 2021 - Launch of Food Safety Information Portal "Enhancing food safety capacity of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) through the use of information and communication technology in selected Caribbean Countries" (Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago). This action is expected to contribute to:
 - o Improving the capacity of selected MSEs to comply with food safety standards required by local and regional markets;
 - o Increasing knowledge sharing, networking and collaboration among select MSEs;
 - o Improving the greater use of e-agriculture by MSEs in target countries.

- February 2022 - Legislative Strengthening in Belize, Guyana and Saint Lucia. The activity provided assistance for countries to upgrade their legislation in the areas of plant and animal health, food safety and fisheries. In each country existing legislation has been reviewed and a series of more than ten stakeholder meetings have been conducted from October 2021–February 2022.
 - o Belize – Regulations for a Poultry Health Bill and review and provide guidance on updating the Aquatic Animal Health Bill.
 - o Guyana - Update the Fisheries Bill and develop a General Plant Health Regulation, and Crops and Livestock Registration, Identification, and Traceability Bill.
 - o Saint Lucia – Regulations for Plant Health and Animal Health Bills.

3 OTHER ACTIVITIES

3.1 Expanding knowledge on the magnitude of pesticide residues in crops

3.1. IICA, together with the *Fundación de Usos Menores*, continues to carry out studies on the magnitude of pesticide residues in crops. Said project is being implemented in Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, and it is hoped to expand this coverage to new countries, crops, pests and pesticides, thus expanding the capacity development of Latin American countries in the preparation of these studies, as well as increasing the necessary information before the Codex Alimentarius to establish new MRLs. In the short term, it is expected to support the *Fundación de Usos Menores* in the preparation of a workshop in the Latin American and Caribbean region to establish a new prioritization process and thus be able to advance further in these important trials.

3.2. With these initiatives, IICA supports its member countries in association with international organizations and cooperating countries in improving regulatory frameworks, the technical capacities of its officials and supporting the work generated in multilateral forums.

3.2 Technical Cooperation Actions on the Implementation of the "One Health" Concept

3.3. IICA supported the process of incorporating the "One Health" concept in the activities of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, including the production of a [conceptual document](#) and the implementation of the independent dialogue "One Health Approach and International Trade: Basic elements for the transformation of food systems". The dialogue focused on understanding how One Health, including soil health and international trade, can contribute to the transition to more sustainable food systems. With the involvement of 86 people, discussion and critical thinking were encouraged regarding integrated approaches (one health, soil health) and international trade.

3.4. For the Andean Region, national and regional priorities were determined and potential areas of work were identified for 2022. Funded by IICA, five national meetings, two regional workshops and 26 conferences with the participation of 900 people were held with the participation of public and private institutions from the public health, environment and agriculture sectors. Results were published as "[Fortalecimiento de los servicios SAIA en la Región Andina \(Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú y Venezuela\) incorporando la aplicación práctica del concepto de Una Salud](#)".

3.5. Within the framework of an IICA funded Technical Cooperation Action (ACT) called "Defense against future zoonotic outbreaks in the Americas: evaluation and reduction of zoonotic risks in wet markets", two risk assessments were generated for Mexico and Brazil, as well as a proposal for a regulatory guidance and training for Brazil.

3.3 African Swine Fever

3.6. Within the framework of the GFTADs, IICA has been leading training actions for the prevention of African Swine Fever in the countries of America and the Caribbean, which are still free of the disease. This coordination is being developed in conjunction with the different international agencies, as well as regional agencies (OIE, FAO, CVP, CAN, CAFHSA, CaribVET, OIRSA, USDA, COPEG).

3.7. To date, five webinars have been held with a total participation of approximately 800 people from more than 25 countries. In compliance with Inter American Board of Agriculture Resolution 535, actions were carried out to strengthen the official veterinary services as one of the priorities of the program, specifically in relation to strengthening the technical capacities of the official veterinary services; risk management and communication; as well as updating and improving emergency plans. The virtual course on transboundary diseases and ASF developed with the support of USDA/APHIS and Iowa State University stands out, as well as the four virtual courses for the Central, Andean, Southern and Caribbean Regions, where more than 500 professionals were trained.

3.8. For 2022, ASF training actions have already begun with the first webinar of the year, on ASF compensation mechanisms and policies, with the experience of Spain, Africa, Asia and the Dominican Republic with its current outbreak.

3.9. Webinars have already been planned for the next semester of the year on topics such as, emergency actions in the event of confirmation of African swine fever, legislation and contingency plans in ASF, risk and crisis communication.

3.4 Antimicrobial Resistance

3.10. IICA, in partnership with the FAS/USDA, has been working on the development of agri-food and agricultural surveillance plans on AMR for various countries of the Americas and the Caribbean. To date, technical assistance has been provided in the development of their plans to Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, Jamaica, Belize, Costa Rica, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic.

3.11. Likewise, IICA has dedicated itself to providing technical cooperation in the implementation of AMR surveillance plans, as well as the development and implementation of pilot projects in AMR surveillance, through a twinning project which is based on technical advice to the countries on diagnostic issues, interpretation of results, development of pilot plans for AMR surveillance and certification of laboratories to develop diagnostic capabilities for AMR. At the same time, a virtual course has been developed on Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) laboratory standards regarding the diagnosis and interpretation of antimicrobial resistance results.

3.12. Finally, several focus-forward seminars have been developed in which, as a result, action plans have been obtained for the private sector in the development of antimicrobial resistance interventions in a consensual manner with the different public and private agencies that help mitigate the impact of RAM in the primary sector.

For further information, please contact Ana Marisa Cordero (ana.cordero@iica.int).

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