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Page: 1/3

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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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 19 October 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, the CCAFRICA countries 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:

- June 2022 – preparation for the 53rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR53);
- September 2022 – preparation for the 6th Session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH6).

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

1.2 Regional Coordination Session on WTO SPS Matters

1.3. Adding to the regional efforts to strengthen capacities in the hemisphere for the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and working in collaboration with several of its members IICA conducted last June its Fourth Coordination Session on WTO SPS Committee Matters. The meeting was hosted virtually with simultaneous interpretation for English, Spanish and French and was attended by 128 participants from thirty-two countries. Considering the current prominent subjects under discussion in the WTO SPS Committee, the fourth coordination session addressed matters related to: the SPS Committee Working Group on Approval Procedures ([G/SPS/W/328/Rev.1/Add.1](#)), the Declaration for the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference ([G/SPS/GEN/1758/Rev.11](#) and [G/SPS/GEN/1960](#)), the EU restrictions on exports of chocolate and cocoa products due to maximum

levels of cadmium in foodstuff ([STC 503](#)) and the EU regulatory approach to maximum levels for contaminants ([STC 519](#)). The next coordination session on WTO SPS Committee matters is already scheduled for 3 November in preparation for the forthcoming 84th Session of the WTO SPS Committee.

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

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 relevant events and activities conducted during the period covered by this report were:

Meetings of the Working Groups:

- e Fruit fly – August 2022
- HLB – August 2022
- *Tuta absoluta* – September 2022
- FOC R4T - August 2022
- Locust – August 2022

2 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARD TO SPS MEASURES

2.1 Strategy Session on WOAAH Guidelines

2.1. Aiming at improving coordination and promoting the development of harmonized comments on the WOAAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters, IICA hosted on-line, in June 2022, the eleventh edition of its Strategy Session organized in partnership and sponsored by the USDA. Matters related to the bovine spongiform encephalopathy, glossary – poultry definition, Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis and the process of drafting joint comments for submission to the WOAAH.

3 OTHER ACTIVITIES

3.1 Latin American Trade Bloc Project (LAC)

3.1. In a partnership between IICA and the USDA, the LAC Project provides technical advice on agricultural health, food safety and food quality matters. With the support of certified lead instructors, it focuses primarily on companies, organizations, and producers in need for training on the US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rules. Besides the face-to-face training, the technical assistance modality of the LAC Project consists of visits to production plants where the trainees have the opportunity to accompany audits.

3.2. From June to September 2022, the following activities were carried out:

- ePhyto workshops for approximately 100 participants from Guatemala and Honduras;
- technical assistance to five plants in El Salvador with face-to-face training and audits;
- training on Preventive Controls in Processed Foods for Human Consumption in Ecuador with a total of 60 trained professionals and company workers;
- technical assistance and diagnostic training at the National Residue Laboratory (LANAR) in Honduras with a total of 15 trained professionals;
- training on Preventive Controls in Human Foods in Peru, with more than 250 trainees.

3.2 African Swine Fever

3.3. Within the framework of the GFTADs, IICA has been leading training actions for the prevention of African Swine Fever (ASF) 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).

3.4. Continuing with the work plan for 2022, IICA hosted in August and September 2022 the first and second parts of the hemispheric webinar on ASF emergency response plans.

3.3 Dairy Hygiene and Technology

3.5. With support of IICA, FECALAC (Central American Dairy Sector Federation), SECAC (Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council) and the Dominican Republic, Central American countries have developed [Guidelines on Good Practices in Bovine Milk Production](#).

3.6. Aiming at strengthening the primary production chain as the basis for the safety and quality of milk and dairy products, the Guidelines promote the application of good practices in the production of milk to ensure the safety of milk and milk products. The Guideline promote public health through the application of effective measures to minimize health related, environment, animal welfare, and quality risks as a basis for the sustainable development of the dairy sector.

3.4 Antimicrobial resistance twining project

3.7. In the framework of this action, developed with the support of USDA/FAS, 8 countries received assistance in the following areas: Costa Rica - AMR Surveillance in aquaculture; Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua - AMR Surveillance Pilot Plan (poultry); Brazil, Chile and Mexico - Laboratory data analysis and Trinidad and Tobago: Laboratory Certification.

3.5 STDF Project: Piloting the use of Third-Party Assurance (TPA) Programme in Central America (Belize and Honduras) to improve food safety outcomes for public health and trade

3.8. This pilot project seeks to drive up compliance with national food safety standards and regulations through better targeting of official resources to facilitate improved public health outcomes and trade opportunities. In the current semester of 2022, the evaluation and review of existing government inspection procedures is underway (frequency, risk profile, etc.). More specifically in Belize's poultry, bean and coconut value chains and Honduras' aquaculture shrimp and fresh produce, as well as the training of government inspectors in risk-based inspection practices. In addition, capacity building, training and awareness-raising sessions on voluntary TPAs are being carried out with experts on the subject through virtual and face-to-face modules with each of the countries.

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