

**ACTIONS AIMED AT IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT ON THE  
APPLICATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

Information presented by the Inter-American Institute  
for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

1. Observer organizations are invited to present reports on activities carried out to promote greater understanding and implementation of the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. IICA therefore wishes to present some initiatives already undertaken for this purpose, or soon to be implemented.

A. ACTIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE SHORT TERM:

**International Seminar on Equivalence and Risk Analysis in Animal Health**

2. An International Seminar on Equivalence and Risk Analysis in Animal Health will be held 25-26 March in Bolivia. Taking part in the event will be officials from the health systems of Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Paraguay.

3. The objective of the activity is to harmonize the concepts of equivalence and risk analysis in animal health among the animal health authorities of the countries taking part and develop guidelines for the preparation and interpretation of studies on equivalence and animal health risks.

**Module on "The Agrifood Chain" of the Executive Series on Leadership in Food Safety**

4. The Third Module of the Executive Series on Leadership in Food Safety entitled "The Agrifood Chain" will be held 15-19 April. As was the case with the previous modules, this one will be attended by participants from 22 western-hemisphere countries and will deal with topics such as: *Food safety and the development of the agrifood chain; Virtual borders in sanitary certification processes for agricultural products; Leadership in overcoming competitive and unanticipated barriers to trade, and; Increasing exports: Specific cases.*

5. This program is possible thanks to the collaboration and financial sponsorship of numerous organizations, including the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition of the University of Maryland, DuPont-Pioneer, the Foreign Agricultural Service of the US Department of Agriculture and the US Food and Drug Administration.

**Training in HACCP in alliance with the World Bank**

6. IICA, through its Virtual Distance Training Center, has developed a strategic alliance with the World Bank's Global Development Learning Network to train 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries in the development and implementation of HACCP plans for industry and the agrifood

chain. The training will be provided by means of New Information and Communication Technologies (NICT). Support will be provided by the Department of Food Science and Technology and the Food Safety Center of Texas A&M University, the Food Safety Research Center of the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, the International HACCP Alliance and the Food Processors Institute of the University of California. This resource will be available by July of this year.

B. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED:

**Development of an agricultural health and food safety agency for the Caribbean**

7. In collaboration with the FAO and the Secretariat of CARICOM, IICA is conducting a feasibility study for the creation of regional agency in the Caribbean, to be known as the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), in response to the mandate issued by the ministers of agriculture of the CARICOM.

8. The overall objective of the CAHFSA is to support the efforts of the Caribbean countries to set up, manage and operate their national agricultural health and food safety programs; and to undertake those actions and activities that can be implemented more efficiently and effectively through a regional mechanism.

9. IICA has prepared a working document and held 14 national consultations in Caribbean countries to present and discuss the framework and obtain inputs from key public- and private-sector stakeholders. At the meeting of the Caribbean Plant Protection Commission (CPPC) held in Trinidad & Tobago in November 2001, the representatives studied and unanimously endorsed the proposal to create the CAHFSA, and plans for its advance were drawn.

**Other actions in support of the Caribbean region**

10. IICA assisted the Ministry of Agriculture of Trinidad and Tobago in preparing plans for responding to emergencies related to the introduction of animal diseases, pests and exotic plant diseases. The draft plans were discussed with key local officials and private-sector stakeholders at a workshop held in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the FAO.

11. A project was implemented to prevent the propagation of black sigatoka in the Caribbean region. Under this project, a regional workshop was held in Jamaica to train plant protection officers from the Caribbean in techniques for diagnosing, preventing and controlling black sigatoka in musaceae.

12. IICA is helping the Ministry of Agriculture of Antigua and Barbuda to modernize its plant protection services.

**Training events**

13. At events in Venezuela and Uruguay in November 2001, IICA gave courses on risk analysis, epidemiological surveillance and the WTO's sanitary and phytosanitary measures and their influence on food safety. The two events were attended by representatives of a total of 6 western-hemisphere countries. Other international organizations also collaborated, such as the PAHO, the FAO, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the University of Uruguay.

14. At the request of the national animal health services of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia, in November 2001 IICA organized the *International Symposium on Traceability in Animal Health*, held in Bahia, Brazil. The participants included representatives of the private sector and officials of the health systems of the countries concerned.

15. In November 2001, an *International Course on Official Certification in Food Safety for Food Services* was held at IICA's Virtual Distance Training Center. Attended by representatives of Costa Rica's food industry, it focused on the development, implementation and monitoring of HACCP plans in food services.

16. In the Andean region, IICA held seminars and produced and distributed electronic publications on emerging pests and diseases, such as BSE, the pink mealy bug, risk analysis, food safety and integrated pest management.

### **Andean System of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Risk Analysis and Equivalence Studies**

17. Initial steps were taken to implement the proposal prepared by an international technical mission (IICA, FAO, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Secretariat of Agriculture of Mexico), aimed at developing a system for training professionals, conducting studies and serving as a support data bank and knowledge management system for the Andean countries for sanitary and phytosanitary risk analysis and equivalence studies. Surveys were conducted and funds were identified for the 2002 work plan, with assistance from USAID, USDA and IICA.

### **Permanent projects for pest and disease control and the declaration of free zones**

18. A zoosanitary surveillance system established with the support of APHIS and IICA operates along the Ecuador-Colombia, Ecuador-Peru and Venezuela-Colombia borders. The purpose is to exchange information and reduce the risks of epidemics. The project included a training course in emergency procedures for professional staff in the Ecuador-Colombia border region.

### **Preparing and executing national modernization projects for animal and plant health services in the Andean countries**

19. IICA has technical assistance agreements in place with the five Andean countries, to help them modernize their animal health and plant protection services. Three (Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia) are currently implementing modernization projects financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and two (Colombia and Venezuela) are awaiting final approval from the Bank. IICA assisted the countries in preparing their projects and is now helping to implement them, mainly through the training component.

20. In Ecuador and Bolivia, IICA has supported the drafting and enactment of new animal health and plant protection legislation, which covers food safety and new autonomous structures and tariffs for their services. In an accreditation scheme with private agronomists, the Ecuadorian inspection system for banana exports (35 per cent of the world market) has been implemented by the Ecuadorian Agricultural Health Service with support provided by IICA.

### **Transparency and information**

21. Through the Andean Agricultural Health Information Network (<http://www.iicasaninet.net/>) and the Agrosalud XXI network ([www.infoagro.net/salud](http://www.infoagro.net/salud)), information is provided on animal health, plant protection and food safety, through press releases, publications and weekly bulletins. Users are kept abreast of the work of the "three sisters" and the WTO, and active involvement in these organizations is encouraged.

**Andean Agricultural Health Forum (FASA)**

22. At the October 2001 meeting of the FASA (Forum for Sanitary and Phytosanitary Authorities in the Andean Region), counterpart officials from the Mercosur countries took part to discuss interregional issues linked to the facilitation of trade, sanitary and food safety matters. IICA acts as the technical secretariat of this forum.

23. If you would like more information about any of these events, please contact:

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