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**Reports from selected international organizations - Report on activities
carried out by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
(IICA)**

Agenda item 14.3

Prepared by the IICA



**Report on activities carried out by the
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
Tenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures**

IICA wishes to share with the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), the members of the Working Group, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Observers, information on the main activities carried out over the last year (April 2014-March 2015) in the area of plant protection.

1. Hemispheric activities and projects

1. a. Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). In the interests of helping to strengthen the NPPOs, IICA continues to support the countries in their implementation of the new version of the PVS tool, which is available in Spanish and English. The PVS process has been implemented in five countries of the hemisphere (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay).

1. b. Regional Workshops for capacity-building and revising drafts of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Workshops were held from September 22 to 25 in Jamaica and from October 28 to 31 in Costa Rica, with the aim of promoting the active participation of the National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) in the ISPM standard setting process, and capacity-building efforts in topics of interest for plant protection. The workshop in Costa Rica was attended by 25 Latin American delegates from 17 countries and three observer organizations, while the Caribbean Workshop was attended by 17 delegates from 13 countries. The Plant Health Committee of the Southern Cone (COSAVE) and the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA) participated in and provided financial support for the event in Latin America. The Caribbean event received financial support from the European Union project EU-CARIFORUM and the IPPC, together with support provided by the IPPC Secretariat and IICA.

1. c. Inter-American Coordinating Group on Plant Protection (GICSV). In its role as Technical Secretariat, IICA provided support for the implementation of the following activities:

- Organization of virtual and face-to-face meetings of the Coordinating Committee and Technical Groups, such as electronic certification (ePhyto) and Huanglongbing (HLB) on citrus disease.
- Preparation and monitoring implementation of the 2014–2015 Work Plan.
- Follow-up of the agenda and implementation of the Work Plan.
- Development of the GICSV Web page on the IICA site to disseminate the Group's work and promote the exchange of information between Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs).
- Support for the Symposium on "Electronic phytosanitary certification: from concepts to implementation", organized by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) in October 2014.
- Virtual (online) meeting to discuss substantive comments to the ISPM drafts.



1. d. Project “Latin America: Strengthening regional capacity to meet pesticide-related export requirements based on international standards.” Work has continued on the implementation of this three-year project, financed by the Standard Trade Development Facility (STDF). IICA is the implementing agency. USDA/FAS, the IR4 Project and the Joint FAO/WHO Group on Pesticide Residues (JMPPR) are also involved in the initiative. The main outputs of the Project are to increase technical capacity to develop new programs for pesticide registration and monitoring, generate up-to-date information on pesticide residues and submit the data for the establishment of Codex Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). The countries that are part of the Project are: Bolivia, Costa Rica, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Paraguay, Panama and Peru. In 2014, training activities were carried out with the government officials responsible for developing field tests and implementing laboratory protocols. In addition, field tests were carried out in Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, Guatemala and Panama.

1. e. Project “Support to the Caribbean Forum of ACP States in the Implementation of Commitments Assumed under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.”

The overall objective of the 10th EDF Programme is to support the beneficial integration of the CARIFORUM States into the world economy and the overall objective of the SPS project is to facilitate CARIFORUM States to gain and improve market access by complying with Europe’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures and to help CARIFORUM States to better develop their own regionally harmonized SPS measures. IICA is the implementing agency for this project which was signed September 2013. It is a 42-months project valued at Euros 11.7 million. Below are plant health related actions that have been implemented under the program to date:

- Country consultations were conducted in all CARIFORUM countries. The objectives of these consultations were to introduce the project to the countries and to determine the priority Agricultural Health, Food Safety and Fisheries needs towards the development of country Work Plans for addressing these needs under the SPS Project.
- **Plant Quarantine Professionals Trained:** Support was provided by the SPS Project for seven professionals to participate in the annual plant quarantine training course hosted by the Faculty of Food and Agriculture of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS), IICA and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (August 2014). This course seeks to improve the Phytosanitary capacities and capabilities of Caribbean countries so that they meet their obligations under the international agreements to which they are signatories, notably the International Plant Protection Conventions (IPPC) and the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement). A total of 25 professionals from 17 countries in the region were trained.
- **World Trade Organization Risk Assessment Workshop:** Support was provided by the Project for nine (9) professionals from CARIFORUM countries to participate in a Risk Assessment Workshop hosted by the WTO SPS Secretariat, Geneva Switzerland. (October 2014)



- **AHFS Seminar Hosted and Exhibition Mounted at the Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2014:** The Project Management Team (PMU and IICA's International AHFS Specialist) successfully hosted a seminar at the CWA 2014 (Suriname) to promote AHFS in the Region and to highlight the interventions being made by the SPS project and other Regional technical groups to strengthen the Region's capacity in agricultural health and food safety (October 2014). Over 60 persons attended the seminar. In addition, an exhibition was mounted which highlighted the project's work in the Region.
- **Post Graduate Diploma in Pesticide Risk Management:** The project has supported the post graduate training in Pesticide Risk Management for one professional from Guyana to attend the Diploma Program in Pesticides Risk Management at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. The student will begin studies in February.

1. f. Meeting of the IPPC's Capacity Development Committee (CDC). IICA participated as an observer at the meetings of this Committee held in June and December, 2014. In the context of these events, IICA gave a presentation on its main technical cooperation activities in the area of plant protection and identified strategic areas for joint action and work in the future with representatives of the IPPC Secretariat.

1. g. Tool "Characterization of National Emergency Response Capabilities in Animal Health and Plant Protection." IICA has developed a new tool aimed at providing countries with a method that will help them to prepare an analysis and characterization of their degree of emergency preparedness and response planning. The results of this process can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses, prioritize areas requiring improvement, monitor progress made in emergency preparedness and design projects and procedures to promote institutional strengthening. The methodology proposed in this guide involves identifying the capacity and authority of the agencies responsible for animal health and plant protection to respond to emergencies caused by pests and diseases that affect animals or plants. Given that the method described here is applicable both to sanitary and phytosanitary emergencies, the language used refers to pests and diseases. The use of these terms is consistent with the concepts defined in the Glossaries of the "Terrestrial Animal Health Code" and "Aquatic Animal Health Code" of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and in the ISPM N° 5 "Glossary of phytosanitary terms" (2012) of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). For that reason, the specific terms used throughout this document are also in line with the definitions given in those Glossaries.

2. Regional projects and activities

2. a. "Competitive Fund for Technical Cooperation Projects" (FonCT). This Fund is an internally funded IICA initiative to finance multinational technical cooperation projects that can be complemented with the resources of other member country organizations or international agencies. The following two projects were implemented during 2014:

- **Project "Regional Virtual School for Plant Health Inspectors" (ERVIF).** IICA has continued with the implementation of this project, which has the support of COSAVE and the IPPC. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to protect plant health and thereby improve agricultural productivity and competitiveness in the Southern and Andean regions, by increasing the technical capacity of the NPPOs and other government services, and ensuring adequate plant inspection and certification standards. During 2014 the International Module was implemented, covering issues common to all countries (SPS Agreement; IPPC; ISPM; RPPOs, professional ethics, crisis



management), which will subsequently be complemented with topics that address the specific concerns and issues in the countries (NPPOs, national standards and procedures, regulated pests, sampling, treatment and other topics).

- **Early Warning Systems (EWS).** In the context of the FonCT project: “Early Warning Systems in territories susceptible to climate change”, implemented in Peru and Paraguay, work was completed the design of a tool for issuing warnings to farmers about pests and diseases. The system uses cell phone technology to send text messages to producers warning of conditions that could favor the spread of pests in crops registered in the System. A database has been established with information on crops, pests and producers has been established, which was loaded during the months of September and October.

2. b. Regional Action Plan to Combat Coffee Rust and Restore Production Capacity in Central America:

This plan was prepared in 2013 by the Regional Cooperative Program for the Technological Development and Modernization of Coffee Production (PROMECAFE) and IICA and was approved by the national coffee institutes and by the Central American Agricultural Council. The Plan includes actions by several regional institutions, each contributing from their area of specialization. As a result of this process, the spread of coffee rust infestation has been controlled in most of the countries, thereby preventing an increased impact on production. In addition, the groundwork has been laid for a Regional Early Warning System (REWS) for coffee rust disease, applicable throughout the region, and an early warning system has been designed for potential use in other pests and diseases. Work is under way to design an early warning system to prevent epidemics of coffee rust and other diseases, and to anticipate crises and their socio-economic effects. In May 2014, PROMECAFE, the Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD), the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), IICA and the National Coffee Institutes held a workshop to define sampling protocols in order to harmonize the monitoring of coffee rust disease in the countries of the region. The objective is to facilitate the analysis and comparison of data.

2.c. UWI Fourth Regional Training Course for Plant Quarantine Officers. This two-week training course took place on August 11 - 22 at the St Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago. The course was developed, implemented and financed jointly by USDA-APHIS, IICA, FAO and the Ministries of Agriculture of Jamaica and Barbados. Representatives from 17 countries in the Region attended the training course, aimed at improving the technical capabilities of plant quarantine inspectors. The participants covered topics such as international phytosanitary measures, the regional plant quarantine infrastructure as well as inspection procedures in ports and airports.

2.d. Fruit Fly database and Website: Under the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI) programme, a Fruit Fly database and website (in progress) for data collection and reporting for CARICOM countries was developed. The objective was to develop a secure website and database to be hosted on an existing site which will act as an entry point for data collection in relation to fruit flies across CARICOM countries. A workshop was held and participants from seven (7) countries were trained in how to use the system as well as integrating it within their current operations. IICA collaborated with USDA/APHIS (Caribbean) in planning and executing this workshop.



3. Regional coordination mechanisms

Southern Region

COSAVE: IICA continued to support COSAVE's activities during 2014 and both institutions are renewing the agreement signed with the aim of strengthening COSAVE's efforts in the region. The main technical cooperation actions carried out with COSAVE during the last period were:

- Support for the implementation of activities of the phytosanitary inspection project.
- **Project proposal "COSAVE: Strengthening regional implementation of phytosanitary measures and market access."** Funding has been requested from the STDF for this initiative aimed at strengthening regional implementation of phytosanitary measures. The objectives of the Project are to maintain and improve plant health, promote regional trade in agricultural products among the member countries of COSAVE and help to maintain existing markets and gain access to new ones. The four components of the Project are: a) Consolidate a regional plant health information system to strengthen trust between countries and improve their technical capacity to implement surveillance efforts and early detection of quarantine pests. b) Increase the region's technical capacity in applying the PRA process with emphasis on assessing economic, non-trade and environmental consequences of introducing a pest, as well as in risk evaluation related to pests that cause indirect damage or on which there is less knowledge in the region (e.g. plants as pests). c) Strengthen capacity-building efforts in the area of plant health inspection and certification, generating the necessary tools to systematize, maintain and improve that process. d) Generate tools and build capacity in order to assess the impact of the phytosanitary regulations applied by the countries for maintaining or improving their plant health status as a means to improve market access and facilitate trade.

Caribbean Region

- **The Seventh Regional Plant Health Directors Meeting** took place in August 2014, in the Cayman Islands, and was attended by 50 delegates from 25 Caribbean countries. In addition, representatives of USDA/APHIS, FAO, CARICOM Secretariat, IICA, UWI and CARDI were present.
- **7th Meeting of the CPHD Forum:** The 7th meeting of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum was held in August in the Cayman Islands. Approximately 50 persons from 25 countries across the Caribbean attended. Also in attendance were representatives from USDA/APHIS, FAO, CARICOM Secretariat, IICA, UWI and CARDI.
- **The 20th meeting of the CGPC** (the Coordinating Group of Pesticides Control Board of the Caribbean) was held in June 2014. Representatives from 18 Pesticides Control Boards across the Caribbean were in attendance. The highlight of this meeting was planning for the second phase of the UN-GEF funded project: Disposal of Obsolete Pesticides including POPs, Promotion of Alternatives and Strengthening Pesticides Management in the Caribbean. IICA's International AHFS Specialist based in the Caribbean functions as the technical secretary for the CGPC.
- **Emergency Response Working Group:** Representatives from 8 countries in the Region participated in the 3rd working group meeting on Plant Health Emergency Response. During this meeting the draft regional emergency response manual was reviewed and a work plan for 2014-2015 was prepared. This working group meeting was executed under



the USDA/APHIS GCSI (Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative) program. IICA assisted in the planning and execution of this meeting.

- **CAHFSA:** A CEO for CAHFSA (Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency) was hired in October 2014 and the operation of that agency officially started. CAHFSA is located at the Ministry of Agriculture in Suriname. The CEO is Mr. Simeon Collins. The process of recruiting additional technical staff has started with the advertisement for a plant health specialist and an animal health specialist. The third meeting of the CAHFSA Board of Directors was held in Guyana November 17-19. IICA, along with other partner agencies (FAO, CARDI and the OECS Secretariat) were invited to attend the third day of the meeting. IICA gave a presentation on the Role of IICA with respect to CAHFSA. The meeting discussed the proposed 2015-2017 Action Plan for CAHFSA. Eleven member countries were present. The Board is chaired by Trinidad and Tobago

Central Region

- **Technical Cooperation Agreement with OIRSA:** IICA and OIRSA signed a Technical Cooperation Agreement in December 2014, aimed at promoting activities to improve institutional capabilities, including education and training in areas of mutual interest such as agriculture, livestock production, forestry, hydro-biological production. The objective is to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector, enhance its capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change, make better use of natural resources and contribute to an improvement in food security.
- **Shipping and Goods Procedures for Quarantine Control Points:** With IICA's support, the countries of the Region made progress in reviewing and adjusting the procedure within the framework of the Central American Customs Union Process (UAC). A final version of the document has been completed. The procedure incorporates all the contributions and suggestions made by the countries, together with the Institute's proposals, which are reviewed jointly with the countries.

Northern Region

- **Annual Meeting of the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO).** During the NAPPO Annual meeting, held on October 20-24 in Mexico, IICA gave a presentation on its activities in the area of plant health and participated in the Symposium on "Electronic phytosanitary certification." As Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Coordinating Group on Plant Protection (GICSV), IICA also attended a meeting with the Executive Committee of NAPPO, OIRSA, COSAVE, the National Service for Agri-food Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) of Mexico, for the purpose of identifying and promoting topics of mutual interest to the organizations participating in that meeting.

4. National projects and activities

Costa Rica:

- **Manual of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for the production of *culantro coyote* (long-leafed coriander)** IICA supported the drafting of a proposal for this Manual, which is currently being reviewed by the competent authorities.

Ecuador:



- **Regional Workshop for the Prevention of Panama Disease.** The IICA Office in Ecuador organized this workshop with the aim of promoting closer international relations and uniting efforts to prevent the spread of this pest to countries in the Andean Region. IICA is leading efforts to adopt preventive actions and develop a regional plan.

Grenada

- **CALIDENA Workshop.** A Diagnostic Workshop on the nutmeg chain in Grenada with a view to identifying and addressing problems that affect the quality of this product and therefore the sector's competitiveness. The meeting resulted in the design of an action plan for the development of a nutmeg value chain.

Mexico:

- **Moscafrut and Moscamed Programs: Strengthening Diagnosis in SENASICA Laboratories and Prevention of Exotic Pests and Diseases.** On May 28, the IICA Office in Mexico submitted reports to SENASICA on the technical and financial results of these programs, together with the technical assessment and external audits.
- **International Training Course on Fruit Fly.** This course took place from June 30 to July 12, in Chiapas, and was attended by 27 technicians from eight countries. It was organized by the IICA Office in Mexico with the aim of training technicians from Mexico and other countries in planning campaigns to combat fruit flies.

Paraguay:

- **Second Course for Plant Health Inspectors.** The IICA Office in Paraguay supported the implementation of this three-month training course aimed at improving the technical capabilities of officials of the National Quality Assurance and Plant and Seed Health Service (SENAVE). The course focused on the areas of plant health inspection, risk analysis related to pests and food safety and was imparted by FCA/UNA researchers, professors of SENAVE and Specialists of IICA, USDA-APHIS and the SAG of Chile.

Trinidad and Tobago:

- **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).** On June 13, the IICA Office in Trinidad and Tobago participated in a working group on food safety and quality assurance on farms, aimed at implementing a National Program on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in that country.

Brazil:

- **Brazilian Inspection System 2014-2016.** The IICA Office in Brazil organized a workshop in Florianopolis with the objective of setting guidelines for the Brazilian Inspection System for the 2014-2016 biennium. The event was attended by experts from the Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development and Justice.