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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Thirteenth Session

Rome, 16-20 April 2018

**Written reports from relevant international organizations - Inter-
American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture Report**

Agenda item 14.3

Prepared by the IICA

English only

Activities of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) conducted in 2017 to support plant health and the International Plant Protection Convention

1. Project STDF 502/COSAVE “COSAVE: regional strengthening for the implementation of phytosanitary measures and market access”.

The STDF/PG/502 project aims to strengthen the capacity to implement phytosanitary measures in order to maintain and improve phytosanitary status, thereby facilitating trade in agricultural goods in the region of Southern Cone Plant Health Committee (COSAVE) and helping to maintain or improve access to foreign markets. To that end, the goal is to build up a regional phytosanitary information system, to enhance the capacity for pest risk analysis, inspection and phytosanitary certification, and to create tools and build up the capacity to assess the impact of the implementation of phytosanitary measures.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is the implementing organization for STDF/PG/502 and the COSAVE countries involved are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. IICA and the WTO, on behalf of the STDF, signed the contract to implement the project from November 1st, 2015 to October 31st, 2018.

The project governance include a Project Steering Committee, a Project Technical Committee and the Project Management Unit (PMU), with a participatory way to make decisions.

1.1 Phytosanitary surveillance actions strengthened:

The activities programmed in the work plan were fulfilled successfully; trainings, workshops and remote work, and the NPPOs worked with experts for the following outputs that are available in Spanish and English:

- Guide for the Implementation of General Plant Pest Surveillance System
- Software and user's guide for web application for the General Plant Pest Surveillance
- Guide for the Implementation of Specific Plant Pest Surveillance System
- Case study on Specific Plant Pest Surveillance: *Bactrocera dorsalis*
- Case study on Specific Plant Pest Surveillance: *Xanthomonas oryzae pv. oryzae*

1.2 Strengthening of the pest risk analysis capacity:

The project focused on the risk assessment for plants as pests and on the assessment of the economic effects and the non-commercial and environmental consequences, with the objective to strengthen technical capacities and provide tools. NPPO officials were trained and the final English and Spanish versions of training materials are nearly complete:

- Guidelines for risk assessment for plant pests (weeds).
- Case study on risk assessment for plant pests: *Ambrosia trifida*
- Case study on risk assessment for plant pests: *Hydrocotyle batrachium*
- Guidelines for risk assessment of the economic effects and the non-commercial and environmental consequences.

The NPPOs, with the expert's orientation, are starting case studies to apply the guidelines on assessment of the economic effects and the non-commercial and environmental consequences.

1.3 Capacity building on inspection and certification

The activities performed were the implementation of an International Module Pilot Course and the Learning Processes' Management – LPM. In November 2017, 21 NPPO officials completed nine training courses, and a reviewed second edition is being conducted with 36 new officials.

The Project Management Unit is working with COSAVE NPPOs to make the necessary arrangements to develop and implement national training modules. A document that describes the sustainability strategy for the Phytosanitary Inspection School (ERVIF) was approved last march.

1.4 Impact of phytosanitary measure implementation assessed

Two tools will be developed to help countries to assess costs and identify the benefits and desired – as well as undesired – impact of implementing specific phytosanitary measures. These tools will be developed with an eye to the specific requirements of a methodology designed to assess the impact of the phytosanitary measures applied by the NPPOs.

This will help NPPOs to identify adjustments to be made to phytosanitary measures to be able to produce the desired results and, at the same time, contribute to improving market access and facilitating trade in products of plant origin. The tools will be tested in a minimum of three case studies so that the necessary adjustments can be made in order to ensure that they function as envisioned. These tools and case studies will be published in order to share the resources needed to protect the phytosanitary status as a public good in the countries of the region and other regions of the world.

The first workshop will be place at the beginning of May 2018 and we hope to have the tools developed before the end of the year.

2. Workshop "Application of risk management approaches"

On October 3-5, 2017, IICA hosted a workshop titled, "Application of risk management approaches" in Bogotá, Colombia. In relation to the implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), Latin American countries have received a substantial amount of risk evaluation training. However, the stage of risk assessment involving decision-making that leads to risk management is still an under-worked issue that requires capacity building that contributes to trade facilitation. The objective of the event was to strengthen the technical capacity on risk management to promote the development of capacities in NPPOs. Fifty-two risk evaluators and risk managers from 16 countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Dominican Republic) in Latin America attended the workshop.

Training objectives were: Promote interaction among professionals of NPPOs in the region regarding risk management procedures they use, with emphasis on border procedures; Identify the best practices for decision making in risk management based on risk assessment; Increase the understanding of the responsibility of the NPPO regarding risk management; Increase the knowledge of risk managers working in NPPOs; and, Familiarize risk managers and risk evaluators with the application of ISPM 11.

Based on the success of this activity, IICA will look to further expand this area of work in the future.

3. International Symposium for Risk-Based Sampling

The North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) hosted an International Symposium for Risk-Based Sampling (RBS) in Baltimore on June 26-30, 2017. RBS is a commodity sampling strategy that is more effective than standard sampling practices because it yields a constant pest detection rate and better data that are statistically sound and relevant for risk targeting. This is done to optimize inspection resources and facilitate safe trade of agricultural products based on scientific principles. The Symposium's goal was to promote harmonized, science-based sampling and inspection policies and practices in North America and around the world through a common understanding and approach to how countries implement existing international plant health standards related to these concepts. Over 115 representatives from 27 Western and Eastern

Hemisphere countries attended; including agricultural, regulatory and customs officials, industry, academics, and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat.

Participants examined the strategic and operational benefits of RBS, shared technical information, learned various countries' experiences in utilizing RBS, and exchanged best practices. On the last day, a smaller group met to initiate the framework for the future development of a risk-based sampling manual, based on the dialogues during the week. The goal is for the manual to be developed as an international resource potentially for eventual inclusion in the IPPC phytosanitary resources page and to serve as a guide for future trainings on this concept. Working with USDA/APHIS, IICA supported participation of ten experts from Latin America.

4. Fumigation Workshops

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, International Services (APHIS-IS), the International Regional Agency for Agricultural Health (OIRSA) and IICA conducted two workshops on Quarantine Fumigation in San José, Costa Rica, on August 28-29, August 31-Sept. 1, 2017. The objective of the workshops was to train technicians from Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama in the methodology for quarantine fumigation based on the APHIS Quarantine Treatment Manual. The workshops included theoretical and practical activities, and each lasted two days.

Seventy-nine (79) technicians with responsibilities in the fumigation operations related to quarantine control participated. Of the total, twenty-two (22) were OIRSA technicians. APHIS-IS/APHIS experts lead the course and OIRSA conducted the practical exercise.

The training facilitated a better understanding of quarantine fumigation operations, and in particular the common understanding among countries for quarantine decision-making with regard to plant health protection and trade facilitation.

5. Workshop "Emerging and reemerging pests: incidence of climate change on the behavior and distribution of pests".

This workshop was held in December 2017, to improve the capacity for prevention and management of emerging and reemerging pests. The workshop improved understanding around the impact of climate change on behavior, population dynamics and distribution of pests in the COSAVE region. Predictive models that relate the behavior, population dynamics and distribution of the pests with changing climatic conditions were presented. Participants shared experiences in the implementation of prevention practices and management of emerging and reemerging pests related to changing climatic conditions. Participants also identified research lines that provide necessary information for the Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) and necessary lines of action to improve the response and adaptation to climate change in relation to the behavior and distribution of pests. As a result of this activity, COSAVE, with the support of IICA, is developing a project profile that will allow it to improve its capacity to make decisions in response to the impact of climate change on the dynamics and behavior of pests.