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Organización  
de las  
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Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Second Session

Rome, 26 – 30 March 2007

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)  
Report to the CPM – March 2007

Agenda Item 8.3

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**Second session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures  
March 2007**

**Activities report for the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures by the Inter-American Institute  
for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture wishes to inform CPM about some of its activities during the past year in the area of plant health.

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Regarding capacity-building and institutional modernization, IICA has based its strategy on the application of the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) Instrument for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs).

**1. Capacity-building of national plant protection organizations**

1.1 From November 20 to 23, IICA provided support for an international workshop in Colombia for the exchange of successful SPS experiences; its purpose was to establish policies for modernizing the various institutions involved in the area of agricultural health and food safety.

1.2 In Paraguay, IICA supported the strengthening of the institutional framework for several official services, including their new organizational structure, a training plan, and international relations. The support proposals were based on the results of the application of the Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) Instrument for National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs). In addition, support was provided for training experts to operate the phytosanitary laboratory, and for implementation of the information program on Phytosanitary Import Accreditation (PIA).

1.3 In Uruguay, the performance of the NPPO was characterized by the application of the PVS; among other matters, this allowed a training program to be designed for NPPO technical officials, based on training needs that had been identified as a critical capability for the service.

1.4 As part of its strategy to strengthen the technical capacity of the institutions that provide agricultural health and food safety services, IICA Venezuela held an exploratory strategic planning event with the Autonomous Agricultural Health Service (SASA), based on the IICA PVS instrument for National Plant Protection Organizations. The event was used as a basis for the process of restructuring SASA and, particularly, for strengthening the Service's Plant Health Directorate.

1.5 In Colombia, the PVS instrument was applied to the NPPO of the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA); this allowed the results of the analysis of information gathered in six workshops to be presented, together with the main recommendations for correcting the weakest areas of the system.

1.6 In Ecuador, application of the PVS for the NPPO allowed the weakest areas of the system to be identified and the principal recommendations for correcting them to be presented. Regarding the weak areas identified by applying the PVS, SESA has been provided with technical support to implement three phytosanitary monitoring units. Technical assistance has also been provided to SESA to strengthen its information and communication system so that it will have an automated system to certify bananas for export, and phytosanitary monitoring and information on international and national regulations and standards. The same process of applying the PVS was carried out in Peru.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)  
Report to the CPM – March 2007

1.7 The IICA Office in Bolivia provided assistance to strengthen the institutional and operational structure of the national Agricultural Health and Food Safety Service (SENASAG).

IICA considers that the advantage that countries take of the forums on international standards is strategic for the continuing improvement of official services and the competitiveness of the agrifood sector. Coordination between the agendas of these forums and the conditions that the countries need to achieve is one of the Institute's goals.

**2. Development of institutional capacities with regard to sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS)**

2.1 SPS Initiative for the Americas: Since 2002, IICA has been implementing the SPS Initiative for the Americas; its main objective is to develop the institutional capacities of 28 countries of the Americas, based on the work of international standard organizations, particularly the WTO-SPS Committee. The Initiative facilitates an active participation in this Committee by the 28 countries and promotes institutional building and coordination between the agendas of the various international SPS forums.

To date, a total of 209 experts from capitals have benefited; of these 63% are from the agricultural sector, 31% the trade sector, and 6% the health sector. Of the 28 countries benefiting from the Initiative for the Americas, 100% state that they have some coordination mechanism to discuss and analyze the agendas of international standards organizations.

Other aspects that have been promoted under the Initiative are human capital, intersectoral coordination, the priority of the issue in decision-making, and financial resources.

2.2 SPS Training: In November 2006, IICA, together with OIE, CIPF, and the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission supported a regional SPS workshop organized by WTO in Colombia. Ten South American countries took part in this workshop.

With resources from the United States Department of Agriculture, IICA provided support to FAO and CIPF in the workshop to review phytosanitary standards, held in Santiago Chile on August 21 and 22. In this regard, the participants, who had received financial assistance were encouraged to coordinate with their countries' representatives on the WTO-SPS Committee and to pay special attention to the draft norm on regionalization. The purpose of this effort was to promote a combined effort between the experts who cover the relevant international organizations and the WTO-SMP Committee

To support FAO, IICA collaborated with the organization of the regional training workshops on management and use of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Portal held in Argentina, and in Trinidad and Tobago, in October and November 2006, respectively. Both events covered the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

As part of the effort to strengthen the areas of information and notification, IICA provided support to USDA in a workshop for the Caribbean countries. The workshop, in which 24 experts participated, provided an information management model.

Information systems are an essential tool to foster transparency and provide timely and accurate information.

### **3. Support for disseminating information**

3.1 The AGROSALUD information system distributes information on agricultural health and food safety, including norms and actions implemented by WTO and relevant international organizations. The Spanish version can be found at: [www.infoagro.net/salud](http://www.infoagro.net/salud) and the English version at: [www.agrihealth.ws](http://www.agrihealth.ws).

3.2 The newsletter, CARAPHIN News, designed for the Caribbean, promotes the exchange of information on the occurrence of pests and diseases of commercial importance; the next issue will be published and distributed in July.

3.3 The information system, INFOAGRONEGOCIOS, is devoted to promoting agribusiness in the Americas, and its objectives include facilitating access to import/export requirements for agrifood products in selected markets and to the principal sources of information concerning the agrifood sector. The Spanish version can be found at: [www.infoagro.net/agronegios](http://www.infoagro.net/agronegios).

Evidently, one of the most important requirements of IICA member countries relates to emerging issues or emergencies, and in this regard, the Institute has supported several specific actions concerning pests or diseases that are a priority for some regions, as well as emerging issues related to new international norms.

### **4. Specific activities**

4.1 In the countries of the Andean region (Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru), a process of analyzing the current situation in the area of traceability for some priority agrifood chains has been started, characterized by a high level of coordination between the public and private sector. An investment plan is being drawn up for the implementation of country projects in this area. In addition, IICA supports the implementation of a traceability system, the strengthening of laboratories, and the development of the organic sector in Paraguay.

4.2 In Argentina, IICA is cooperating with SENASA and provincial and municipal governments in a series of dissemination activities designed to make participants in the agrifood chain aware of the issue of Best Agricultural Practices (BAP), to encourage their voluntary incorporation into agrifood quality programs. IICA facilitates the understanding of, and the relationship between, BAP and international agreements, such as the WTO-SPS Agreement, and also animal health (OIE), plant protection (CIPF) and food safety (CODEX) agreements.

4.3 In Venezuela and Ecuador, national Best Agricultural Practices (BAP) committees have been established with the participation of both the public and the private sector. These national committees are working on the preparation of national directives or protocols on BAP for fresh fruits and vegetables, trying to harmonize the requirements of the USA (Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables) and of the European Community (EUREPGAP). In Colombia, the creation of the BAP Inter-Institutional Committee was supported, and IICA also took part in the elaboration of the BAP protocol for fruits, vegetables and herbs of the Colombian Technical Norms and Certification Institute (ICONTEC).

4.4 In Peru, a series of BAP guidelines have been developed for different products such as olives and corn, which have been distributed and publicized among small and medium producers.

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)  
Report to the CPM – March 2007

4.5 In Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador, a series of events have been held for small and medium-sized producers to disseminate information on BAP and raise awareness of their importance for supplying the national market with safe, high-quality foodstuffs.

4.6. IICA supported the eleventh meeting of the Coordinating Group of Pesticide Control Boards of the Caribbean held in Barbados from June 20 to 22, 2006. The IICA Office in Saint Lucia was the secretariat of this group.

4.7 IICA provided support to FAO in a regional course on implementation of ISPS No. 15 (Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade), for all the Caribbean countries in August 2006, and collaborated in the workshop to identify the needs of countries of the Andean region regarding the application of ISPS No. 15 for wood packaging, in collaboration with NAPPO.

4.8 In Argentina, technical and administrative support was provided to the national cotton ball-weevil control program and also training in multi-sectoral negotiation, especially for the plant protection sector.

4.9 Support for the fruit fly control and elimination program continued in Chile; this is a bi-national program between Chile and Peru. The program aims to characterize fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata* and *Anastrepha* spp.) infestation in the hemisphere and identify aplotypes. Agreement between IICA-SAG and ASOEX.

4.10 To assist the COSAVE countries, IICA supports the regional strategy for the control and elimination of the cotton ball-weevil within the framework of the IICA-COSAVE-IDB project, provides technical and administrative support to COSAVE, and supports capacity-building in the region, enhancing knowledge of the standards and guidelines for developing the risk analysis methodology for phytosanitary products, in the context of the COSAVE standards.

4.11 In January this year, IICA supported the workshop on “Mitigating the threats of invasive exotic species” in the islands of the Caribbean, organized by UNEP-GEF in Trinidad and Tobago. Also in the Caribbean region, IICA provided support for a regional workshop organized by FAO and held in Jamaica on the phytosanitary status of the CARIFORUM member countries.

4.12 In Venezuela, cooperation was provided to SASA and to the Food Hygiene Directorate of the Ministry of Public Health on the Pesticides Register, based on the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides.

4.13 In Ecuador, support was provided to the inventory of quarantine pests of ornamental flowers and banana; a project to update and harmonize the Ecuadorian Plant Health Act was implemented; technical assistance was provided to build capacities in the SESA Risk Analysis Unit, and the country’s phytosanitary certification system and processes were reinforced.

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