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COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES

Seventh Session
Rome, 19 - 23 March 2012
Report by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
Agenda item 12.4 of the Provisional Agenda

1. A report on activities carried out by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is attached herewith for information.

Report on activities carried out by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

IICA wishes to share with the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and the representatives of the plant health services of the Member Countries some of the activities carried out over the last year (2011-2012) in the area of plant health.

1. Developing the Capacities of the Official Services

1.1 During 2011, IICA provided technical cooperation for modernization of phytosanitary services through the application of its the *Performance, Vision and Strategy (PVS) for National Plant Protection Organizations* tool in **Haiti**, which resulted in a plan for strengthening the national phytosanitary service. In addition, IICA contributed to the development of a strategic plan for the National Phytosanitary Service of **Costa Rica**. For 2012, within the framework of a 4-year project for strengthening capacities in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures funded by the European Union for CARIFORUM countries, the IICA PVS tool will be applied in 15 other Caribbean countries with a view to creating National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agencies in each country, as well as contributing to the operationalization of the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food safety Agency (CAHFSa).

1.2 As part of IICA's support of IPPC activities, IICA hosted and co-funded with the Phytosanitary Council of the South (COSAVE) and the International Regional Agricultural Health Organization (OIRSA) the regional Latin American meetings for discussion of proposed IPPC norms in September, 2011. IPPC was represented by three members of the Standards Commission. The meeting was held at IICA headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica. The 2012 meeting for Latin America will be organized following the above model of cooperation with the RPPOs, and IICA will also organized the norms discussion meeting for the Caribbean with IIPC funding.

1.3 The capacities of official services in the Central Region (**Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama**) on Risk Analysis of Plant Pests were strengthened through an advanced course conducted jointly by IICA, the Inter American Development Bank (IDB), the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) and the IPPC. The course was preceded by the pilot testing by the participants of the IPPC's new on-line PRA course developed by IICA under contract with the IPPC, and will be followed by internships and mentoring programs at USDA-APHIS in 2012.

2. Developing Institutional Capabilities in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)

2.1 IICA, under contract and in close coordination with the IPPC, developed and uploaded a new on-line course on Plant Pest Risk Analysis for use globally by IPPC Member Countries. The Spanish version was completed in October 2011 and the English version is currently being installed in the IPPC webpage. IICA expresses its gratitude to the IPPC for its confidence on the Institute's capabilities and renews its commitment to supporting the capacity-building efforts of the IPPC in the Western Hemisphere.

2.2 As part of a new cooperation agreement between with the USDA-APHIS, IICA is implementing a program to strengthen the capacity of Caribbean countries in plant quarantine. The program is part of the USDA's Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI) and involves support for the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum and its four working groups, as well as extensive training on plant quarantine for phytosanitary inspectors, delivered by the University of West Indies.

2.3 In cooperation with the COSAVE, IICA conducted a workshop on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for countries in the South Region. As result, a study of the situation and perspectives of GAPs in the region is being completed and will guide future activities in this area.

3. Support for the Dissemination of Information

3.1 IICA produces several newsletters and has communications systems that encourage the exchange of information relating to SPS and the work of the WTO, the international reference organizations, and regional organizations.

3.2 As part of the AGROSALUD (AGRIHEALTH) platform, the "Observatory of Emerging Issues and Emergencies" is currently operating as a communication and information system targeting the public and private sector. Its purpose is to update users on situations – both positive and negative – relevant to economic well-being and public health in the Hemisphere in the areas of animal health, plant health and food safety. These events will be selected from official references to ensure transparency and harmonization and will be backed up by press releases and documents from the same sources.

4. Specific activities

4.1 Andean Region

- A new cooperation agreement has been signed between IICA and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN). The agreement will result in joint programs to strengthen agricultural health and food safety in the CAN Member Countries.
- As part of a 4-year cooperation agreement signed between IICA and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2011, a project funded by the IAEA has been approved for control and eradication of fruit flies in the region. The 4-year project will cover **Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru**. The first coordination meeting of the project took place in Lima, Peru in March 2012.
- IICA is contributing to the implementation of an APHIS-ICA-IICA agreement, designed to develop projects oriented towards research on risk mitigation of quarantine plant pests of economic importance for **Colombia's** export markets.
- A workshop on "Sanitary Risks and Inspection" was held by ICA in Bogota, **Colombia**, in November, 2011. The workshop was attended by high-level officials of the Colombian system of inspection and certification and by phytosanitary border, as well as representatives of the private sector.
- To address regional concerns regarding the dissemination of various snail pests, and at the request of the PPO of **Ecuador**, IICA, in collaboration with USDA-APHIS, held a regional workshop on identification of snails and other mollusk plant pests. The workshop was held in Quito, Ecuador with phytosanitary staff from **Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia** in attendance. As a result, a regional strategy for prevention and control of these pests was developed.
- IICA supported the PPO of **Venezuela** in conducting a survey to determine the possible presence of the red palm weevil. The results indicated that this pest is not currently present in the country.

- Also in **Venezuela**, IICA conducted a workshop on “Implementation of GAP” for 40 coordinators and promoters belonging to the Socialist Networks for Production Innovation, who are responsible for the development and implementation of 500 agricultural production projects around the country.

4.2 Caribbean Region

- IICA participated in the Third Regional Consultation on developing a Caribbean Strategy For Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in the Insular Caribbean led by UNEP-CABI. The workshop was held in the Bahamas as part of a project being implemented by CABI in which IICA is a collaborator. Five countries participated in this project (**Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Saint Lucia**, and the **Dominican Republic**). The draft strategy was finalized at this meeting.
- The 47th meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society was held in Barbados in July, 2011. Over 250 persons attended from over 25 countries. The theme of the conference was: *“Assuring Caribbean Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of Climate Change.”*
- A WTO-IDB/INTAL Regional Workshop on the Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures for the Caribbean Countries was held in Barbados in July 2011. Approximately 50 persons from 12 countries were in attendance. IICA participated by providing resource staff and presenters.
- A training course on Plant Quarantine Principles and Procedures was held in collaboration with USDA-APHIS, the University of the West Indies, IICA, and FAO, with 25 persons from 16 countries across the Region in attendance. The course was geared towards the training of new plant quarantine inspectors. IICA assisted in developing the curriculum and in delivering the training.
- IICA, in collaboration with USDA-APHIS, conducted a regional Lepidoptera identification workshop for Caribbean countries. This was one of a series of workshops held over the past five years, which has been providing training in pest identification for Ministry of Agriculture personnel. In 2011, as in previous years, the training was held at the St. George’s University in Guyana. There were 19 participants from all the CARICOM countries, in addition to participants from St. Marten, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. This year the training was on the Order of Lepidoptera. The trainers were from the University of Florida and were provided by FAVACA (the Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas). IICA provided technical and logistic support for the workshop.
- IICA participated in the launching of the CABI Plant Clinic initiative for the Caribbean, held in Grenada. The initiative was launched in three countries of the Caribbean (Grenada, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago) as a pilot group. It is expected that plant clinics will eventually be established in other countries the Region.
- A workshop for the Global Review of Phytosanitary Surveillance in the Context of the IPPC Standard (ISPM #6) – Identification of Challenges and Best Practices was conducted in Barbados on January 24-26, 2012. Participants were drawn from all CARICOM Member States.

4.3 Central Region

IICA has continued to contribute to the implementation of policy measures in areas of SPS within the framework of the Central American Agricultural Policy (PACA, for its name in Spanish). Some of the work thus carried out was as follows:

- IICA and the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SE-CAC) established and implemented a joint program of work covering the SPS component of the PACA. This program is part of the process of creation of the Central American Customs Union, in which **Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama** (as observer) participate. The plant health related results of this work include:

- Support to the countries in revising the Operations Manual for Quarantine Control Posts via regional videoconferences and meetings of the SPS Subgroup. The procedures covered by the manual will be mandatory in 2012.
- IICA contributed in the development of the sanitary and phytosanitary component of the Regional Policy and Strategic Plan for the Fruit Sector, which was approved by the Ministers of Agriculture.
- IICA shared with countries of the South Region, Nicaragua and Panama the lessons learned in the implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in the countries of the Americas, as well as the concept of One Health.
- A proposal for a Traceability Guide for Grains has been developed by IICA to support **Honduras** – P4P Program of the World Food Program. The proposal contains grain fumigation procedures and is currently undergoing pilot tests.
- IICA participated in the annual meeting of the Inter American Citrus Network (RIAC), held in San Jose, Costa Rica in December, 2011. The meeting included a symposium on HLB, a disease of great concern for the hemisphere.

4.4 South Region

Since 1979 IICA has had a cooperation agreement with the RPPO in the South Region, the Southern Cone Committee on Plant Health (COSAVE, for its name in Spanish), which includes **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay**. Both institutions agreed to conduct an external evaluation of such agreement in 2011, with the objective of strengthening and consolidating COSAVE's operation, promote sustainable development of the agricultural sector, facilitating trade, and contributing to the protection of the environment. The agreement, ratified by the Ministers of Agriculture of the region, has been renewed for four years. Activities conducted in 2011-2012 within the framework of the IICA-COSAVE agreement include:

- IICA supported a regional workshop on "Prevention and Control of *Lobesia botrana*; the event was held in Chile on April, 2011.
- A study was conducted on the institutional life of the COSAVE, with the goal of documenting its history, trajectory, and institutional activities, analyzing political, institutional and technical factors that have impact its evolution.
- A regional workshop on Electronic Certification was supported by IICA; the workshop took place in Santiago, Chile in May, 2012.