

SPS Project News

10th EDF Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Project

Welcome to the 'SPS Project News'

The 10th EDF Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures Project is pleased to share with you the first issue of the 'SPS Project News' for 2015. In this issue you will learn more about the SPS Project and see how the Project is collaborating with other institutions and agencies to advance the SPS regime in CARIFORUM States. We hope that you find this issue useful and informative! If you have any feedback or suggestions, please feel free to contact us at sps.project@iica.int.

Overview of the SPS Agreement

The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the 'SPS Agreement') entered into force with the establishment of the World Trade Organization on 1st January 1995. It concerns the application of food safety and animal and plant health regulations. The SPS Agreement sets out the basic rules for food safety and animal and plant health requirement.

SPS Agreement – Basic Right (Article 2.1)



WTO member countries are encouraged to use the standards developed by the relevant international bodies whenever they exist. However, members may use measures which result in higher levels of health protection, so long as their measures are based on an appropriate assessment of risks and the approach is consistent, not arbitrary. *Continued on page 5*



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What is the 10th EDF SPS Measures Project?

The Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) Project, is one component of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) Programme titled “*Support to the Caribbean Forum of ACP States in the Implementation of Commitments Undertaken under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)*”. The overall objective of the SPS Project is to strengthen the capacity of CARIFORUM States for international market access through compliance with Europe’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, as well as improve capacity for developing regionally harmonized SPS measures.

Project Actions:

The SPS Project actions are directed towards creating and/or strengthening Regional and National SPS systems through systematic focus on alleviating constraints in the areas of legislation, coordination and capacity building:

- **Legislation:** Establishment of a sound and comprehensive national and regional legislative framework for plant and animal health, including fisheries, food safety, and related environmental monitoring;
- **Coordination:** Development and organization of an efficient responsive institutional framework and mechanism for coordination of SPS issues at both the national and regional level; and
- **Capacity Building:** Development of the human resources to support the SPS regime. This will aim to improve the capacity of public and private sector stakeholders in areas such as; the application of good agricultural, manufacturing and laboratory practices, HACCP and risk analyses, pest identification and food safety.

Expected Outcomes:

Through the implementation of project actions the following outcomes are expected:

- Enhanced Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Systems
- Strengthened enforcement of legislation, standards, guidelines, measures for increased production and marketing of agricultural and fisheries products
- Improved coordination to support the SPS regime
- Enhanced institutional capacity of national and regional regulatory bodies and the private sector to meet SPS requirements of international trade
- Enhanced trade opportunities within European and other international markets

Implementation:

The Project commenced on September 3, 2013 and is being implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) over 42 months in collaboration with the following partners: CARICOM Secretariat (CCS), Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the SPS committee of the Dominican Republic (Comité Nacional para la Aplicación de Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias – (CNMSF).

The following CARIFORUM States are the primary beneficiaries of the Project’s activities: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago.

SPS Project Technical Actions – Highlights

The 10th EDF SPS Measures Project has undertaken a number of technical activities and provided financial support to the implementation of various actions during 2014 and 2015. Provided below are some highlights of the actions achieved between July 2014 and April 2015:

Legislative Framework

International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) Workshop hosted in collaboration with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) secretariat. A regional workshop was supported in September 2014 in Jamaica to review and comment on draft ISPMs. Thirteen (13) CARIFORUM countries were represented. The workshop also built the capacity of professionals in the international standard setting process.

National and Regional Coordination of AHFS Systems

- **Annual Meeting of Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum supported:** Support was provided to host the seventh meeting of Caribbean Plant Health Directors in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands in July 2014. This meeting developed strategic interventions to strengthen plant health capacity in the wider Caribbean. All CARIFORUM countries were represented at this important meeting.
- **Annual CaribVET/CVO Meeting:** Support was provided to host the 10th Meeting of the CaribVET Steering Committee and the 15th Meeting of the CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers held in Guadeloupe, April 20th – 24th, 2015. CVOs from all CARIFORUM countries attended.

- **Supported the third Meeting of the Board of the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA)** held in Georgetown, Guyana, November 17-19, 2014
- **Attendance to International SPS Meetings:** Support was provided to seven countries to attend international meetings; SPS (October 2014, Geneva Switzerland) and OIE (November 2014, Guadalajara, Mexico).
- 10th Session of the Commission of Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) held in Rome in March 2015. Thirteen countries were supported (the largest contingent of Caribbean nationals at a CPM);
- 62nd Meeting of the SPS Committee in Geneva in March 2015. Four countries were supported;
- 9th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Contaminants held in New Delhi, India, March 16th – 20th, 2015. Two countries were supported;
- 47th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticides Residues held in Beijing, China, April 13th - 19th, 2015. One country was supported.



SPS Project Technical Actions – Highlights

Capacity Building of Public and Private Sector Personnel

- *Plant Quarantine Professionals Trained*

Support was provided for seven (7) 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 Organisation (FAO) (August 2014).

- *World Trade Organization Risk Assessment Workshop*

Support was provided for nine (9) professionals from CARIFORUM countries to participate in a Risk Assessment Workshop hosted by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) SPS Secretariat, Geneva Switzerland in October 2014. This workshop covered topics such as: risk analysis and the SPS agreement, international standards and guidelines for conducting risk analysis.

- *Post Graduate Scholarship in Pesticide Risk Management*

Support was provided to the Coordinating Group of Pesticides Control Boards of the Caribbean (CGPC) to facilitate the participation of a CARIFORUM national in a postgraduate diploma programme in Pesticide Risk Management at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. The programme began February 23, 2015; the initial two weeks of the course



consisted of on-campus lectures and activities. The course will continue on-line until the latter part of 2016.

- *Antimicrobial Resistance Sensitization Seminar for Private Sector:*

Forty (40) persons from both private and public sectors benefited from a one-day sensitization seminar on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The session was held in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) on January 16, 2015 in Trinidad and Tobago.

- *Food Safety and Security Conference:* The participation of twenty seven (27) private sector personnel from all CARIFORUM countries was supported at the 7th International Food Safety and Security Conference held in Jamaica, March 17th – 18th 2015. Participants were given the opportunity to obtain Industry Certification in the areas of HACCP Audit, Food Managers Certification Proctor Exam, GMPs Importance in Food Safety Management and Maximum Residue Levels in Fruits and Vegetables.

One Health Leadership Training

The 10th EDF SPS Project provided support to the hosting of the 'One Health Leadership' training as part of the 'One Health, One Caribbean, One Love' Project. Thirty-six (36) leaders from the agricultural, environmental and health sectors of thirteen (13) Caribbean countries participated in the first in the series of four (4) modules which will run over a two year period. The 'One Health Leadership' workshop, which was held November 11-13, 2014 at the Turtle Beach Hotel in Tobago, provided intensive conceptual and didactic training by international and regional experts.



The objectives of the workshop were to: inform, discuss and develop ideas on how to apply the 'One Health' approach to issues at the animal-human-environmental interface in the Caribbean region; begin the development of a Caribbean network of professionals in human, animal and environmental health who are motivated to champion, promote and utilize an inter-sectoral 'One Health' approach in their countries; and identify 'One Health' priority issues and activities in the Caribbean for further development into national project proposals. The 'One Health Leadership' training falls within component three (3) of the SPS Project actions: "Capacity Building of Public and Private Sector Personnel". The ongoing series will be supported by the SPS Project.

Overview of the SPS Agreement...continued from page 1

SPS Measures: Definition



To Protect:

From:

Human or animal life

- risks arising from additives, contaminants, toxins or disease-causing organisms in food

Human Life

- plant- or animal-borne diseases (zoonoses)

Animal or plant life

- Pests, diseases or disease-causing organisms

A country

- damage caused by entry, establishment or spread of pests (including weeds)

The agreement sets out a framework for what countries can do, but is not prescriptive in how countries use health standards and methods of inspecting products.

All countries maintain measures to ensure that food is safe for consumers, and to prevent the spread of pests or diseases among animals and plants. These sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures can take many forms, such as requiring products to come from a disease-free area, inspection of products, specific treatment or processing of products, setting allowable maximum levels of pesticide residues or limiting the permitted use of additives in food. Sanitary (human and animal health) and phytosanitary (plant health) measures apply to domestically-produced food or local animal and plant diseases, as well as to products coming from other countries.

Integrated Food Borne Diseases and AMR Workshop

The SPS Project supported the hosting of the “Strengthening Integrated Surveillance of Food Borne Diseases and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in the Caribbean” regional workshop, which was held in collaboration with the PAHO/WHO, FAO and the OIE. The workshop was held between January 13 and 15, 2015 at the University of the West Indies, School of Veterinary Medicine in Mount Hope, Trinidad.



The objective was to improve the understanding of integrated surveillance on AMR through the illustration of existing monitoring programmes and international regulations; to facilitate the exchange of experiences and information sharing among participating sectors; and to strengthen the capacity of the participants in epidemiological and microbiological tools used in integrated surveillance on AMR. The participants were surveillance epidemiologists from Ministries of Health and veterinary services, as well as microbiologists from food analytical laboratories and veterinary diagnostic laboratories of Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Rabies Diagnosis Training



Thirteen (13) participants from five (5) countries (Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) benefited from the training workshop on Laboratory Methods for Rabies Virus Diagnosis. The SPS Project supported the training, which was hosted by the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) in collaboration with the PAHO/WHO and the St Georges University, Grenada (*December 15th – 19th 2014; Grenada*). Rabies is an important zoonotic disease present in some CARIFORUM countries that needs to be addressed urgently.

The participants, who represented Ministries of Health, the Agricultural Sector and Academia, were trained over a five-day period on sample collection, bio-safety, direct fluorescent antibody technique and DRIT for rabies diagnosis.

Highlights of Activities Supported by the SPS Project!



“One Health” Training Facilitators and Project Team



Participants engaged at the training workshop on “Laboratory Methods for Rabies Virus Diagnosis”



Participants at AMR Regional Workshop



Opening of the AMR Regional Workshop



Participants at the Plant Quarantine Inspectors Training Course

The 10th EDF SPS Measures Project Management Team

The Project is being executed in the CARIFORUM Region by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The SPS Project Management Team comprises of the following persons:



*Dr. Robert Ahern
Head of AHFS,
IICA*



*Dr. Janet Lawrence
Project Manager*



*Ms. Carol Thomas
International AHFS
Specialist*



*Mr. Baulbeer Persaud
Financial &
Administrative Officer*



*Ms. Patsine Arthur
Secretary*

Upcoming Activities!

- Regional Food Safety & Foodborne Disease Surveillance Workshop (May 13th – 15th in Trinidad & Tobago)
 - GAPs Workshop (May 18th – 22nd in The Bahamas)
- Salmonella Surveillance & Risk Management Workshop (May 19th – 21st in Jamaica)
 - OIE General Session (May 25th – 29th in Paris)

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