

# codex alimentarius commission <sup>E</sup>



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
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## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARD PROGRAMME

### FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*13<sup>th</sup> Session,*

*Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 9-13 December 2002*

#### CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

1. A new international food and agriculture trade environment has emerged as a result of the Uruguay round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations and subsequent agreements on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures and on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).
2. Members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are required to base their domestic technical regulations or standards on standards developed by international organisations. These organisations include, the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety; the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) for animal health; and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for plant health.
3. The evolution of the conditions for international trade in relation to food and agriculture affects numerous crosscutting sectors in every country, including human, animal and plant health, environmental welfare and economic development. The regulatory systems and infrastructure needed to conform to the new international trading environment are weak in many developing countries. This puts these countries at a competitive disadvantage in the international trade arena and constitutes a major limitation to the effective participation of these countries in the discussions and decisions taken at the level of international standardisation bodies.
4. Both the SPS (article 9) Agreement and the TBT (article 12) Agreement make specific reference to increasing the capacity of developing countries and remaining cognisant of the unique needs of developing country Members. Specifically section 12.3 of the TBT<sup>1</sup> states "*Members shall, in the preparation and application of technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures, take account of the special development, financial and trade needs of developing country Members, with a view to ensuring that such technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures do not create unnecessary obstacles to exports from developing country Members*". Reinforcing these views, the Executive Heads of FAO, WHO, WTO, WB and OIE, in a joint statement issued at the occasion of the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Doha in November 2001, expressed their commitment to strengthening the capacity of developing countries to meet the requirements of the SPS agreement.
5. At the 23rd Session of the Codex Commission (July 1999), FAO and WHO were called upon to strengthen capacity building activities, particularly in relation to risk analysis capabilities in developing countries.
6. In keeping with these mandates, FAO and WHO engaged in diverse capacity building activities designed to assist developing countries in improving their food safety and plant and animal health systems. Together with international organisations, national governments, international and regional financial institutions and NGOs, various capacity building and technical assistance initiatives have been undertaken. This report will focus on capacity building activities in the region undertaken in part or in whole by FAO and WHO during the period since the last Regional Codex Co-ordinating Committee meeting. It also provides a brief on regional or national capacity building activities that are in the process of being approved.

<sup>1</sup> World Trade Organisation: *Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade*, Article 12

## RECENT AND ONGOING CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

7. In order to support countries desiring to harmonise their national standards with those of Codex and comply fully with international trade regulations, FAO and WHO engage in a variety of capacity building activities. While the activities and strategies differ and are tailored to specific regions and countries, the overall objective is to support and strengthen national food control systems. This is often done by providing technical assistance in reviewing and analysing the institutional set up for food control and evaluating its effectiveness, identifying main weaknesses, and formulating recommendations and proposals for the establishment of technically sound food control systems which are harmonised with current international standards. Specific activities falling within the realm of capacity building include, training of food control officials and technical staff (food control managers, food inspectors, food analysts) in the form of seminars, workshops and study tours to broaden in-country skills and increase the ability of local governments to implement comprehensive food control systems, enhancement of food control laboratory capabilities, preparation of training manuals and guidelines, support in establishing and strengthening National Codex Committees, policy advice and establishment of regulatory frameworks. The remainder of the report will focus on these activities, occurring at global, regional and national level.

### GLOBAL ACTIVITIES

#### International Workshops

8. An *International Workshop on Food Safety Management in Developing Countries* was organised and sponsored jointly by Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and FAO, with financial support from Languedoc-Roussillon region. The workshop was held in Montpellier, France from 10-14 December 2000. Fifty-one participants (including participants from Asia) representing twenty-two countries benefited from this event. Topics such as the impact of the SPS and TBT agreements in developing countries, and risks of undesired substances in foods and feed were presented and discussed. Working groups met to discuss five food safety and development priority areas: risk assessment, food safety regulatory systems, quality assurance, developmental finance and research needs. The working groups presented a series of recommendations which were then discussed during the plenary session. The report may be obtained from CIRAD on request.

9. FAO and WHO jointly convened a *Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators in Marrakech* from 28-30 January 2002 to bring together food safety regulators from every region of the world to discuss and share experiences on food safety issues that are of global concern. Forum discussions were based on the principle that regulations must be science-based and built on risk assessment as appropriate to circumstance. These discussions demonstrated a global recognition that actions need to be taken throughout the food production chain from farm and fishing boat to the consumer. Participants agreed that actions need to be taken urgently to develop the capacity in particular in developing countries to assure the safety of the food supply to their populations. Building such capacities will also assist in strengthening exports, improving public health and reducing poverty.

10. An *International Workshop on the Application of HACCP Principles in the Prevention and Control of Mycotoxins* was held in Greenwich, UK from 17-28 June, 2002. The workshop was co-sponsored by FAO and the National Resources Institute (NRI). The purpose of the workshop was to present and train the participants on the use of the Manual and the application of the HACCP system in Mycotoxin prevention and control. The manual was written jointly by FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in collaboration with NRI. The manual was published in 2001 by FAO as Food and Nutrition Paper 73.<sup>2</sup> It can be obtained from FAO on request.

#### FAO Global Projects

11. A global project for the *Enhancement of Coffee Quality through Prevention of Mould Formation* was started in December 2000, and is due to end in December 2004. This project is being implemented by Brazil, Colombia, Ivory Coast, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Uganda, with collaboration from Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC) and the University of Surrey, U.K. The project has received funding from the Common Fund for Commodities and the Dutch Government. An additionally funded component for training and dissemination of best practice in ochratoxin A (OTA) control in Ecuador has also been incorporated.

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<sup>2</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and FAO, 2001. *Manual on the Application of the HACCP system in mycotoxin prevention and control*. FAO Food and Nutrition Paper 73, Rome, 2001.

12. The project approach emphasises capacity-building in coffee-producing countries, with the aim of formulating codes of practice for the coffee industry. Key initial activities under the project involve defining mould formation mechanisms, identifying critical control points, evaluating optimal drying conditions, and developing the necessary tools including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems to control and monitor both mould formation and OTA production. Specifically, the project builds capacity at national level within the industry and responsible government agencies in:

- The application of internationally-agreed principles of food hygiene and a HACCP-based approach to food safety throughout the coffee production and processing chain
- The analytical capacity and capability required to support national programmes for prevention and control of OTA- contamination of coffee

13. In 1999-2001, FAO formulated and implemented an *Umbrella Programme for Training on Uruguay Round and Future Negotiations on Agriculture*. The first phase of the programme included the implementation of 14 sub-regional training courses conducted in Africa (4 courses); Asia (3 courses); Near East (2 courses); Europe (2 courses); and Latin America (3 courses). The programme was co-financed by FAO, European Union and several donor countries. It was designed taking into account the complementarities and synergies of the countries involved in the programme, including the more general training on multilateral trade conducted by other international institutions (notably WTO, WB, ITC, UNCTAD, etc). The project aimed at improving understanding of existing WTO agreements to enable countries to more fully participate in the negotiation process and debate issues of special concern to the region. Topics which were covered during training included various UR agreements concerning agriculture, such as SPS measures, Technical Barriers to Trade and Trade related Intellectual Property Rights.

14. A two year project to create a Global Inventory, Reference Materials and Food Safety Training Programme for Improving the Quality and Safety of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables was recently approved. It is funded by FAO's Prevention of Food Losses Fund (PFL) and will be implemented by the Food Quality and Standards Service (ESNS), in collaboration with Agriculture Support Systems (AGS) and Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP). The project's main objective is to improve access and availability of information, through provision of resource materials and training activities, to countries desiring to enhance the quality and safety of their fresh produce. The project will create an inventory of all available food safety training materials and develop a database of existing training programs. This information will be developed into an electronic database with information relevant to all aspects of the production chain, from harvest to transport and marketing. Several training activities will be carried out at regional and national levels, including Latin America and the Caribbean. A series of training materials such as videos, CDs and Manuals will accompany the planned training.

### **Global Initiatives**

15. A *FAO Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety* was established by FAO as an important source of demand-driven funding to supplement the present trust funds, which support key components of the Organization's Field Programme.<sup>3</sup> The initial funding target is of US\$500 million.

16. The projects to be funded from this Trust Fund will assist Member Governments in initiating, strengthening, accelerating and expanding activities in the following two areas: *Food Security* and *Emergency Prevention of Transboundary Pests and Diseases of Animals and Plants*.

17. Transboundary animal diseases are epizootic diseases that are highly contagious or transmissible with the potential for very serious and rapid spread, irrespective of national borders. These diseases are of serious socio-economic or public health consequence and can be a major constraint to international trade of animals and animal products. This can have an adverse effect on the food security situation in the countries concerned and also on the food safety of consumers around the world. The same is true for locusts and other migratory pests that can fly over great distances and threaten crops hundreds or thousands of kilometres away from their places of origin.

18. Through its ongoing *Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES)*, approved by the FAO Council at its 106<sup>th</sup> Session, FAO is adopting a new approach to an old problem by emphasising early warning, early reaction and networking of research capacities to ensure the use of more effective and environment-friendly methods. The programme is focusing on strengthening existing surveillance and control in affected countries.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/y1262e/y1262e00.htm#P5\\_1](http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/y1262e/y1262e00.htm#P5_1)

19. The FAO Integrated Programme for Building Capacity for Biotechnology, Food Quality and Safety, and Phyto- and Zoosanitary Standards has been developed for consideration by potential donors to address the needs of developing and transition countries in the establishment or enhancement of appropriate policies, institutions and human resources concerned with biotechnology and sanitary measures in the context of food and agriculture, and in connection with trade related and environmental issues. The food safety component of this Programme valued at US\$56.5 million covers such areas as: guidance for decision makers, regulatory and legal aspects, institutional strengthening at regional and national levels, human resource development, improvement of laboratory capabilities, and management of food control programmes.

20. A *Joint FAO/WHO/OIE/WTO/WB Framework for Capacity Building in SPS-related Matters* was an initiative launched by the 5 organisations following the joint Statement made by their respective Executive Heads in November 2001 in favour of increased capacity building efforts for developing countries to enhance their ability to fully participate in the work and decision making process of international standards setting bodies. A draft framework has been prepared by FAO and is currently under active discussion by the concerned units within the organisations.

## **REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Regional Workshops**

21. Last session's FAO/WHO/ILSI pre-Codex workshop was on the subject of Risk Analysis and Exposure Assessment and was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic from 13-16 February 2001. Sixty-two participants representing government institutions involved in food control, university technical experts and senior administrators and researchers were in attendance. The overall objectives of this workshop were to: familiarise participants with the principles of risk analysis and in particular the methodologies for the assessment of exposure to food-borne hazards; to raise the awareness of participants of the region in risk assessment; to provide guidelines to participants on the data required to assess exposure and to encourage participants to apply expertise acquired on risk analysis of food-borne hazards in food legislation.

22. A FAO/AOAC Latin America and the Caribbean Section Workshop on Risk Analysis/ Assessment Methodology was held in Montevideo, Uruguay on 18 November 2001. The workshop was attended by seventy participants from the region. The overall objective of the workshop was to further update participants on the requirements for risk analysis and in particular to exemplify its application through practical case studies. The workshop included presentations on the methods and models used in risk assessment, in particular exposure assessment, with case studies on contaminants, microbiology and GMO's.

23. FAO/ILSI and INTI organised a Risk Analysis Workshop for the Southern Cone Countries in Buenos Aires from 12-13 August 2002. Forty participants from the region attended the workshop. The main objectives of the workshop were to: familiarise participants with the principles of risk analysis and the methodologies for its qualitative and quantitative risk assessment for food contaminants and additives, provide information on the data required for risk assessment and promote the application of this data in formulating managerial decisions.

24. The workshop was organised with a practical approach and presented real case studies. The programme included risk analysis principles followed by each lecturer's presentation of risk assessment examples and their own institution's approach to solving them. Practical group exercises were conducted on case studies from real scenarios on chemical and microbiological contaminants, food additives, veterinary drug residues, and pesticides, where the risk assessment approach was used to come to a management decision by the participants government to solve a food safety issue. The presentations included scientific as well as policy and regulatory aspects.

### **FAO Regional Projects**

25. A project to modernise the food control systems of Andean countries was funded in August of 1999 and ran through December 2001. The project was implemented in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. The main objective of the project was to facilitate the design of a plan of action for each participating country for modernising food control systems and to formulate national projects to harmonise food control. These objectives were met through a series of regional level workshops to design, present and revise National Plans of Action for food control. Five national consultants, one for each country, supported by international experts, reviewed the current food control regulations and implementation of the food control system in each country, current problems were defined followed by a plan listing necessary steps to be taken to achieve the goals set out in the national plan of action. National workshops were held to co-ordinate the work set out in the national plan(s) of action.

26. A regional project to strengthen National Codex Committees in Central America began in March 2001 and is scheduled to be completed in December 2002. The project is being implemented in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic. The main objective of the project is to create and/or strengthen National Codex Committees in each country and facilitate the application of Codex guidelines and recommendations. The objectives will be met through a series of regional and national workshops to establish and strengthen National Codex Committees and review the structure and responsibilities of subsidiary Codex bodies. A Codex information system will be created in each country to disseminate to government and other stakeholders relevant information including new guidelines and regulations established by Codex.

27. Fourteen National Seminars on Codex (2 per country), 7 sub-regional workshops and 49 national workshops (7 per country) have been carried out with 700 persons trained and 125 formed as trainers. A Codex information system which will include the web sites of the 7 national Codex Committees will be created in each country to disseminate relevant information to governments and to other stakeholders. A comparative analysis between the local regulations and Codex standards was carried out in each country with the purpose of promoting their harmonisation or equivalence. During this project international and regional organisation such as INPPAZ/PAHO, INCAP/PAHO and OIRSA participated. The complete project, including objective and activities with the corresponding reports and documents, is available at the website<sup>4</sup> of FAO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

28. A project to strengthen Phytosanitary Capabilities in the CARICOM region began in 2000 and is scheduled for completion in 2002. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the phytosanitary capabilities of the CARICOM member countries, with particular emphasis on pest exclusion, and to ensure that legal frameworks are consistent with new international trade agreements. These objectives will be met by drafting instructions for plant protection legislation, training phytosanitary officers at both the policy and operational level and creating an information sharing and exchange network for the region.

29. A project to assist countries with Trade was initiated in September 2001 as part of the Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) for the Caribbean. The specific objective of this TCP assistance is to formulate a trade facilitation project as a component of the Regional Special Programme for Food Security (RSPFS) for the Caribbean. Particular attention will be given to food quality and safety standards; trade and commodity development programmes; transitory and compensatory measures relating to the present trading environment, and capacity building required for effective participation in multilateral trade negotiations. Specific elements of Trade Facilitation within the overall framework of RSPFS include, upgrading food quality and safety standards, promoting intra-regional trade in agriculture, raising the competitiveness of agricultural commodities (both import and export) and increasing national capacity to participate effectively in multilateral trade negotiations on agriculture.

30. A project to evaluate and strengthen the prevention systems for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and the feed quality control system began in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. (TCP/RAL/0017 Evaluación y Reforzamiento del Sistema de Prevención de la Encefalopatía Espongiforme Bovina (EEB) y el Sistema de Control de Calidad de Piensos) The project promotes capacity building in food quality and safety at regional level in South America. The activities of the project are to help ensure the quality and safety of the bovine meat produced both for internal consumption and for international trade, ensuring that all beef produced is free from BSE. The project involves the organisation of two study trips and three regional courses in risk analysis, epidemiological surveillance and laboratory diagnosis.

### **Other regional activities**

31. FAO published in 2001 the "Guide for the municipal management of food security and nutrition", in Spanish, which includes chapters on food supply and implementation of a municipal system on food control and Codex information. This publication is available at the website<sup>5</sup> of FAO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/Regional/LAmerica/prior/comagric/codex/rla0065/0065.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.rlc.fao.org/pubs/document.htm>

32. The Inter American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL), *ex officio* secretariat in the Pan American Institute of Food Protection and Zoonosis (INPPAZ/PAHO) and FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, is starting the survey of laboratories.<sup>6</sup> INFAL's First Assembly was carried out in Aruba (June 11-13, 2001). During the meeting bylaws were approved; members of the Executive Committee were elected; four technical groups were created (food microbiology, laboratory quality assurance, residues of veterinary drugs in foods, and food additives, contaminants and pesticide residues); and the Plan of Action for the period 2001-2003 was also established.

33. With FAO's support, the Latin American Food Composition Network (LATINFOODS) continued working on the update of the Regional Food Composition Table which is located at the website<sup>7</sup> of FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean < In addition the first electronic conference on "Data compilation for food composition tables and databases" was carried out (May 6 - 24, 2002) with the participation of 101 professionals from 17 countries and INCAP/PAHO and FAO.

## NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Workshops and Seminars

34. A National FAO/ILSI Brazil Seminar on Risk Analysis for Food Control: A Practical Approach through Case Studies was held in Brasilia, Brazil from 9-11 May 2001. Eighty persons representing the main Government Institutions involved in food control, industries and Universities at the level of technical experts, senior administrators and researchers participated. Case studies on microbial pathogens, chemical contaminants, GMOs, mycotoxins, additives, BSE and packaging, were presented by the invited international and national lecturers. The implications of risk analysis in the new international trade context for developing economies and constraints in complying with import requirements were discussed. Five working groups were created for problem solving examples of different food safety issues where risk analysis methodology had been applied and in mock case studies using the participant's own data. Solution to the case study, conclusions and establishment of priorities were prepared on the final day by each working group and one common workshop recommendation was approved.

35. FAO and the Ministry of Health of Chile organised a workshop in Laboratory Quality Assurance in Santiago, Chile from August 4-8, 2002. The course general objective was the development of a quality assurance system for chemical analysis of food, to train participants from the national health laboratory network in the establishment and implementation of an analytical quality system complying with the standard ISO 17025 for their laboratories and in preparing for accreditation. The course consisted of lectures and exercises, including a practical audit.

36. The National Codex Committee from Paraguay (CONACAP) and FAO organised a National Seminar on Codex Alimentarius which was held in Asunción (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001) with the participation of 45 persons. Achievements and difficulties of CONACAP were discussed and several recommendations were agreed, one of them being the strengthening of the management of CONACAP. This recommendation has originated the formulation of a FAO technical cooperation project.

37. FAO provided assistance to the Government of Chile, General Secretariat of the Presidency and the Dirección Multilateral, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in modernising their food control system. A Seminar and working sessions were held with local authorities from the ministries and institutes responsible for food control activities in the country in relation to the reform process currently being undertaken to update and unify the food and agricultural sectors. Over 30 participants attended the Seminar from the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Codex Committee, Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Trade, Industry, Consumer organisations, and Universities. The main topics of the discussions were key issues in the transition to a modern food control system, including legislation, management, inspection, laboratories, coordination of activities and policies, economic feasibility and trade impact. The FAO/WHO Guidelines for Food Control Systems were discussed. Presentations were also given on modern food control systems with practical examples and case studies from countries with similar agriculture-based economies in the process of modernising into a unified system.

38. In addition numerous conferences were given by FAO's technical officers at regional and national meetings.

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<sup>6</sup> This is a joint PAHO/FAO activity

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fao.org/Regional/LAmerica/bases/alimento/default.htm>

### **FAO Field Projects**

39. A project designed to strengthen Food Control and Safety for Fish Export in Antigua began in January 2001 and is expected to continue through September 2002. The project will assist the government to organise and manage food control activities in the country, including, drafting of new food regulations to ensure safe and wholesome local food products; improvement of the inspection and certification of export fish and fishery products; training of food control personnel and upgrading the analytical capabilities of the food control laboratory. These goals will be accomplished through technical backstopping missions by experts in the areas of food quality control and fish inspection and quality control, a study tour for one Ministry official on export fish certification, review of lab equipment, training for lab staff and production of a manual on food inspection.

40. A second phase project to strengthen the National Codex Committee on Argentina was funded in May 2000 and completed in April 2001. The objective of this assistance was to improve and expand the Codex information system and enhance the capacity of the national body to highlight national issues of importance at international Codex meetings. The project aims to strengthen the National Codex Committee through the appointment and training of 9 provincial Codex focal points on international criteria for the development of norms, guides and recommendations of Codex and their application in control programs. The project will conduct a series of workshops on food control issues, including, application of HACCP and risk analysis in food control; training for food inspectors and training of laboratory technicians in quality control measures.

41. A project to Control Legislation for Veterinary Drug use in Barbados was funded for five months beginning in August 2000 and continuing through part of 2001. The global objective of the project was to aid Barbados in developing new legislation on the control of veterinary drugs and to regularise the trade in veterinary drugs, ranging from their import and manufacture to their storage and sale. The legislation will also protect consumers and foster exports of food products. The final project outcomes included, a system for registration of all veterinary drugs permitted for use in Barbados, establishment of a licensing system for veterinary drug importers, legislation on maximum residue limits (MRL's) for foods of animal origin and improvement of national programmes for monitoring and control of veterinary drug residues in foods of animal origin.

42. A project designed to strengthen the Food Control System in Guyana began in May 2002 and will continue through October 2003. The project will assist the Government in upgrading the food law and harmonising national food standards with international standards, improving the efficiency of the food inspection in order to facilitate compliance with the WTO Agreements on SPS and TBT, upgrading of the analytical capabilities of the Government food control laboratory, to ensure the monitoring of food contaminants and permit the certification of exported products and strengthening the capability of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) and the National Codex Committee, facilitating more active and effective national participation in Codex work. The successful accomplishment of the project should produce a coherent food control system with efficient utilisation of resources and operations compliant with international requirements. The laboratory will be upgraded and personnel trained to expedite product testing and certification. Codex contact point will be strengthened to allow for improved involvement in Codex work, with national interests protected and adequate representation in the international arena. The National Legal Consultant will be trained in legislative drafting and will therefore be able to assist in later preparation of regulations and standards.

43. A project to strengthen the food control system of Haiti is scheduled to begin shortly. This is a second phase project following up on an 18 month project to reinforce national food control capacity. The main activities of this project will be drafting of food law and basic regulations in accordance with Codex Guidelines, creation of a National Codex Committee, training of food inspector trainers, training of laboratory personnel and provision of basic laboratory equipment.

44. A project to strengthen the National Codex Committee in Paraguay began in July 2002 and is scheduled for completion in February 2004. The main objectives of the project are to support the work of the National Codex Committee and Codex focal point, to establish linkages between government sectors, industry and consumers, develop an action plan to update national food standards in harmony with Codex guidelines and to establish a web site for exchange of information on Codex. The project will achieve these objectives through technical assistance provided by international experts, including assistance in drafting a proposal for modernising the food control system and provision of training and workshops on food control systems and the role of Codex.

45. An eighteen month project to strengthen the food control system of Suriname began in May 2002 and is scheduled to continue through October 2003. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the National Food Control System through providing training, upgrading laboratory facilities and supporting the functioning of the National Codex Committee and its Working Groups. The expected project outputs are amended national food laws, regulations and standards which comply with international guidelines, improved food inspection service which applies modern quality assurance and HACCP principles, improved laboratory facilities capable of contamination monitoring in primary agricultural products and processed foods and a plan of action on food safety, conforming to Codex Commission recommendations.

46. A project designed to strengthen the National Codex Committee of Uruguay began in 2001 and will continue until 2003. The main objective of this project is to improve national and local capacity of the Codex Committee, by enhancing the decision making structure and encouraging greater participation from government officials, industry and other stakeholders in National Codex activities. The outcome of this project will be a stronger Codex Committee able to inform and advise the state and civil society in matters related to Codex.

47. A project was funded to provide emergency technical assistance to the Government of Uruguay in evaluating *Fusarium* contamination of grains. A large part of the 2001 wheat crop was infected with *Fusarium*, a mould species that produces the mycotoxin deoxynivalenol (DON) which can have both short term and long term detrimental effects on humans and animal health. Immediate assistance was provided by FAO and an emergency legislation was passed limiting the DON content in human foods and animal feed. The project has been expanded into longer-term technical assistance (2002-2004) with the purpose of establishing adequate controls in the supply chain and to formulate future prevention and control strategies. It includes a study mission, extensive training activities in GAP, GMP and HACCP for mycotoxin prevention and control, an integrated national action plan, rapid detection methods and laboratory strengthening, the establishment of a DON rapid alert forecasting system and a crop information network.

## **UPCOMING ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS**

### **FAO Field Projects**

48. A regional project to strengthen the management of National Codex Committees and Application of the Codex Alimentarius standards of the Andean Countries is presently in its final stage of approval. Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela will participate in this project. The main objectives are to strengthen the management of the National Codex Committees; to develop a national and sub-regional training program and to promote the harmonisation of the national standards to Codex.

49. Two joint ESNS and AGE (Joint FAO/IAEA Division) projects have been approved under the Prevention of Food Losses (PFL) Special Fund which involve capacity building activities in Latin America.

50. A regional project for strengthening the analytical activities, laboratory quality assurance and capacity building of the Interamerican Network of Food Analytical Laboratories (INFAL) is currently being drafted.

51. The Government of Brazil has requested assistance with two activities. The first being a project to, improve the quality of black pepper with the Ministry of Agriculture and Supply, Vegetable Production Control and Promotion. The second would incorporate a microbiological risk analysis approach in food control programmes with the Codex National Committee. Both proposals are currently being drafted.