



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations**



**World Health
Organization**

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Agenda Item 5

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

19th Session

San José, Costa Rica, 10 – 14 November 2014

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL (Replies to CL 2014/23-LAC)

Replies from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Lucia

ARGENTINA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems.

These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

Law 26.361- Amendment to Law N° 24.240. Additional provisions. The introduced amendments aim to strengthen consumer rights.

SENASA	SUMMARY AND BRIEF EXPLANATION
Resolution 91/2012	Coordination of surveillance and warning of residues and contaminants.
Updating of Decree 4238/68 Chapter XXXII – ANIMAL WELFARE (annex 1)	Embraces all species. It has 3 considerations: a) Avoid animal suffering. b) Evaluate impact on the agrifood chain of seizures resulting from failure to apply animal welfare measures e.g. bruises, hematomas, deaths in transit. It also covers intrinsic meat quality. c) Animal premonition of the slaughter.
Updating of Decree 4238/68 Chapter XXXI – HACCP – (annex 2)	Expansion of the Chapter of Good Practices and SSOP. This adds the mandatory HACCP. Generally period of ONE (1) year to comply in all slaughtering and meat processing companies.
Resolution SENASA 458/2012 Crop CREHA Plan – (annex 3)	Establishes the National Programme of Control of Residues, Contaminants and Hygiene in plant foods and feed (Crop CREHA)
Resolution N° 205/2014 Family Farming (annex 4)	Family farming is incorporated into the National Food Control System. The Resolution includes new concepts to adapt it to family farming, and to promote joint agreed work with other public bodies and family farmer representatives.

SENASA	SUMMARY AND BRIEF EXPLANATION
Res. SENASA N° 735/11	Technical regulation on the identity and quality of paprika. This standard sets out the identity, quality and safety requirements for its marketing.
Res. SENASA N° 453/13	Technical regulation on the identity and quality of the European walnut.
Resolution 559/2011	Approves the Maximum Residue Limits for Veterinary Drugs in foods of animal origin.
Resolution 666/2011	Establishes the gradual obligation to keep a TREATMENT PROCEDURE BOOK in all livestock establishments producing animals for human consumption on in all the national territory. Its implementation ceased in 2013.
Resolution SENASA N°369/13	Creates the System of Traceability of Phytosanitary and Veterinary Products in which all private or legal persons involved in their import, processing, packaging, marketing and export have to register and are declared in the system. Adopts the GS1 standards for the identification of such products.
Resolution SENASA N° 60/2014	Relates to the phytosanitary and quality inspection of products and by-products of grains. Determines that all shipments of products and by-products of grains for export or re-export should be submitted to phytosanitary and quality inspection by SENESA.
Resolution SENASA N° 280/2014	Establishes for the reasons set out that from 1 July 2014 meat-sector operators not registered with RUCA (Food Chain Register) will not have access to an Electronic Transfer Document (eDT).
Resolution SENASA N° 402/2014	Electronic governance. Adopts a guide on SENASA's electronic processes to facilitate the search for all processes carried out in the agency.
Resolution SENASA N° 206/2014	Under the National Service for Agrifood Health and Quality, establishes and approves the classification of border control posts, as set out in the annex that forms an integral part of this resolution.
Draft Regulation for the Pecan Nut	The regulation on the identity and quality of the pecan nut will soon be promulgated. This will determine the identity and quality requisites for this species.

Joint Resolutions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and the Ministry of Public Health.

2014 [Joint Res. N° 282/2014 SPRel y 298/2014 SAGyP](#)

Substitutes articles 681 and 681.3. New species of algarroba (carob) flour.

[Joint Res. N° 261/2014 SPRel y 228/2014 SAGyP](#)

Substitutes article 682 and incorporates article 682.2 into the Argentine Food Code (CAA) - Quinoa or Quinoa Seed and Quinoa or Quinoa Flour respectively.

[Joint Res. N° 252/2014 SPRel y 218/2014 SAGyP](#)

Substitutes articles 555, 556.2, 556.3 and 561, and incorporates articles 556.5 and 560.3 into the Argentine Food Code. Includes standards of quality and genuineness for Goat's Milk

2013

[Joint Res. N° 287/2013 SPRel y 423/2013 SAGyP](#)

Modifies article 1280, referring to Mayonnaise

[Joint Res. 222/2013 SPRel y 331/2013 SAGyP](#)

Includes paragraph 72.1 in article 1398 of the Argentine Food Code, Brea Gum [Joint Res. 223/2013 SPRel y 332/2013 SAGyP](#)

Substitutes article 528 in the Argentine Food Code. Sunflower Oil (Halcon).

[Joint Res. N° 205/2013 SPRel y 298/2013 SAGyP](#)

Incorporates insert 1 into article 1417. Isomalto-oligosaccharides (IMO).

[Joint Res. N° 203/2013 SPRel y 296/2013 SAGyP](#)

Substitutes articles 537 and 551 of the Argentine Food Code (CAA). Fractional crystallization in vegetable glycerides.

[Joint Res. N° 169/2013 SPRel y 230/2013 SAGyP](#)

Updating of Chapter XI "Vegetable Foods".

[Joint Res. N° 168/2013 SPRel y 229/2013 SAGyP](#) Substitutes article 207. Incorporation of the Common Market Group Resolution N° 02/12, MERCOSUR Technical Resolution on Positive List of Monomers, Other Starting Substances and Polymers Authorized for the Manufacture of Plastic Packaging and Equipment that Come into Contact with Food.

[Joint Res. N° 167/2013 SPRel y 228/2013 SAGyP](#) Substitutes Article 293. Extends the time limit for the Premium Cured Ham category.

[Joint Res. N° 161 SPRel y 213 SAGyP](#) Substitutes article 235.5. Incorporation of Common Market Group Resolution N° 01/12, MERCOSUR Technical Regulation on "Supplementary Nutritional Information (Statements of Nutritional Properties)".

[Joint Res. N° 45/2013 SPRel y 76/2013 SAGyP](#). 7

Incorporates Trehalose into the Argentine Food Code, in Chapter XXII "Miscellaneous" - Article 1417.

[Joint Res. N° 43/2013 SPRel y 59/2013 SAGyP](#). Substitution of Article 1194 of the Argentine Food Code. **Incorporation of two new Yerba Mate products.**

2012

[Joint Res. N° 212 SPRel y 1197 SAGyP](#) Incorporates in the Argentine Food Code, Common Market Group Resolution N° 40/11, MERCOSUR Technical Resolution on "Nutritional Labelling of Non-Alcoholic Drinks Sold in Returnable Containers"

[Joint Res. N° 186 SPRel y 938 SAGyP](#)

Approval of use of fats equivalent to cocoa butter.

[Joint Res N° 193 SRPel y 826 SAGyP](#). Substitute articles 151 and 156.3. Definition and microbiological criteria for prepared meals ready to eat.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

- i) **Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;**

No new measures have been adopted, but the participating organizations are improving their organization to achieve more effective participation throughout the process of adoption of national positions and participation in meetings.

- ii) **Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.**

We have achieved: 1) greater interaction with OIE colleagues which we consider to be of utmost importance to jointly examine selected documents of the Committee on Food Hygiene, paying attention to OIE regulations in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code. 2) Networks of professionals with varying expertise in the production sector and in the area of health are being consulted on specific matters relating to the documents. 3) There is greater interest of Academia in participating in Codex projects. 4) We have started work on producing a Monthly Newsletter which will provide greater oversight of the activities of the National Codex Committees.

QUESTION 3: CODEX STANDARDS NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

I) WHICH SPECIFIC CODEX STANDARDS AND RELATED TEXTS (CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT OR ALREADY IN EXISTENCE) ARE OF MOST IMPORTANCE AND INTEREST TO YOUR COUNTRY;

- The documents under discussion in the CCFICS, especially those relating to the regulatory performance indicators. The questionnaires for exporting countries and those concerning the future activities of the FICS are important and present both a challenge and a concern.

- We are also very interested in the work being pursued in the Committee on Food Hygiene. We are interested in concluding the Guidelines for the Control of Trichinella in Pork Meat, the Draft Guidelines for Salmonella Typhimurium, the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables and its Annexes of specific codes of hygienic practice: ready-to-eat fresh pre-cut fruits and vegetables, sprout production, fresh leafy vegetables, melons and berries.

The Proposed Draft Standards for Garlic and Kiwi are important for Argentina as they are products of commercial interest to our country.

- The work of the Committee on Contaminants is very important. We are paying particular attention to contamination from arsenic, aflatoxins, mycotoxins in cereals and spices, etc., but have so far not been able to make any substantial contributions.

- We are also interested in the progress of debate on bioassay methodology for the detection of marine biotoxins in bivalve molluscs.

The work of the recently created Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs seems to be very interesting. We believe that every support should be given as the committee will be regulating products many of which are produced in developing countries.

II) WHAT ARE THE CURRENT PRIORITY AREAS FOR SETTING NATIONAL STANDARDS;

Updating and improving the National Food Control System.

The systems of alert and withdrawal of products from the market.

Aspects of food safety. Nutrition with a special emphasis on issues relating to vulnerable groups.

Identity and quality of products. Food labelling.

III) USE AND RELEVANCE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL LEVEL.

Both the standards of the Argentine Food Code and those established in MERCOSUR (made up of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Venezuela) should firstly take the Codex Alimentarius standards into consideration, where these exist. Should these not exist, the standards of other countries are taken into consideration. The Codex standards are clearly absolutely necessary as they have a scientific basis and enable governments to fully align their standards with internationally recognized standards.

The Argentine Food Code and MERCOSUR review their legislation on the basis of progress made in Codex standards.

BOLIVIA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

With regard to food legislation and regulation, the National Service for Animal Health and Food Safety (SENASAG) has been involved as food control authority in different technical committees that regulate food safety and has been developing regulations for primary production, such as:

- Regulation for the Certification of Fruits and Vegetables through Good Agricultural Practices, based on the CODEX equivalent.
- Guidelines for Dairy Production Plants under Official Control - PABCO

Both in a process of social dissemination among stakeholders at national level, in meetings, workshops, seminars.

- The National Monitoring Programme for Residues and Contaminants in Foods has been designed and established with a basic focus on pesticide residues, veterinary drug residues and pathogenic biological contaminants in priority foods.
- The analytical capacity and human resources of the food analysis laboratories have been boosted by the purchase of state-of-the art technology to measure contaminant residues in foods, for example pesticide and veterinary drug MRLs, and by the exchange of experiences with corresponding international experts and training courses abroad.
- Similarly, an IT system has been designed and implemented for the Food Safety Rapid Alert System which is in a phase of socialization and organization.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;**
- Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters.**
- Aspects, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.**

With regard to strengthening Codex to broaden its participation, the National Codex Alimentarius Committee (CNCA) has undertaken the following activities:

- Approval of the document: "REGULATING THE FUNCTIONING OF THE NATIONAL CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMITTEE OF BOLIVIA", a document which broadens the participation of members in the CNCA and the standards technical committees and determines the CNCA's work orientations.
- Seminar programme for university students to publicize the activities carried out by Codex at international level and the CNCA's national activities among students following related courses at public and private universities.
- Workshop on "Codex Alimentarius Activities, its Standard-setting Procedures and its Importance at International Level", with the participation of international experts, with the aim of making the governmental and industrial sectors aware of the importance of Codex activities.
- Workshops and seminars with specific sectors to raise the participation of other sectors in the development of Codex standards.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;**
- What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and**
- The relevance of Codex standards at national level.**

The following topics are priorities for Bolivia:

- Quinoa
- Potato
- Cocoa

With regard to Codex work, the following committees are priorities:

- Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
- Codex Committee on Food Labelling
- Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems
- Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
- Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods

COSTA RICA

QUESTION 1: STRENGTHENING NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS

R/. As we already mentioned in reply to circular letter CL 2012/20-LAC, Costa Rica's institutional competences in food control and safety are directly held by the Ministries of Health; Agriculture and Livestock (National Animal Health Service - SENASA¹, the State Phytosanitary Service - SFE and the National Production Council); Economy, Industry and Trade and certain specific bodies within these.

Since the last session of the CCLAC in 2012, Costa Rica has continued to implement different activities to help the country improve its national food control systems. These include:

- Broadening the scope of accreditation of SENASA laboratory tests in accordance with International Standard ISO/IEC 17025:2005.
- Drafting of regulations on animal-based foods.
- Updating of the Regulations for Drinking Water, currently at the draft stage.
- Participation of the country in international fora such as OIE, Codex Alimentarius and WTO.
- Implementation of a quality management system in countries' animal health inspection bodies.
- Implementation of International Standard ISO/IEC 17020-2012 for inspection bodies.
- Surveillance and control of animal-based foods *in situ* (operatives, seizures).
- Quarantine controls at border inspection points.
- Follow-up to the Regional Unit for Risk Analysis of Food-Borne Diseases.
- Implementation of a Technical Training Programme for Inspectors at Product Control Quarantine Points.
- Implementation of the National Liaison Centre led by the Ministry of Health for emergency events and for International Sanitary Regulations.
- In 2013, the Regulatory Office for Products of Sanitary Interest, under the Ministry of Health, managed to recruit personnel to help the control of products and the follow-up of complaints, among other matters.
- The Ministry of Health formulated the Food Control Plan 2015, through the Regulatory Office for Products of Sanitary Interest, and coordinated, with the Costa Rican Institute for Research and Education on Nutrition and Health (INCIENSA), its implementation and the feasibility of its completion, according to the analytical capacity of the official laboratory.
- Participation in the Regional Colloquium held from 4 to 6 March 2014 at IICA, Costa Rica.

The National Centre of Bacteriological Reference (CNRB) of INCIENSA posted the following advances as Official Laboratory of the Ministry of Health:

- The National Commission of Risk Management for Food-Borne Antimicrobial Resistance, with participants from various sectors and institutions.
- Development of integrated surveillance of agents causing food-borne diseases, through the operation of a National Laboratory Network, which includes not only human clinical laboratories, but also food, water and veterinary laboratories.

¹ <http://www.senasa.go.cr/senasa/sitio/index.php/paginas/view/136> (this link provides information on how SENASA planned to improve the food control system)

- The information provided by the CNRB regarding public food-supply services, relating to outbreaks of food-borne diseases, is used by the Ministry of Health's Oversight Areas to guide inspection and control activities.
- Elaboration of a new design for the physical structure of the Food Microbiology Laboratory of INCIENSA, Official Laboratory of the Ministry of Health.
- INCIENSA's Food Laboratory was included among the food laboratories of Central America that will receive advice from the PRACAMS (Programme of Support to the Quality and Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in Central America) initiative for the accreditation of laboratory analysis: Screening of *Salmonella* in food, feed and environmental samples by PCR using the BAX Q7 system.
- INCIENSA's Food Laboratory received certification in the preparation and analysis of molecular subtyping by pulsed-field gel electrophoresis for: *Salmonella* (2010), *Vibrio cholerae* O1 (2012), *Shigella sonnei* (2013), strategic methodology for confirming the relationship between isolated pathogens of different origins (e.g. clinical samples, foods).
- There was successful standardization of new molecular methodologies for the laboratory diagnosis of agents causing FBDs (e.g. *Clostridium perfringens* enterotoxin A, viruses causing diarrhoea, including rotavirus, norovirus, astrovirus and enteric adenovirus).
- The laboratories for food, enteropathogens, molecular biology and antimicrobials of the National Bacteriology Reference Centre participate in external evaluations of performance conducted annually by renowned international bodies.

Information dissemination activities by the CNRB - INCIENSA

- Support to the National Liaison Centre for International Sanitary Regulation – Costa Rica, in the validation, notification and tracking of international notifications relating to food.
- **Preparation and dissemination of alerts and epidemiological reports:** the Laboratories of Enteropathogens and Foods of the National Bacteriology Reference Centre (CNRB) periodically consolidate and analyse information from surveillance which is disseminated through the electronic mails of the microbiologists of the public and private laboratories that make up the National Network of Laboratories, Health Oversight Areas, epidemiologists (Min. of Health and CCSS), infectologists, health authorities at central level and is also posted on the INCIENSA webpage (<http://www.inciensa.sa.cr/actualidad/Informes%20de%20vigilancia.aspx>). In the framework of the WHO-Global Foodborne Infections Network, for which the CNRB is the Regional Centre for Central America, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, This information is also shared with the food and public health laboratories of these countries. Here are some recent examples:
 - Bolaños HM, Tijerino A, Oropeza G, Morales JL, Campos E and National Bacteriology Laboratory Network. Laboratory surveillance report: **Significant increase of shigellosis in Costa Rica in the first quarter of 2014**. Tres Ríos, Costa Rica: INCIENSA, 2014. Available on INCIENSA webpage:
http://www.inciensa.sa.cr/vigilancia_epidemiologica/informes_vigilancia/2014/Bacterias/Incremento%20de%20diarreas%20por%20Shigella%20enero%20-%20abril%202014.pdf
 - Bolaños HM, *et al.* Laboratory surveillance report: **Laboratory surveillance of *Salmonella*, Costa Rica, 2013**. Tres Ríos, Costa Rica: INCIENSA, 2014. Available on INCIENSA webpage:
http://www.inciensa.sa.cr/vigilancia_epidemiologica/informes_vigilancia/2014/Bacterias/Vigilancia%20basada%20en%20laboratorio%20de%20Salmonella,%20Costa%20Rica,%202013.pdf
 - Bolaños HM, Acuña MT, Duarte F, Tijerino A, Sánchez LM, Vargas JL, Campos E and National Laboratory Network. **Alert: Increase in gastroenteritis by *Salmonella* Weltevreden – infection vehicle not yet determined**: Tres Ríos, Costa Rica: Centro Nacional de Referencia de Bacteriología, INCIENSA, 2012. Available at:
http://www.inciensa.sa.cr/vigilancia_epidemiologica/informes_vigilancia/2012/bacterias/Informe%20Vigilancia%20-%20Alerta%20-%20Incremento%20en%20las%20gastroenteritis%20por%20Salmonella%20Weltevreden.pdf

Training activities attended by the CNRB-INCIENSA:

- Bolaños, HM. Participation as instructor in the **Regional Workshop for the Management of Risk of Poultry Meat Contamination with *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella***, held in Panama City, Panama, 25 – 28 June 2013. Activity organized by PAHO/OIRSA.

- Duarte F. Participation as speaker in the **Virtual Seminar International Health Regulations and INFOSAN**. Title of address: **The role of the Food Microbiology Laboratory in isolating foodborne pathogens and its relation to the International Health Regulation National Focal Point**. June 2013. Activity organized by the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories for the laboratories of the English-speaking Caribbean.
- Campos E, Bolaños HM. Participation in the production of guidelines and in the organization of three **simulations for public health events in ports and airports as part of the IHR**. These activities have been developed since 2012 to assess the level of awareness and preparation of social actors responsible for managing the Contingency Plan in ports to address public health events of national and international importance in the framework of the International Health Regulations (including two simulations for cholera).
- **Training in “Biochemical characterization and serotyping of *Salmonella* spp.”** for two members of staff of food laboratories (SENASA and LANAR) of Honduras at INCIENSA, Costa Rica, 21 – 25 October 2013.
- Acuña MT. Participation as speaker in the **Virtual Seminar on IHR and INFOSAN**. Address title: **The role of food laboratories in isolating the agents causing FBD and their notification to the National Liaison Centre – International Health Regulations**. 14 December 2012. Activity organized by the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories.

Priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

- Campos E. Participation in **“Global Foodborne Infections Network Steering Committee Meeting 2014”**. Geneva, Switzerland, 11 – 13 June 2014.
- Campos E. Participation in **“Early warning rapid alert systems (EWRA) and horizon scanning technical workshop on food safety”**, FAO, Rome, Italy, 22 – 25 October 2013.
- Elaboration of protocol: **Study of diarrhoea burden of presumed infectious origin, shigellosis and salmonellosis, Costa Rica**. Collaborative project: Department of Health Surveillance – Ministry of Health, National Bacteriology Reference Centre - INCIENSA, Epidemiological Surveillance Sub-Area, CCSS, Coordination of Clinical Laboratories, Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS), INCAP, PAHO (February 2014). Under execution.
- Under execution: **“Prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. in pork for consumption, originating in production plants and slaughterhouses of Costa Rica”** (collaboration INCIENSA / SENASA). Starting date: July 2013.

In addition to the above, the country has conducted training activities, with the support of cooperation agencies, involving government officials responsible for programmes to strengthen the National Food Control Systems.

- ✓ Workshop on risk assessment in food safety, (Sept. 2012).
- ✓ Course on Good Regulatory Practices, (21 - 24 July 2014).
- ✓ Design and implementation of traceability registers at primary producer level (March 2013).
- ✓ Training course for trainers in traceability and withdrawal/recovery of products directed towards the Food Industry Sector. (October 2013).
- ✓ Course: “Implementation of a quality management system in inspection bodies of countries”.
- ✓ Awareness-raising seminars on the role of standards in raising countries’ competitiveness.
- ✓ Raising awareness of sanitary and phytosanitary measures for the Food Industry Sector.
- ✓ Course: “Implementation of a technical training programme for inspectors in the Product Control Quarantine Points”.
- ✓ Workshop on “Good Regulatory Practices”.
- ✓ Seminar on European guidelines most relevant to product safety.
- ✓ Design and implementation of traceability registers at primary producer level.
- ✓ Workshop “Rapid Alert System in Costa Rica”.
- ✓ Workshop “Case study of successful establishment of ACHIPIA for food safety control”.

- ✓ Training “in methodology to estimate the disease burden for food-borne diseases” (FBD).
- ✓ Raising private sector awareness of safety issues and ISO 22.000. Updating of requisites for export to the European Union targeting the private and public sector.
- ✓ Course on Food Safety and Metrology (12, 13 and 14 May 2014).
- ✓ National seminar for proposed Central American technical regulations and national technical regulations for the withdrawal/recovery of products, held from 13 to 14 June 2013.
- ✓ Workshop on Risk Analysis in Biosecurity, (26 February to 2 March 2013).
- ✓ Strengthening National Food (Water) Control Systems in Costa Rica.
- ✓ In order to strengthen processes of food inspection; in the framework of a cooperation agreement with the Inter American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); a project on the virtual regional school of food safety inspectors will be initiated in 2015, with the participation of the relevant institutions.
- ✓ Participation in the International Visitor Leadership Programme on the subject of agricultural trade and food safety, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture of the United States of North America, implemented from 26 July to 16 August 2014.

Legislation and regulations for addressing emergencies.

The Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers (AyA) is the autonomous institution legally charged with overseeing, throughout Costa Rica, all matters relating to drinking water supply systems and the treatment wastewaters at national level. It is also responsible for developing and operating the systems under its charge, and for a series of strategic objectives for the whole country, including delivery of National Risk Management Policy under the National Law on Emergencies and Risk Prevention N° 8488 (Official Gazette N° 8, 11 January 2006).

In order to enhance effectiveness and to be prepared for emergency or disaster situations, the AyA has been strengthening the Management of Emergencies and Disasters by integrating, within its organization, the doctrine and methodology of the Incident Command System (ICS) in such a way that coordination in operations is more effective. In this connection, a MANUAL ON RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES TO TACKLE EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS IN THE AYA has been produced with the main aim of standardizing the actions undertaken in all the country’s regions in emergency and disaster situations.

Management and control of water for consumption.

The Manual states that there are technical instruments such as DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND NEEDS ANALYSIS FORMS that permit, in coordination with other relevant institutions, the production of a final record of the damage, for decision-making in cases where the money and time invested in works require specialist studies for the final plans and subsequent reconstruction.

Initiatives to improve inter-institutional collaboration.

As part of the processes of community-based risk management of rural aqueducts (ASADAS), significant efforts have been made to improve the processes of communal management, through participatory processes and workshops with the Programme PRIGA-UNA, IDESPO-UNA, UCR, under the coordination of the Sub-Directorate of Communal Systems Management and the Technical Unit of the Directorate of Risk Management of the UEN for Research and Development.

NATIONAL WATER LABORATORY (LNA-AyA): The National Aqueducts and Sewers Service was created in 1961, with which the AyA Central Laboratory began operations. But it was not until 1997 that the Central Laboratory was designated, through Executive Decree N° 26066-S of Monday 9 June 1997, as National Water Laboratory of the Costa Rican Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers.

Specific objectives:

- Monitor and control the quality of water for human consumption in Costa Rica.
- Plan and coordinate, with the aqueduct operating entities, the modifications and programmes needed to improve the quality of water for human consumption of systems operated by the AyA, Municipalities and Rural Aqueduct Committees.
- Provide laboratory analysis services to evaluate and control the systems of treatment of drinking water and wastewaters.
- Determine criteria, standards and guidelines to evaluate water in its different uses.
- Conduct research in the fields of water, environment and health.

- Promote improved quality of water for human consumption in Costa Rica.
- Plan, coordinate and execute programmes for protection of the aquatic environment.
- Seek excellence and total quality in the conduct of laboratory water analysis.

The laboratory has accreditation before the Costa Rican Accreditation Office with Standard INTE-ISO/IEC 17025:2005. It is in the process of accreditation with Standard INTE-ISO/IEC 17020:2012 and is the National Reference Laboratory for Wastewater of USAID-EPA.

The LNA applies the requisites stipulated in Standards INTE-ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and INTE-ISO/IEC 17020:2012 to ensure the reliability and impartiality of the results of tests and inspections, with a timely response. For this reason all the staff of the Testing and Inspection Services are familiar with the documentation of the Quality Management System and apply its policies and procedures.

Drinking water microbiology:

The LNA conducts the following analyses: *Total and fecal coliforms, Escherichia coli, Pseudomonas, Streptococcus faecalis, Escherichia coli, Clostridium perfringens, Staphylococcus aureus, Salmonella, Vibrio cholerae*, fecal enterococci and mesophilic bacteria counts.

Physical and chemical characteristics of water:

The LNA conducts the following analyses: apparent colour, turbidity, smell, taste, temperature, pH, conductivity, total alkalinity, total hardness, hardness calcium, hardness magnesium, calcium, magnesium, fluoride, sodium, potassium, chlorides, nitrates, aluminium sulphates, iron, manganese, zinc, copper, lead, nitrites, ammonia, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, mercury, nickel, antimony and selenium. There are also human and technological resources to identify pesticides.

Optimization of treatment plants:

Iron, aluminium, total hardness, alkalinity, sulphates, pH, saturation pH, saturation index, apparent colour, true colour, turbidity, chlorides, continuous sampling curves, jar tests (including optimal coagulant dosage, optimal pH, optimal gradient of flocculation, sedimentation time, sedimentable suspended solids, volume of sludge), granulometric analysis, coefficient of uniformity (filtration materials), effective size (filtration materials), training for operators of water treatment plants in the handling of equipment and laboratory methods.

Wastewater chemistry:

Dissolved oxygen (DO), chemical oxygen demand (COD) total and dissolved, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) total and dissolved, total organic carbon (COT), temperature, potential of hydrogen (pH), total phosphorous, ammonia and organic nitrogen, total Kjeldahl nitrogen, fats and oils, total dissolved solids, total suspended solids, sedimentable suspended solids, Methylene Blue Active Substances, nitrates, conductivity.

Wastewater microbiology:

Fecal coliforms, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* spp., identification of enterobacteria, *Vibrio cholerae*, intestinal nematode eggs, biological analysis of activated sludge, macroinvertebrates in receptor channels.

Below are the principal programmes comprising the LNA's Institutional Plan of Operation.

- Control and monitoring of quality of water for human consumption throughout the country.
- Sustainability of the accreditation process.
- Specialist studies on topics relating to water, environment and health.
- Accreditation of sanitary inspectors through Standard INTE-ISO/IEC 17020: 2012.
- Start of operations of LNA's Integrated Information System (SILAB), among others.

In addition to various community and reforestation programmes, there is the **Seal of Sanitary Quality**. This programme has run for 12 years. The categories so far created are:

- Aqueduct operation bodies.
- Health sector.
- Restaurants.
- Recreation centres.
- Hotels.
- Other establishments.

The LNA has an annual Training Plan, which this year 2014 includes thirteen internal theoretical activities and other practical activities. The laboratory personnel also attend courses, workshops, congresses, seminars and other events, run externally in the country or abroad, depending on the needs of the laboratory, and coordinated by the Office for International Coordination of the AyA.

Addressing sanitary emergencies.

The LNA collaborates with the Ministry of Health in addressing all requests for analysis of water quality and sanitary inspection of aqueducts, in the event of sanitary emergencies of chemical or microbiological origin. In this connection, the LNA is represented in the National Liaison Commission of the Ministry of Health which is charged with coordinating the response to public health events in the national territory. It belongs to the National Network of Laboratories of Costa Rica and to the National Commission of the International Health Regulations, as well as to the National Food Safety System.

Work conducted.

The following table is presented as an indication of the annual quality control of aqueducts, with an estimate of coverage and water quality in Costa Rica.

Table 1. Water for human consumption: general estimate of coverage and quality in Costa Rica - Period 2013

Supply	N°	Population covered		Population with drinking water		Population with non-potable water		Aqueducts	
		Aqueducts	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%	Potable
AyA	191	2,226,47	47.2	2,196,275	98.6	30,072	1.4	166	25
Municipalities	234	655,524	13.9	625,418	95.4	30,106	4.6	206	28
CAAR/ASADAS *	2,010	1,228,961	26.0	1,006,519	81.9	222,442	18.1	1,350	660
ESPH and others	16	230,000	4.9	230,000	100	0	0	16	0
Subtotal per entry	2,451	4,340,832	92.0	4,058,212	93.5	282,620	6.5	1,738	713

Source: LNA-INEC

* Evaluated under the Monitoring Programme for the period 2013 for chlorinated aqueducts and for the period 2011-2013 for non-chlorinated aqueducts.

During this present year, 2014, sanitary inspections have been carried out in 281 systems administered by communities that are in the Seal of Sanitary Quality Programme. In other community systems, 19 sanitary inspections have been conducted this year, while in 2013 a total of 142 sanitary inspections were conducted in systems administered by the AyA.

Priority issues for the control of water for consumption that should be tabled at national and regional level. To deal with sanitary emergencies arising from possible water transmission at diagnostic laboratory level, funding is being sought for the National Water Laboratory of the AyA to implement other microbiological procedures required nationally to respond in the best possible way to diarrhoea outbreaks, for example virological analysis of water. This requires infrastructure, personnel, equipment and training. Further to all the above, with regard to the food industry SENASA monitors the potable water used in the processing of products, by-products and derivatives of animal origin. The purpose is to check compliance with the standard determined by AyA.

QUESTION 2: STRENGTHENING CODEX AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Please describe:

i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

R/. Costa Rica has undertaken the following actions to strengthen the CCLAC at national level and to promote more effective national and regional participation in Codex:

Production of the following materials:

- development of a “*Digital Regional Notification System*” to facilitate follow-up to Codex topics as the system sends reminders before document deadlines, thus helping regional contact points prepare their comments and formal approval. There are presently 6171 users,
- preparation of leaflets (Spanish/English) on the “*Digital Notification System*” to promote its use,
- preparation of leaflets (Spanish/English) on “*Responsibilities, functions and duties of National Delegates to Codex Alimentarius and the Representative of the CCLAC*”, produced in a workshop on “*the strategic importance of Codex Alimentarius*”, which served to identify the responsibilities, functions and duties that National Delegates should assume in order to perform appropriate representation and maximize resulting benefits to their country,
- production of a video on “*the importance of Codex for the country and of the different sectors participating actively and effectively in this body*”, as part of the national strategy to raise awareness and understanding among the government and private sector,
- our national coordinators participate relatively frequently in radio programmes that talk about issues discussed in the Codex and that are relevant to our country,
- magazines regularly feature articles on standards that have been approved or topics under discussion within the Codex,
- greater participation of the country in physical working groups has been encouraged, to the point where the country has led or co-led these groups, as in the case of the “*Revision of the Risk Analysis Principles Applied by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues*” (CCPR), and the “*Discussion Paper on Burden of Responsibility of Multiple Questionnaires Directed at Exporting Countries*” (CCFICS) processed cheese, Need for MRLs for countries (CCVDRF),
- new standards of interest to the region have been promoted, with support from the production sector: avocado, passion fruit, cilantro coyote, non-centrifuged cane sugar (tapa dulce), standard for potato, yacon, cadmium in cocoa, among others,
- a priority plan of committees of interest to our country was produced to enable us to monitor these committees and, subject to availability of funds, to attend their physical meetings. (10 committees selected),
- as part of the regional plan of work of the CCLAC, Costa Rica is in the process of producing an educational video that will serve to train members of the diplomatic corps of the CCLAC region, before attending a Codex meeting, whether as head of delegation or else providing technical support, in order to bolster collaborative working mechanisms among the official missions of our country, in the countries where Codex meetings take place.

ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

R/. With regard to specific actions to strengthen the Codex Contact Point, the following are worthy of mention:

- Training activities were organized for members of the private sector, academia and sectors represented in the National Codex Committee, such as:
- Workshop “*Importance of effective participation in Codex for CR as CCLAC coordinator*”, (54 participants).
- “*Successful Experiences of an International Coordinator*”, (51 participants).
- Workshop “*International Negotiations*”, (24 participants).

- In order to sensitize and train the government and private sector on the importance of participating in Codex and as this can help boost competitiveness in international trade, a seminar was held in December 2013 on “*The role of Codex Alimentarius in opening international markets and its impact on the competitiveness of SMEs*” which, thanks to cooperation agreements, was attended by Mr Samuel Godefroy, Vice Chair of Codex Alimentarius, Mr Rogerio Pereira, Representative of Codex of Brazil, in addition to Mrs Awilo Ochieng, Vice Chair of Codex and national experts. The event discussed topics that facilitate food trade and national SME competitiveness through the exchange of successful experiences of several countries of Latin America in formulating international food standards in the framework of Codex Alimentarius and the impact this has had on developing production sectors.
- A Letter of Understanding was signed between Ministries and competent bodies to strengthen the National Codex Committee and the Costa Rica Focal Point to perform its role as Coordinator of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC).
- There is greater sector participation because the “Digital Notification System” permits the participation of internal and external users, providing an opportunity to learn more opinions and gain a technical basis for the country’s positions, an external user being understood as any “consumer, student or industry” user. There are presently 4720 external users and 630 internal users..

QUESTION 3: CODEX STANDARDS NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

Please describe:

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

R/ among the current topics under discussion, the following are of greatest interest to Costa Rica:

- Discussion paper to elaborate a model questionnaire that will facilitate the exchange of information as part of the system of evaluation of the official system of inspection and certification of an exporting country, (CCFICS),
- Processed cheese,
- Discussion paper on the line of action to facilitate the establishment of maximum residue limits for pesticides used with minor and specialty crops,
- All MRLs for veterinary drugs,
- Maximum levels of additives,
- Progress in the inclusion of additives in the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA),
- Harmonization of the GSFA with specific standards,
- Database of processing aids,
- Proposed draft maximum levels of arsenic in rice (bran and polished). (CCCF),
- Draft maximum levels for deoxynivalenol (DON) in cereals and cereal products and associated sampling plans. (CCCF),
- Proposed draft maximum levels for fumonisins in maize and maize products and associated sampling plans. (CCCF),
- Discussion paper on the development of a code of practice for the prevention and reduction of arsenic contamination in rice. (CCCF),
- Discussion paper on the revision of guideline levels for methylmercury in fish and predatory fish. (CCCF),
- Discussion paper on the establishment of a maximum level for total aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts and associated sampling plan. (CCCF),
- Proposed maximum levels for cadmium in chocolate and cocoa products. (CCCF),
- Establishment of revised nutrient reference values (vitamins, minerals), and establishment of nutrient reference values-non communicable diseases (NRV-NCD) for potassium. (CCNFSDU),
- Revision of the Codex Standard for Follow-up Formula (Codex Stan 156-1987 (amended 1989)). (CCNFSDU),

- Draft revision of the General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods (CAC/GL 09-1987 (amended 1989, 1991)). (CCNFSDU),
- Proposed draft revision of the List of Food Additives in the Standard for Infant Formula,
- Costa Rica participates in the EWG on Histamines, which is important for Costa Rica as one of the country's major processors of animal-based food also processes tuna which forms histamine.

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

R/. Costa Rica does not have specific areas as such; in general it prefers those that are cross-cutting and focus on ensuring food safety.

However with regard to nutrition and foods for special diets, the national priority is to revise the Regulations for the Registration of Diet Supplements (Decree 36134-S), together with the elaboration of Regulations for Energy Drinks and revision of the Central American Regulations for the Food Register (Decree 34490-COMEX-MEIC-S). There is also interest in updating the Central American Regulations on Nutritional Labelling, expressed by the Consultative Technical Commission on the Nutritional Values of Foods.

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level

R/. As mentioned in its reply to circular letter CL 2010/18-LAC, Costa Rica has promoted certain topics of interest to our country that have been adopted as Codex standards, which has placed us in a better position on international markets as the basis for our economic development.

Codex standards are relevant to Central American economic integration as, together with all their related texts, they have served as the basis and technical substance of the Technical Regulations that have been negotiated within Central American Customs Union.

In the absence of national food legislation, Costa Rica seeks to align with Codex standards, subject to the specific characteristics of the country. However, Costa Rica is a signatory member of Codex Alimentarius and always accepts the latter's technical substance, thereby ensuring international recognition of what we do as Codex decisions are based on science.

Codex standards are fundamental as a national point of reference, especially where no specific or existing regulations exist. They are frequently used by external and internal official inspectors in our processing plants.

CUBA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

- Responsibility for the *national food control systems* (NFCS) is shared by various entities that coordinate among themselves. Bodies with specific responsibilities relating to food safety include notably the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) (Codex Contact Point and directs the National Codex Committee (NCC)), Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), Ministry of the Food Industry (MINAL), Ministry of Domestic Trade (MINCIN), Ministry of External Trade and Foreign Investment, Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR), Ministry of the Sugar Industry (MINAZ), Customs Authority of the State, Offices of Central Administration of the State (OACE), National Assembly of People's Power, People's Entities of People's Power, and Consumers.

- The **National Diagnostic** on food safety was carried out by a working group. Work is currently underway on updating the Food Safety Policy.

- An analysis is underway for approval of the proposed draft Decree Law on Food Safety and Security, which is expected to be implemented in **2015**. The juridical documents supporting the Decree Law on Food Safety and Security are being updated as are its regulations. Work is underway on a proposed Coordinating Body for Food Security.

- Training of food inspection and control personnel is being stepped up, based on the principles of risk analysis. With this in mind, we have been preparing collaboration projects with FAO to improve the training of the inspection professionals that operate in this section of the Food Control System, and seminars and workshops have been organized.

- The Network of Food Laboratories **REENLAC** is being strengthened and modernized as part of the food sector's standards and quality infrastructure and to ensure further progress in the accreditation of food control laboratory tests.

- Cuba's participation in videoconferences is limited by its problems of access to the INTERNET for this type of activity. It was able to participate in 3 or so videoconferences programmed by the Regional Coordinator of the CCLAC between November 2013 and September 2014, thanks to the help of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in our country.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

Cuba views it as a top priority that all the experts on the National Codex Committee (NCC) work and cooperation together, so that there can be a better understanding in the country of Codex Alimentarius as a body dedicated to food safety and fair trade practices, and of its relevance to consumers. With this in mind, the complete range of available documentation on the main topics dealt with by Codex should be distributed throughout the country.

1. In relation to celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of Codex Alimentarius; through its National Codex Committee supervised by the National Standards Office, under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Cuba convened a workshop under title: Successes and Challenges, 50 years of Codex and its impact on Cuba. The workshop was attended by all members of the National Committee and other specialists from state bodies involved in the food chain and its related academia.

Guests included the FAO Representative in Cuba, the UNDP Official, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), Director of Quality and Technology of the Ministry of the Food Industry (MINAL), Vice Director of the NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH CENSA and the Director of the National Food Hygiene Laboratory (LNHA-IMV)

On behalf of the Presidency, recognition was given to all those individuals who had displayed an outstanding attitude in the accomplishment of Codex activities in these 50 years in the country. This was followed by talks on the following topics:

- "Codex Alimentarius and its principal activities in Cuba "
- "Communication as a component of risk analysis through the food chain"
- "Challenges in the processing and supply of food in the non-state sector in (TPCP)"
- Round Table: "Safety in primary production and its impact on human nutrition"
- Round Table: "Activities on Food Control".

2. A National Workshop was held in October 2013 with more than 400 participants from different parts of the country on FOOD TRADE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FOOD CHAIN, ACTIONS TO PREVENT AND AVOID CONTAMINATION FROM *SALMONELLA SPP*, ORGANIZED BY NC and the National Codex Committee, in response to the country's needs regarding Salmonella contamination in imported foods, with the participation of specialists from different institutions, agencies and entities, and a programme that included talks on a selection of topics.

3. The Fourth National Workshop of CODEX ALIMENTARIUS was held in March 2014 to deal with important topic areas that relate to food safety and have a high impact in the country, besides raising cultural awareness of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission as the main world body producing international food standards and its working mechanisms, with the participation of experts from different institutions, agencies and entities, and with a programme that included talks on a selection of topics.

- The NC Group of Experts produced a leaflet on 'The Codex Alimentarius. Mission and Benefits'. As part of an FAO Project, a book was issued on "Risk Analysis as the Basis of Food Safety Systems" compiled by a group of authors, experts of the National Codex Committee. These were distributed to all management and technical staff of bodies and entities involved in the food chain.

- Training continues in food issues (Food safety, HACCP, manufacture and hygiene prerequisites, among others, by experts from the NC's Quality Management Centre.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

i) Which specific standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

The following Codex standards are of most importance and have been approved, published and implemented in Cuba:

- General Principles of Food Hygiene
- Codex list of pesticide residues, veterinary residues and heavy metals in food
- General Guidelines on Claims
- Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling
- Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods
- Principles and Guidelines for Microbiological Risk Assessment
- Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods
- Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety Applicable to Governments
- Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Management
- Guidelines for the Validation of Food Safety Control Measures
- Guidelines for the design and implementation of national food safety assurance programmes associated with the use of veterinary drugs in food producing animals
- Proposed draft guidelines on the application of general principles of food hygiene to the control of viruses in foods
- Code of Practice for the Processing and Handling of Quick Frozen Foods
- Code of Hygienic Practice for the Collecting, Processing and Marketing of Natural Mineral Waters
- Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for the Storage, Handling and Transport of Edible Fats and Oils in Bulk
- Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods (Latin America and the Caribbean)
- Code of Practice for the Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Refrigerated Prepackaged Foods with Extended Shelf Life
- Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Code of Practice for Good Animal Feeding
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat
- General Standard for Labelling of Prepackaged Foods
- Standards for canned tomatoes, honey, natural mineral waters, food grade salt, wheat flour, maize, selected vegetables, pineapple, papaya, mango, rice, avocado, bananas, sugars, citrus fruits, fermented milk, condensed milk, cheese, processed cheese, evaporated milk, tomato, fish fillets, among others.

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

- Areas of hygiene, risk analysis and food safety which are being revised for a second version and high-risk foods, with the updating of standards for fermented milk, meat products, fruits and vegetables, sugars, among others. In addition work is underway on standards for contaminants other than heavy metals and the standard on food additives is being updated.

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards a national level

- The Codex standards for product requirements, guides, guidelines and codes of practice are of vital importance. In Cuba we have adopted some 137 Codex documents, accounting for 34% of the more than 500 Cuban food standards.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Following the 18th CCLAC in the Dominican Republic, the legal framework for strengthening the National Food Control System has included the following activities:

- 1.1) Entry into effect in mid 2013 of Law 166-12 creating the Dominican Quality System (SIDOCAL), promulgated 12 July 2012. Its first two objectives are:
 - To protect the health of living beings and the environment.
 - To provide technical services specialized in quality aspects to avoid commercial or other practices which mislead or could mislead consumers and users.
- 1.1.1) At the same time, this law identifies the National Institute for the Protection of Consumer Rights **PRO CONSUMIDOR** as the sanctioning administrative body with national authority to monitor the quality of products and services on the market.
- 1.2) The Dominican Republic Congress is debating:
 - "The draft Constitutional Law for Sovereignty, Food Security and Right to Food (SINASSAN), which will guarantee the transparency and efficiency of food distribution and marketing systems to reduce the risks of price volatility from speculation and abusive or distortionate practices.
 - Draft Law on Seeds.
 - Draft Law on Drinking Water and Sanitation.
 - Draft General Law on Water of the Dominican Republic.
 - Draft law decentralizing the administration of drinking water and sewers in the Dominican Republic.
- 1.3) The Ministry of Agriculture began in Puerto Plata the first programme of beef traceability in the country, using a modern animal health system that certifies by seal the quality of meat and dairy products.
- 1.3.1) Work is underway revising the Regulations for the Application of Good Agricultural and Livestock Practices.
- 1.4) Proposed draft laws and regulations in the process of adoption.
 - 1.4.1) The following regulations are in the process of evaluation and internal consensus in the National Health Council of the Ministry of Health:
 - ✓ FOOD SANITARY REGULATIONS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, which is at the final stage of evaluation at the time of writing.
 - ✓ SANITARY REGULATIONS FOR POULTRY AND POULTRY PRODUCTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.
 - ✓ SANITARY REGULATIONS FOR THE INSPECTION OF MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.
 - ✓ REGULATIONS FOR THE SANITARY INSPECTION OF FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS.
 - 1.4.2) The following are in the process of evaluation and internal assessment in the Ministry of Agriculture:
 - Proposed Draft Law on Animal Health Protection.
 - Proposed Draft Law on Plant Health Protection.
 - National Regulations on Plant and Animal Products in Transit.
 - National Regulations to Mitigate Pests (fumigation and spraying).
 - Regulations for the Management and Treatment of Regulated Refuse in Ports and Airports.

These proposed draft laws and the regulations were submitted by the IICA to the Ministry of Agriculture, for their revision in its Legal Advisory Office.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Following the 18th CCLAC, the country has conducted the following activities:

A) Participation in the following meetings:

- Colloquium of Codex Alimentarius for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, from 15 to 17 January 2013, in Panama City, Panama.
- 56th session of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. From 20 to 22 March 2013. In room CR, WTO in Geneva, Switzerland.
- CAC36 - Codex Alimentarius Commission. 36th Session from 1 to 5 July 2013, in Rome, Italy
- CCRVDF21- Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods. 21st Session, from 26 to 30 August 2013, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States of America.
- CCNFSDU35- Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses. 35th Session, from 4 to 8 November 2013, in Bad Soden a.t., Germany.
- CCFH45- Codex Committee on Food Hygiene. 45th Session, from 11 to 15 November 2013, in Hanoi, Viet Nam.
- Colloquium of Codex Alimentarius for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, from 4 to 6 March 2014, in San José, Costa Rica.
- CAC37- Codex Alimentarius Commission. 37th Session, from 14 to 18 July 2014, in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Regional Workshop on Microbiological Criteria in Foods, from 8 to 9 September 2014, in IICA, San José Costa Rica.
- Participation in the 'Session on International Food Legislation: short-term challenges in the dairy sector'. In the framework of the 50th Anniversary of Codex during the 13th Pan American Dairy Congress, 11 September 2014, in Queretaro City, Queretaro State, Mexico.

B) Communication of comments on circular letters:

- CL2012/24 CAC (Processed Cheese)
- CI2014/12 FA (SIN).(Four comments sent)

C) Submission of the following conference room documents (CRD):

- Three CRD (Items 4, 5 and 6) in 45th CCFH.
- Support CRD to CRD-Brazil (Concern Forms) in 21st CCRVDF.
- Support CRD to CRD-Chile (Rev. risk analysis principles in CCPR) in 45th CCPR.
- Support CRD to CRD-Costa Rica (Note 161) in 45th CCFA.

D) Preparation of country position papers.

Before each international session of the Codex committees, we prepared a country position paper that was agreed, as appropriate, by the technical subcommittee or the National Codex Alimentarius Committee (CONCA), which is then passed on to the delegate representing the country.

E) CCLAC videoconferences.

Through the PCC-RD and delegates to meetings, the country has participated in almost all the videoconferences held since the CCLAC, in the period 2013 – 2014, presenting the position, comments or otherwise on the item under discussion, whether the country has been present or not.

F) The National Codex Alimentarius Committee (CONCA), made up of representatives of the producer, technical and consumer sectors, convened in a regular and valid manner 6 times between December 2012 and September 2014.

2.1) Participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

There is a clear need to enhance the integration of consumer associations which, as NGOs, do not have sufficient economic or human resource support to ensure that the consumer sector plays a questioning and health defence function through safety standards applicable to the production process.

The work pursued by the National Institute for the Protection of Consumer Rights (Pro Consumidor) seeks to monitor food safety activities, but still falls short in its efforts to integrate monitoring activities with normative work in the various food technical subcommittees belonging to the CONCA.

The Association of Industries of the Dominican Republic (AIRD) has been promoting the revision, harmonization and updating of standards in the dairy sector and supporting the work of other technical subcommittees such as that on labelling.

Question 3) Codex Standards: national priorities and interests

3.1) *For the establishment of national standards, the industrial institutions have been encouraging the revision, harmonization and updating of rules in the dairy sector and supporting work in other technical subcommittees: labelling, pesticide residues, fresh fruits and vegetables, foods for special dietary uses, food additives, veterinary drug residues, fish, and others.*

3.2) *Topics relating to the following have always been a national priority:*

- *Codes of Good Practice (Manufacturing, Agricultural and Livestock).*
- *Implementation of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system.*
- *Implementation of Risk Analysis.*
- *Establishment of pesticide MRLs in agricultural products and veterinary drug MRLs in meat products.*

3.3) *Codex Standards at national level.*

We are currently waiting for a reply from the Association of Industries of the Dominican Republic (AIRD) and the Dominican Institute for Quality, identifying which Dominican Standards (NORDOM) in use in the country's food production sector are harmonized with the regulations, codes of practice, guidelines and guides produced by different Codex Committees.

ECUADOR

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems.

These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiative to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food **safety** issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

Ecuador has entities that are able to conduct food monitoring and control, and that have control plans adapted to their area of responsibility. However, it still does not have a National Food Control System that coordinates all the institutions and controls the whole food and agriculture chain.

Some of the country's control systems and plans include:

- National Plan of Monitoring and Control of Contaminants in Primary Production – Programme of Monitoring and Control of Pesticide Residues in Agricultural Products.
- National Programme of Control of Bovine Brucellosis.
- National Programme of Control of Bovine Rabies.
- National Plan of Control (National Institute of Fisheries)
- National System of Forest Control
- Ecuadorian Quality System

Ecuador understands the importance of having these control systems and plans and has therefore adopted the following actions:

- Allocation of budget (personnel, purchase of equipment, upgrading of facilities, process of laboratory accreditation, team building, inclusive holidays, internal and external training, among others)
- Issuance of regulations for monitoring and control (e.g. creation of the National Agency for Health Regulation, Control and Monitoring - ARCSA, Executive Decree 1290 of 30 August 2012, Regulations for the Sanitary Registration and Control of Processed Foods AM. 4871 of 4 June 2014, Substitute Sanitary Regulations for Processed Foods for Human Consumption, AM. 5103 of 25 August 2014, General Regulations for the Law on the Ecuadorian Quality System, among others)
- Conclusion of ministerial agreements between monitoring and control bodies.
- Exchange of technical knowledge to strengthen control bodies.

- Refurbishment of laboratories
- Dissemination and application of the National Control Plan to the fisheries sector.
- Planning the market monitoring of commodities, applying mechanisms that will ensure compliance with the Basic Law on Consumer Protection. Law N° 2000-21. Official Register Supplement 116 of 10 July 2000.
- Among others.

Important is the shaping and implementation of a National Food Control System that will guarantee the consumer a safe product, that will permit rapid and immediate measures in the event of an alert and that will contribute towards reducing FBDs and thus protecting public health.

Other topics considered important at national and regional level are:

- Control and monitoring of contaminants
- Residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs
- Use of food additives
- Analysis and control of foods based on risk profile.

We also suggest that work be conducted on the harmonization of regulations relating to the labelling of processed foods.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to remote more effective participation in Codex;

Reactivation of the technical subcommittees and formulation of the Strategic Plan of the National Committee of the Food Code.

- ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

Training.

Question 3: Codex Standards: national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- i) which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

a) CAC/MRL 1 Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides

b) CAC/MRL 2 Maximum Residue Limits for Veterinary Drugs

c) CAC/RCP 1-1969 General Principles of Food Hygiene CPE INEN-CODEX 1

d) CODEX STAN 192-1995 General Standard for Food Additives NTE INEN-CODEX 192

e) CODEX STAN 193-1995 General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed NTE INEN-CODEX 193

- ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

- o Country orientations in line with government guidelines
- o Standard setting needs from stakeholders (use of additives, pesticide residues, among others)

- iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

Codex standards are used as points of reference for national food standards and for the adoption of national standards (e.g. CPE INEN-CODEX 1: General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969)). They are also used in the regulations and thus become mandatory standards.

Some public institutions, such as MIPRO, promote the joint application of these standards in the different enterprises. The Ecuadorian Standards Service is initiating projects to learn the applicability and benefit of the standards.

EL SALVADOR

1. Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Salvadoran Technical Regulations (RTS) have been compiled on food matters, including: Regulations on the Sanitary Inspection of Meat, Good Agricultural Practices for Fruits and Vegetables, Maximum Residue Limits for Chemical Pesticides in Fruits and Vegetables for Domestic Production and Import, Regulations for the Production, Processing and Certification of Organic Products.

In the pipeline are:

- a) Drinking water
- b) Packaged water
- c) Food establishments
- d) Microbiological criteria in fisheries and aquaculture
- d) Sampling for heavy metals in fishery products
- e) Poultry products. Poultry meat
- f) Cereals. Beans
- g) Cooked and uncooked sausages
- h) Food fortification and its sanitary register
- i) Imitation dairy cream, among others.

In addition to the Salvadoran Technical Regulations (RTS), the Central American Technical Regulations (RTCA) on foods are applied and monitored by the competent authorities of the country.

Foods in the country are legislated by laws and their associated regulations within the purview of the competent authorities: Ministry of Health, Ministry of agriculture and Livestock and Consumer Protection Office.

Food Security is a priority of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and the Codex Contact Point is also involved in any necessary regulation.

2. Strengthening Codex at national level

In January 2014 the National Codex Committee of El Salvador (CONACODEX) was formally established, with members representing the public, production, consumer, academic and scientific sectors. On the same date, the "Rules of Procedure of the National Codex Committee", a programme of annual meetings, and the "Working Procedure of the Codex Mirror Committees" were adopted.

The Codex Contact Point is a member of the Foods Sectoral Committee, created under the framework of the National Policy for Consumer Protection, which is coordinated by the Consumer Protection Office whose functions include: monitoring, in a coordinated manner among the institutions of the National Consumer Protection System, compliance with obligatory technical standards, especially those relating to quality, safety and labelling; promoting regulatory tightening aimed at protecting the economic interest of consumers; and encouraging consumers to be given appropriate information that will enable them to make responsible decisions when procuring goods and services.

The Codex Contact Point and the Foods Sectoral Committee are continuously engaged in disseminating national and Central American regulations which use Codex Alimentarius as their point of reference. This has increased their familiarity and resulted in greater take-up in the private sector.

The Codex Contact Point has followed the work of 8 Mirror Committees whose function is to study the documents sent by the Codex Secretariat and to determine comments and country positions.

With national delegates, the Codex Contact Point has also participated in international committees, with the invaluable support of IICA.

3. Codex Standards: national priorities and interests

i) Codex standards and related texts of most importance and interest to your country:

- Food additives
- Food contaminants
- Pesticide residues in plant foods
- Establishment of pesticide MRLs in minor crops
- Labelling for prepackaged foods and nutrition

- Milk products
- Food hygiene
- Residues of veterinary drugs in animal-based foods

ii) What are the priority areas for setting national standards:

- Food safety and security
- Audits and inspection and sampling methodologies for fresh fruits and vegetables.

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level

The Policy for Development, Diversification and Production Processing (PFDTR) has agroindustry, and food and beverages among its priority sectors. The Codex Contact Point will work on the priority of using Codex standards and on involving these sectors in the Mirror Committees.

GUYANA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

- 1) Draft national food safety law establishing a new Food Safety Authority and paving the way for a consolidated food safety system through a coordinating mechanism therefore allowing for an integrated food control system.
- 2) New agencies already established for Plant Health and Animal Health to strengthen the farm to table approach which will now support the food safety system.
- 3) Laboratory infrastructure through the recently concluded Agricultural Export Diversification Programme (ADP) funded by the International Development Bank (IDB), include the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Biological Control Laboratory and strengthening of the Government Analyst Food and Drug Laboratory. Under this programme the capacity of the Inspection Services for Plant Health, Veterinary Public Health and Food and Drugs were also strengthened through the provision of material resources and training.
- 4) Dissemination of information achieved by the coordination of the agencies via the ADP.
- 5) Areas being addressed are:
 - i. Control of veterinary drugs and pesticides through legislation.
 - ii. Labelling of drugs and food products.
 - iii. Expiry dates of drugs and Foodstuff sold on local market.
 - iv. Agro processors trained in safe food production and awareness of HACCP.
 - v. Strengthen food safety integrated surveillance system.
 - vi. Exporter brought up to date with international requirements especially in the areas of Agri-produce and fisheries products.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

The Guyana National Bureau of Standards within the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry houses the Codex Contact Point. The Contact Point is spearheaded by a Technical Officer of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards.

On March 05, 2014 Guyana's National Codex Committee (NCC) was resuscitated. This committee consists of representatives from Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Guyana Consumers Association, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, PAHO/WHO, non-governmental organisations and academia.

Our participation at international meetings is hindered by financial constraints but our participation in e-working groups is being encouraged by the NCC and will soon be undertaken.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

At the national level Codex standards are taken into account when national food standards are being developed.

Members of the NCC have selected several Codex standards of which they deem as priority. They are; pesticide residue, food labelling and packaging, fish and fishery products, fresh fruits and vegetables, poultry products, meat products.

PANAMA

1. Ministry of Health, Department of Food Production (DEPA):

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

In the Ministry of Health, through the Department of Food Production (DEPA), we have carried out actions aimed at improving the food control systems through the use of Codex standards and guidelines.

In the following activities:

Inspection systems:

- Use of the code of hygienic practice
- Use of the basic texts on food hygiene for the regulations of obligation of the HACCP system
- Training workshops on HACCP scrutiny by inspectors of the MINSA Sanitary System
- Compilation of inspection forms for inspected companies
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Fruits and vegetables. Training was given to fruit and vegetable producers and inspection routines were designed on the basis of the manual.
- Procedural manual on risk assessment. Related training was given to inspectors.

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards;

- We consider it a priority that Codex should have a standard for panela, as presented by Colombia in the colloquium held in Panama.
- Through the CCFL we support a manual or guidelines for biofortified foods and a standard for the labelling of these foods through the CCFL as there is interest in such foods directed towards rural areas where small farmers benefit from their consumption and can even engage in their sale.
- As part of the process of harmonization with Central America, we are revising the Central American Technical Regulation on Additives 67.04.54:10, using as reference the CODEX GENERAL STANDARD FOR FOOD ADDITIVES. CODEX STAN 192-1995

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

- We consider that Codex maintains appropriate support in the form of relevant technical information on the food issues that concern us in the Ministry of Health. We are currently applying the guidelines for the control of Campylobacter and Salmonella in poultry

i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

We are currently using the Codex Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods and the guidelines on nutrition labelling for the purpose of harmonization in Central America. Panama does not have such a standard or guidelines.

We use:

Guidelines for determination of equivalence of sanitary measures relating to food inspection and certification systems.

- Prevention and reduction of food contamination.
- Foods derived from modern biotechnology
- Pesticide residues in food.
- Methods of analysis and sampling

With regard to application of the International Health Regulations, we use the FAO/WHO framework to develop national plans of intervention in food safety situations.

2. Panamanian Food Safety Authority (AUPSA).

- *Since becoming a member of the Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) system, Panama has adopted various procedures and Central American Technical Regulations in a range of areas that include: sanitary and phytosanitary measures, microbiological criteria for food safety, fats and oils, specifications for fortified wheat flour, requisites for the import of foods processed for exhibition and consumption, procedure for issuing a sanitary licence or operating permit to production plants and stores, Central American regulations on sanitary measures and procedures, and currently a study of Central American technical regulations for nectars, and the procedure for award of the Sanitary Register and Sanitary Registration.*
- *Similarly, by virtue of the “Agreement establishing an association between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and Central America, on the other”, Panama has determined specific procedures to assess the national food control systems of the countries of the European Union, including the original clearance inspections for establishments producing foods in the member countries of the European Union and wishing to export their products to our country. Specifically, sanitary appraisals in these countries use the system equivalence approach, either for a group of products or for a group of measures or for specific measures, with all the original audits financed by the Panamanian State, a situation so far unusual for the Panamanian sanitary system.*
- *It is worth mentioning that Panama has recognized the equivalence of systems of various countries of the world for specific product groups, including for specific sanitary and phytosanitary measures, using as point of reference for its procedures the determinations of international reference bodies, such as Codex Alimentarius, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the International Plant Protection Convention.*

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

Among the standards that Panama monitors with utmost interest is the work undertaken by CCFICS, CCFH, CCFL, CCFA, CCRVDF and CCPR.

We are currently actively engaged in the work of the CCFICS because of its importance for the national control systems and we hope to contribute significantly to the new work led by Costa Rica that involves the use of questionnaires for sanitary assessments conducted by countries.

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

We are following with interest the development of standards for specific products that are widely consumed in our country and region, such as the start of possible work on processed cheese, to avoid unfair trade practices, while at the same time protecting the nutrition and health of our population.

We consider it important to continue working on codes of hygienic practice for activities taking place in industry and for activities that require more specific provisions than those set out in the general codes; for example, the development of a code of hygienic practice for street food, using by way of example the regional standard that exists for the countries of the Middle East.

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

Codex standards carry great importance for Panama, as they provide the basis for technical specifications of food products and serve as the scientific justification for the sanitary measures that are applied by countries such as ours with limited resources to carry out risk analysis, and thus help comply with the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

3. Ministry of Agricultural Development through the National Department of Plant Health

The regulations through Decision DAL-042-ADM-2011 on Pesticide Land Applications which enters into effect in 2015 and which, *in one way or another, intervenes in the matter of strengthening national food control systems*; the regulations of article 50 punishing violators of MRLs in fruits and vegetables, and explaining how fruits and vegetables are sampled; the Laboratory of Analysis of Pesticide Residues in Plants and Plant Products which is certified with ISO 9001 and is about to be accredited.

4. Authority for Consumer Protection and Defence of Competitiveness (ACODECO)

- a. **Inspection services:** The Department of Metrology of the Authority for Consumer Protection and Defence of Competitiveness (ACODECO) is the authority charged with enforcing the Technical Regulations for different products consumed by the domestic population. To this end, the Department of Metrology has been placed under the ISO Quality Management System with the result that all the verification processes have been certified:
- Verification of net content of prepackaged products on the market
 - Net content of fresh chicken eggs.
 - Verification of sale of bread by weight
 - Verification of re-used edible fats and oils
- b. **Laboratory infrastructure and activities:** With regard to infrastructure, the laboratory has a grains section and another physical/chemical section. Laboratory activities include: Vitamin C content, pH, acidity, net content of powdered milk, net content of fishery products (tuna, sardine), canned pigeon peas, stuffed olives, quality analysis of rice, kidney beans, beans, lentils, net content of corn flakes, etc.
- c. **Dissemination of information:** We pursue the following activities to disseminate all the above information:
- We have 10 national daily radio programmes from Monday to Friday.
 - A television programme from 8:00 to 9:00 Monday through Friday entitled 'look after your purse'.
 - ACODECO Tour programme, with the participation of primary and secondary schools, universities, associations of retirees and pensioners, and public and private institutions, aimed at providing visitors with information on all that we do.
 - Participation in all national fairs, distribution of educational material.
 - 'ACODECO in your Community' programme visiting all homes throughout the country and explaining all the topic areas the institution is involved in.
 - Production of three magazines each year with topics of current interest.
 - The Institution has 85 spokespersons who employ the communications media to publicize what we do.

5. Laboratories:

University of Panama
Specialized Institute of Analysis
Section of Food and Beverage Analysis

Our institution is certified with ISO 9001:2008 of Applus

This Standard certifies the management of the institute

- In recent years more analytical services have become available in our section.
- We provide analysis of the lipid profile (saturated, monounsaturated, polyunsaturated fats, *trans* fats)
- Analysis of dietary fibre
- Analysis of cholesterol.
- Analysis of liposoluble and hydrosoluble vitamins.
- Analysis of minerals.
- Analysis of trace heavy metals (ppb)
- Elaboration of nutritional labelling
- Analysis of tap drinking water etc. and packaged water.
- We participate each year in interlaboratory matrices in which we conduct analyses.
- Our work closely reflects internationally recognized methods of analysis such as the AOAC for different matrices, AOCS for fats and oils, Food Chemicals Codex for raw materials, and Standard Methods for water analysis.

- We belong to the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL). We currently chair LATINFOODS/FAO/UNU; we are members of the National Codex Committee; and we participate as members of different commissions associated with food and food safety at national level.
- We have a section that conducts microbiological analysis of food, water, medicines, cosmetics etc.
- Our institution is the reference laboratory at national level for the analysis of medicines.
- We have a laboratory for wastewaters and environment which is accredited with Standard ISO 17025.
- A section for miscellaneous products
- A section for analysis of cosmetics
- A section for metrology which is starting

We have qualified staff in Chemistry, Pharmacy, Biology, Industrial Engineers.

We have a rolling plan of training for all the institution's personnel.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

Members of the National Codex Committee have used every workshop or meeting on food safety to talk about Codex and its importance for health and trade.

All information relating to Codex is presented, evaluated, revised and approved through the National Codex Committee.

ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

We are working on setting up mirror committees on food labelling, food hygiene, CCFICS and pesticides.

Awareness-raising campaigns are organized to achieve greater involvement of the Private Sector in the meetings of the National Codex Committee.

With regard to application of Codex, users are provided with standards and guidelines for their consultation.

Since 2012 we have participated with national delegations in meetings of the last three sessions of the Codex Commission, in meetings of the Committee on Food Hygiene and in associated physical working meetings, in meetings of the Codex Committee on Veterinary Drugs and in meetings of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

PARAGUAY

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Since the 18th session of the CCLAC, the National Institute for Food and Nutrition (INAN), as part of its plan to improve its food control system, has carried out the following actions related to strengthening the structure to improve food management and control of food:

- The institution has been reinforced in the area of food surveillance, given that it underwent a change in operating structure following approval of a new organizational chart by Resolution S.G N° 195/13 which determines the creation of a "Department of Food Safety and Control", raised to the rank of department, working exclusively on the control of food safety, both in processing plants and at the different points of distribution and/or sale.
- The INAN has also been strengthened in the area of Technical Standards and Regulations, with the creation within its new structure of a "Regulatory Affairs Unit", whose purpose is to centralize the coordination, study, revision and elaboration of technical regulations, both at national level (National Legislation) and regional level (MERCOSUR) and to handle all matters relating to coordination of the Codex technical subcommittees that come under its responsibility, in order to consolidate work on internally producing regulations based on Codex Alimentarius standards, among others.
- It should be noted that the institution holds accreditation as inspection body ISO 17020 and accredited laboratory ISO 17025, gained in May 2010.

- It maintains close links with different public bodies working in the food safety sector in order to carry out effective controls. It is involved in the different activities organized by the Ministry of Industry and Trade – Consumer Protection Department, relating to awareness raising campaigns highlighting the importance of food safety and quality.
- In this connection, it has coordinated the formation of a NATIONAL COMMISSION ON AGROCHEMICALS AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT – CONASA to establish coordinated strategies of information, education and communication, among relevant entities, on the appropriate use of agrochemicals to protect the health and peace of mind of the public. The Commission’s aim will be to establish and support coordinated strategies in the integrated and appropriate management of agrochemicals and their impact on public health and the environment. The RESULTS EXPECTED from the formation of this Commission are:
 - 1. Strategic plan, formulated and to be implemented over the short-, medium- and long-terms.
 - 2. Compilation, analysis and processing of information provided by technical teams for implementation of the established strategic plan.
 - 3. Appropriate management and handling of agrochemicals achieved.

Among other aspects, control programmes are implemented for: food courts, local market kitchens, educational centre canteens, food preparation and sales points; and in the case of FBD outbreaks, the locations where the food poisoning occurred are examined and controlled, and information on the symptoms of the persons affected is noted. Each programme is accompanied by its respective analysis results.

- Training programmes are organized for producers, companies and technical managers in the area of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs).
- Further drafts are being produced for the Paraguayan Food Code which will subsequently be released among the relevant institutions.
- There has also been work on formulating technical regulations for stevia- and sugar-based table sweeteners.

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

The National Committee is currently revising both Decree 17.487 “Creating Paraguay’s National Codex Committee”, and the Rules of Procedure of the National Committee, in order to align these to the country’s reality and to invigorate its actions.

The National Committee continues to convene once a month in Regular Session and, when necessary, Extraordinary Sessions are called. In this regard, strategies are being examined to enhance the participation of the public and private sectors in the Technical Subcommittee meetings.

In May, and with IICA assistance, a Workshop on Strengthening the National Codex Committee and the Codex Subcommittees was held, with the support of the top-level authorities of each institution making up the National Committee.

- ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

The INTN, which serves as Codex Contact Point and Executive Secretariat of the National Committee, is working on an amendment to its Charter, with a proposal that the Codex Office becomes the Technical Secretariat of Codex Alimentarius, considering its importance.

Question 3: Codex Standards: national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;

With regard to Codex standards and related texts in general, all **Codex commodity standards** are of interest, both for standard setting and for national legislation, as they are the first source of consultation.

Relating to the establishment of Paraguayan standards, the Codex standards of most interest are those that include product requirements. They have recently been used as the basis for the national standard on white sugar and those on natural fruits, and *those on commodities in general*, which continue to be used in the work of the different national technical committees for Paraguayan standards.

- ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

The entity responsible for coordinating national standards is the National Institute of Technology, Standards and Metrology - INTN, and Contact Point of Codex Alimentarius, where the area of priorities for establishing national standards is determined in line with stakeholder requests. Priorities may reflect Government policy or identified interests of the production sector.

- iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

We should mention that Codex standards are used at national level as the basis for technical regulations, the basis for the Product Register and the basis for Paraguayan standards.

As regards regulatory matters, Codex standards are the first point of reference for the establishment of national technical regulations. During this period, they have been used as the basis for draft technical regulations for sugar, wheat flour, food grade salt, and others. At regional level, within the sphere of MERCOSUR, they have been used as the basis for revision of the Technical Regulations for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods, Nutrition Claims and Declaration of Food Additives in Meat Products.

SAINT LUCIA

Question 1: Strengthening National Food Control Systems

Please describe any significant developments/actions taken in your country to improve national food control systems.

These may include actions relating to: National food law and regulations; food control management e.g. food administration structures, initiatives to improve multi-sectoral collaboration; inspection services; laboratory infrastructure and activities; information dissemination; training. Please also describe priority food safety issues to be addressed nationally and regionally.

- Saint Lucia has been working through the Ministry of Health to develop a modern Food Safety Act that would incorporate principles of HACCP and food hygiene. Currently the draft Act is currently with the Attorney General Office, for review and approval before it is ascended to parliament for enactment.
- There has been more collaborative approach between inspection agencies – Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Bureau of Standards to address issues related to food safety at points of entry and market surveillance. This collaborative approach has allowed the agencies to capture potential food hazards that may have been outside the scope of any single agency.
- Saint Lucia is engaging in the construction of a national diagnostic facility that will focus on laboratories for food, agriculture and metrology. Earmarked for completion in June 2018.
- Main areas of food safety nationally include:
 - meat and chicken monitoring,
 - animal feed,
 - use of hormones and antibiotics in Animal husbandry
 - codes of good agricultural practice for swine, crops, small ruminants, broilers

Question 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

Please describe:

- i) Any significant actions that your country has taken to strengthen Codex at the national level and to promote more effective participation in Codex;

- National Codex committee was revitalized and re-launched in July 2013.
- In-house Training was conducted by staff of Codex Contact Point to members of the committee. Further training is required to strengthen the understanding of members on CODEX.
- New committee has prioritized work of CODEX Committee based on national priorities to include mirroring the work CCLAC and the following subject committees:

- CCFICS
- CCFL
- CCPR
- CCFH
- CCFFV

- Subcommittee leaders assigned to ensure specific CODEX work is executed.

ii) Any specific actions aimed at strengthening the Codex Contact Point, i.e. consultative structures and processes on Codex matters, including promoting increased involvement and participation of consumers and other stakeholders.

- Contact Point still has resource constraints with only one officer assigned to all CODEX matters.
- National Codex committee exists with cross section of representatives from various sectors as follows:
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries - Veterinary Department
 - Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce
 - Caribbean Agriculture Business Association
 - National Consumers' Association
 - Ministry of Health, Wellness and human resources - Environmental Health Department
 - Caribbean Public Health Agency
 - Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
 - Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
 - Baron Foods Ltd
 - Saint Lucia Manufacturers Association
 - Saint Lucia Industrial and Small Business Association
 - Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs
 - Saint Lucia hotel and Tourism Association
 - Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards
 - General Interest
- System of reminders established through mail client to solicit feedback from members on CODEX committees of interest.

Question 3: Codex Standards national priorities and interests

Please describe:

- i) Which specific Codex standards and related texts (currently under development or already in existence) are of most importance and interest to your country;
- General Guidelines on Claims
 - Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling
 - Principles for Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection
 - Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods
 - Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Microbiological Risk Assessment
 - General guidelines on sampling
 - Guidelines for the Control of Campylobacter and Salmonella in Chicken Meat
 - Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for Pesticides
 - General Principles of Food Hygiene

- Code of Practice for the Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
- Regional Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Foods (Latin America and the Caribbean)
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Bottled/Packaged Drinking Waters (Other than Natural Mineral Waters)
- Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat
- General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods
- Standard for Honey
- Standard for Natural Mineral Waters
- Standard for Food Grade Salt
- Standard for Wheat Flour
- Standard for Pineapple
- Standard for Papaya
- Standard for Mangoes
- General Standard for Food Additives
- General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed
- Standard for Rice
- Standard for Avocado
- Standard for Bananas
- Standard for Sugars
- Standard for Ginger
- Standard for Grapefruits (*Citrus paradisi*)
- Standard for Tannia
- General Methods of Analysis for Contaminants
- Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling
- Standard for Oranges
- Standard for Tomatoes
- Standard for Bitter Cassava

ii) What are the current priority areas for setting national standards; and

- Tourism Sector
- Agricultural products and practices
- Environmental services and management

iii) Use and relevance of Codex standards at national level.

- High use of CODEX standards current/active work programme has the following projects that use CODEX standards as a base document or reference text:
 - Specification for Brown Sugar
 - Specification for White Sugar
 - Specification for Powdered (Icing) Sugar
 - Code of practice for meat and meat products

- Labelling of prepackaged foods
- Specification for Poultry and poultry products
- Specification for flour
- Specification for rice
- Codes of hygienic practice for crops
- General principles of food hygiene
- Code of practice for egg and egg products
- Standard for fish and fishery products