

Written reports from international organizations: International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC)

Report for CPM18-2024

This report to the 18th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) provides a summary of the activities of the International Grain Trade Coalition (IGTC) as an External Cooperator of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat during 2023.

IGTC purpose as it relates to the IPPC Mission

The IGTC's ongoing efforts are consistent with the IPPC mission. Our aims include to:

- Support accomplishments toward world food security and economic well-being goals as defined by the United Nations.
- Inform and promote the common/shared interests of international actors that include farmers, producers, exporters, importers, governments, and consumers.
- Foster a safe, predictable, sustainable, affordable, nutritious, and secure food supply across the world.
- Share critical research and expertise on the global supply chain. Serve the diverse needs arising from international provision of food, feed, transport and processing for grains, oilseeds, pulses, and derived products.

IGTC achieves its purpose via cooperation with international organizations like IPPC as well as in collecting and disseminating information via an extensive global network of participants at the global, regional, national, and local venues of thought leadership and decision making for policy as well as commercial practice. We succeed with common positions on key issues impacting the global grain trade that are in line with IGTC's strategic goals, communicating those positions through external advocacy, education, and guidance to members - ultimately establishing more trade enabling policies among governments and international organizations. For example, IGTC is focusing much of its related effort on supporting the work of WTO SPS Committee.

Key Highlights and Activities in 2023

2023 was a significant year for the IGTC as the organization began leadership transition. Alejandra Castillo was named the President and Chief Executive Officer of the organization replacing Gary C. Martin who is now President Emeritus and who had been in the position since the organization was formed. Gary's leadership through the years provided dedicated support to the mission of the IGTC to provide advice on the impacts of policy decisions on commercial requirements and economics of the world's food, feed, and processing industries. The IGTC would like to thank Gary for his excellent service through the years and warmly welcomes Alejandra onboard to continue the important work of the IGTC. We are confident that Alejandra will continue to keep the IGTC in the forefront of efforts to ensure food security for the world.

The IGTC is proud to continue playing a leading role with IPPC ePhyto Industry Advisory Group (IAG) and foundational support for the IPPC ePhyto solution. IGTC participants from around the world welcome the opportunity to continue to participate in ePhyto workshops. The IGTC is particularly pleased that it was able to contribute to the development of the ePhyto Solution sustainable funding proposal as an observer to the IPPC Focus Group, which developed the document presented to CPM18. The IGTC still strongly believes that the optimal solution to sustainably fund the IPPC ePhyto Solution remains direct funding from the FAO regular program allocation, as it is truly a public good.

The IGTC is also pleased that it has had the opportunity to encourage the adoption of the IPPC ePhyto Solution as a presenter to several IAG/IPPC collaborative webinars as well as a presenter to several in-person workshops around the world. The IGTC provided presentations to the East Africa Grains Council in May as well as to an ePhyto Workshop in Uzbekistan in September. Participation in activities such as these serve to underscore the staunch support of the international grains industry for the digitalization of trade documents for facilitating trade.

Following CPM-17, the next important event for the IGTC was the Africa Grains Week in May. These events brought together producers, the commercial grain trade, and government officials to discuss issues affecting trade in the region, and how to improve trade relationships for the benefit of food security, sustainable development, and access to innovative technologies. Participants were provided with an excellent report on the status of ePhyto implementation in Africa by the ePhyto Steering Group representative for Africa, Josiah Syanda.

In June, the IGTC led a ground-breaking series of trade and global food security events in Geneva entitled "IGTC Geneva Dialogues" with speakers, decision-makers, and thought leaders traveling to participate in person from around the world.

The two-day program on June 19 and 20 focused on cooperation between the public and private sectors for the benefit of global food security, and the role in this effort for corporate entities, non-profit trade associations, and national and regional governments. IGTC representatives took the floor to make presentations from global, national, and regional perspectives, emphasizing the role of the grain trade in meeting the needs of a growing global population, and providing evidence about the current challenges, such as supply deficits in low-income, import-dependent countries.

In September, IGTC took part in the discussions at the [WTO Public Forum, themed "It is Time for Action."](#) With more than 130 sessions hosted by WTO members, businesses, NGOs, and academia, the forum served as a dynamic platform for dialogues on crucial topics spanning trade, sustainability, technology, and multilateralism. IGTC is committed to advancing global trade and cooperation, and this forum was a fantastic opportunity to exchange insights and ideas.

More than sixty international delegates and partners gathered in Geneva in November for the Annual Ordinary General Assembly of IGTC and related meetings. Participants travelled from countries and regions including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Eastern Africa, EU, Mexico, UK, and USA. Attending the meetings were also IGTC's global Corporate

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Stakeholders and international organizations such as World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Grains Council (IGC), the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). IGTC was honored by the presence of high-level guests David Dong, CEO and Vice President of COFCO International, and Dr. Ibrahim Ashmawy, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade of Egypt

In December, the IGTC made a presentation at a panel session on "Enhancing Trade and Traceability in Agri-Food Supply Chains through SPS Electronic Certification," organized by the International Seed Federation, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) which took place during the UNCTAD eWeek in Geneva.

Additional Ongoing Activities

IGTC Electronic Trading Documentation Working Group

Modernization and innovation in trade documentation practices continues to be one of the highest priorities for IGTC. During 2023, grain trade professionals from around the world continued to provide informational guidance regarding requirements related to the innovation of paperless document exchange. and assist in the innovation of a transparent, secure, cost-efficient electronic system for all parties to benefit from productivity improvements while resulting in better management and more sustainable, dependable, predictable, and responsive logistics.

The Working Group continues to support advancing the digitalization of trade documentation with information collection, constructive support, and taking advantage of any opportunities for direct involvement with the IPPC related to the IPPC ePhyto Solution. Work specifically related to the ePhyto Solution includes:

- Support for grain trade personnel around the world as they contribute to the successful implementation of the ePhyto Solution and the nearly six million certificates that have been exchanged to facilitate the safe trade of plant products for the benefit of global food security.
- Leadership and planning for the NPPO and RPPO ePhyto Workshops with industry, spanning all regions of the world since their inception in 2021.
- Service as an active member of the Industry Advisory Group (IAG). Recruitment to have more plant product sectors included in this group has been a priority.
- Providing industry perspective presentations at international fora on the ePhyto Solution and the role it plays in trade facilitation.
- Addressing the long-term sustainability of the ePhyto Solution via the IPPC's Focus Group on Sustainable Funding.

IGTC Phytosanitary Policy Team

The IGTC Phytosanitary Policy Team is one of five policy teams operating under the IGTC. The Policy Team monitors, analyses, and influences phytosanitary measures impacting the international trade of grain, oilseeds, and other agri-bulks. Principle activities include developing and sharing expertise on phytosanitary standard setting, and the principles of facilitating safe trade, harmonizing official measures, expediting market access negotiations, and enhancing phytosanitary security.

Of ongoing relevance to the policy team concerning the international trade of grain is the adoption of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) that encourage all

Parties to more effectively manage contaminating pests to enhance food security and protect the world's biodiversity; manage pests in exporting countries to minimize the movement of quarantine pests in international trade of grain; implement aligned and robust international phytosanitary standards based on science and risk assessments to facilitate trade and improve food security; and minimize the risk of the movement of quarantine pests during trade.

Additionally, the IGTC focuses on the alignment of work programs with other rules-based and standard-setting bodies such as WTO and Codex Alimentarius. This includes the implementation of the SPS Declaration adopted at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference and participation as an observer to the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in late February 2024.

As noted in last year's report, the IGTC policy statement on Phytosanitary Measures continues to be a driver of the organization's efforts to facilitate food security and minimize the movement of quarantine pests in international trade of grain. The Policy Team, in addition to the IGTC staff, continues to 1) regularly review the IPPC website for event and meetings of relevance where IGTC members may attend and have input, 2) review IPPC documents and provide feedback directly to IPPC or via IGTC member governments on issues that may affect the international trade of grain, 3) meet with various WTO members on the developments in the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), and 4) monitor progress in the implementation of the SPS Declaration adopted at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference and actively participate as an observer during the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference.

In the coming year, the IGTC will also remain actively involved, either via physical attendance, on-line or through the review of meeting documents and advocacy with relevant international and national governments and organizations, in several events to include meetings of the WTO SPS Committee, the Standards and Trade Development Facility, CPM18, the International Day of Plant Health, London Grains week, Global Grains Geneva and others.