

## **PROCINORTE**

### **Minutes of the XXX Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Held Virtually**

#### **Background and Objectives**

1. Share national developments to inform the PROCINORTE Secretariat.
2. Review current Task Forces activities.
3. Receive updates on current animal health (ASF/CSF) research projects.
4. Identification of areas of potential research between the three countries in 2025-26.
5. Explore future funding opportunities and sources.

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#### **1. Opening Session**

Dr. Le Vallée, Executive Secretary, chaired the meeting and welcomed all board members. He mentioned as important points to consider at the meeting that there is a new member from the USA and that the strategic plan for the next few years needs to be updated.

#### **2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda tabled was approved by the BoD.

#### **3. Minutes of XXVI Meeting**

Minutes of XXIX meeting were accepted by the BoD.



#### 4. Update from each member country

Dr. Le Vallée invited each country to provide an update on its research or scientific priorities and agendas.

##### Canada

- Dr. Saindon shared good news to start with: his division applied to an international project funding mechanism and CAD\$174,000 was obtained to improve and strengthen scientific collaboration on the issue of highly pathogenic avian influenza in North America.

It was mentioned that the funds will be received by IICA, which will manage them, and the administrative process must be followed up with Mr. Turnock.

Dr. Saindon also mentioned the activities that the Canadian members of the different task forces had reported to him: Soil, Water and Climate Change will work on resilience, NORGEN will have a couple of webinars and Plant Health will have a webinar on the occasion of the International Plant Health Day and a hybrid workshop from Mexico City in September.

Finally, he announced his retirement in 2025.

Dr. Le Vallée expressed his appreciation for the funds obtained, thanked Dr. Saindon for his many years of work at PROCINORTE and invited Dr. Ibrahim and Mr. Day to give some updates from headquarters before they left for another important meeting.

##### IICA HQ

- Mr. Day also thanked Dr. Saindon for all his collaboration with PROCINORTE. He mentioned that he would be going to Edmonton in March to participate in the discussion on NAFTA, where he would present an overview of the situation in North American countries.

Mr. Day also commented that 2025 would be a very busy year, mainly with COP 30 and the ministerial meeting, both in Brazil.

Finally, he informed that the Director General would be traveling to Mexico in March, also to Africa in the coming months, and would probably participate in the Olds College event in June.



- Dr. Ibrahim, from his end, reported that IICA is working on developing a platform on tropical systems to showcase how they can contribute to food security. He also mentioned the agreement that IICA signed with Mexico to combat screwworm and the ongoing work that has been carried out for years to fight African swine fever and Fusarium. Finally, he noted that FORAGRO (forum for innovation, science and technology) would be relaunched in March and invited all attendees to participate.

## USA

- Ingrid Watson, from USDA ARS, informed that Dr. Silverstein will be the new PROCINORTE board member replacing Dr. Kappes and apologized on his behalf for not being able to attend the meeting as he was called to an emergency meeting with the new U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Ms. Watson mentioned that with the cabinet changes, it is too early to know what changes there will be in ARS research projects, but that the priority issues continue to be: Avian Influenza, African Swine Fever, and Screwworm. She also highlighted that anything that helps bring consumer prices down and help us farmers, ranchers and rural communities is going to have visibility and priority, and that their climate hubs are celebrating ten years and continue working to enable more informed decision making on climate. Finally, she announces that the members of the task forces will be changing and that she will share the information soon.

Country participation in the FORAGRO event in Costa Rica in March was discussed. Mr. Day mentioned that historically it has been focused on Latin America and proposed including the United States and Canada in the conversation.

## Mexico

- Dr. Rodriguez del Bosque reported on the economic situation in Mexico, highlighting budget reductions that will affect the continuity of some projects. However, he announced that INIFAP will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with several events during the year and invites attendees to join a big event in August. He also reported on the priority that Mexico is giving to the screwworm issue and finally, he announced that he will no longer be a member of the PROCINORTE board as he is leaving INIFAP to take a sabbatical year to do research in entomology.



## **5. Update from the Secretariat**

After the updates from all countries, Dr. Le Vallée provided information on the PROCINORTE events planned for the year. He mentioned that two hybrid events are scheduled for September in Mexico City but could be held virtually if no speakers from Canada or the U.S. are able to travel.

Dr. Le Vallée also noted progress on the development of the new PROCINORTE website and reminded everyone that for any questions or inquiries related to PROCINORTE, they can contact Camino Aparicio or himself.

Finally, Dr. Le Vallée stated that the IICA Canada office is organizing an event in June as part of the G7 framework and invited everyone to participate.

## **6. Discussion**

Ingrid asked for a moment so that Dr. Silverstein could introduce himself and greet everyone. Dr. Silverstein introduced himself and apologized for not being able to participate in the meeting from the beginning. Everyone welcomed him to the PROCINORTE board.

## **7. Closing remarks**

To conclude the meeting, Dr. Le Vallée noted that 2025 will be a very interesting year due to the changes that will occur in the board and in the task forces. Dr. Saindon stated that although there will be changes, PROCINORTE will continue with the same strong objective. The meeting is closed by Dr. Le Vallée.



## Annex 1: List of Participants

### Board Members

- Dr. Gilles Saindon, Assistant Deputy Minister, AAFC
- Dr. Jeff Silverstein, Associate Administrator for National Research Programs, ARS/USDA
- Dr. Luis Ángel Rodríguez del Bosque, Director General, INIFAP
- Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim, Technical Cooperation Manager, IICA
- Dr. Jean-Charles Le Vallée, Executive Secretary, PROCINORTE

### Board Support Members

- Mr. Bob Turnock, Deputy Director, Science Partnerships Division, AAFC
- Ms. Ingrid Watson, Deputy Director, Office of International Research Engagement and Cooperation, ARS/USDA
- Mr. Ryan Moore, International Affairs Specialist, ARS/USDA
- Dr. J. Isabel López-Arroyo, Senior Researcher, INIFAP
- Ms. Celestina Brenes, Specialist, Technical Cooperation, IICA

### Other Attendees

- Mr. Lloyd Day, Deputy Director General of IICA, viewer
- Dr. Camino Aparicio, IICA Mexico / PROCINORTE Secretariat Coordinator
- Ms. Gloria Ramírez, IICA Canada / PROCINORTE Secretariat
- Ms. Ana Paulina García, IICA Canada / PROCINORTE Secretariat

