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# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Costa Rica

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### New Agricultural Policy

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Policy and Program Announcements

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**Report Highlights:**

This report summarizes the new agricultural policy for the 2010-2021 period, recently announced by the Government of Costa Rica.

## **General Information:**

### **Ministry of Agriculture Launches State Agricultural Policy for 2010-2021**

The Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) recently announced a new agricultural policy that resulted from a first stage of consultations with the public, private and academic sectors of the country. The document used information from previous policy statements and contributions from different sectors and institutions such as the National Chamber of Agriculture and Agribusiness, UPANACIONAL (Union of Small and Medium Size Producers), CAC (Central American Agricultural Council), OIRSA (International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health), and others. The government opened a second stage of consultations with all sectors involved with the purpose of expanding, improving and correcting the initial text. The period for comments will end on October 31. According to the MAG, more than a document, the policy should be seen as a continuous dialogue process.

The policy is based on three pillars: competitiveness, innovation, and development and management of rural areas. The following is a summary of each pillar.

**Competitiveness:** The goal is to increase the level of competitiveness of the Costa Rican agricultural sector. There are several strategic issues involved such as safety of the agricultural sector, financing and insurance, information and communication systems, efficient management of markets, and production infrastructure and support.

**Innovation and Technological Development:** This pillar gives priority to the generation and transfer of technology for innovation for producers that are exposed to adverse natural phenomena. Some of the strategies to achieve the goal include: scientific, technological, and socio-economic research and transfer; conservation, use, and access to phyto-genetic and zoogenetic resources; integral risk management; mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change; and specialized training for personnel.

**Management of Rural Areas:** The goal is to promote balanced development of the rural areas allowing the proactive participation of all the actors involved, resulting in the improvement of social indicators and the sustainability of natural resources. Strategic areas include: quality improvement through increased use of technology in the production processes; capacity building for organizational and business management; access to financing resources; family agriculture; ecological agribusiness; clean production; sustainable management of land and other resources; and compensation for sustainable production.

During the presentation of the plan, agricultural groups, former ministers of agriculture and members of the Agricultural Engineers College participated in the dialogue. One issue of concern was the lack of definition regarding how the plan will be carried out. Some of the comments indicated that it is not clear as to how the plan would be financed. That information was not included in the new agricultural policy statement. Everyone agreed, however, that it is an important effort as a long term guide for the sector.

Some of the policy instruments of interest include:

effective administration of negotiated free trade agreements; simplification of bureaucratic procedures, including extended use of digital or virtual instruments for the fulfillment of requirements; modernization of quarantine stations at ports and airports; and programs to improve inspection, certification, surveillance and pest and disease control.

Additionally, the policy text includes: permission to use biotechnology products for animal feed; utilization of bilateral protocols and sanitary agreements for increased market access; information center for the use and consumption of biotechnology products; biofuels development program; and public-private alliance for the development of biotechnology projects, among others.