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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR PLANT AND ANIMAL HEALTH (OIRSA) RELATING TO THE
WTO AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY
AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES,
OCTOBER 2018-JANUARY 2019

The following communication, received on 25 February 2019, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

**1 TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES RELATING TO
AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND TRADE**

1.1. A course on international trade in agricultural products was held in Nicaragua for students in the master's degree course on management of sanitary and phytosanitary measures at the National Agrarian University (UNA).

1.2. In cooperation with the Chinese Taipei International Cooperation Development Fund (ICDF), and the Honduran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG) and National Agriculture and Food Health and Safety Service, OIRSA trained 160 citrus fruit growers from Francisco Morazán department in integrated pest management, crop management and control of HLB disease.

1.3. With expert support from the Chinese Taipei ICDF, the regional diagnostic workshop on certification of healthy citrus plants was organized, with the participation of laboratory technicians from the Agriculture Ministries and Secretariats of six countries in the OIRSA region.

1.4. Pesticide registration processes were updated at the regional level, with the participation of 50 officials from 10 Central American countries and from Chile and Ecuador.

1.5. A training programme on prevention of melon and watermelon virus diseases was held in Costa Rica, targeting members of the country's Melon Growers Association, representatives of producer enterprises and technical experts in the sector.

1.6. A national round table on production and management of healthy plants in Honduras was held in Honduras with the participation of a delegation of 60 persons, including graduates and undergraduates in agronomic engineering from the National Agricultural University of Catacamas, Olancho.

1.7. An online self-management training course on food safety risk analysis was organized for 327 participants from the government, private and academic sectors, in the field of food safety; the participants came from eight countries in the OIRSA region and South American countries.

1.8. An online self-management course on training of safety auditors in plant production systems was held for 373 participants from the government, private and academic sectors, dealing with food safety; the participants came from eight countries in the OIRSA region, as well as South American countries.

1.9. In El Salvador, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Centre (CENDEPESCA) received support for the organization of a workshop on training and technical assistance regarding safety of fisheries and aquaculture species in El Salvador. The workshop was attended by technical experts involved in fishing and aquaculture from the Ministry of the Economy and the private aquaculture sector.

1.10. In Guatemala, recertification training was provided for SITC (International Quarantine Treatment Service) staff on methyl bromide fumigation, in accordance with the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) standard. Four training days were organized.

1.11. In Honduras, staff of the Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA) received certification training on methyl bromide fumigation in accordance with the Australian fumigation standard. Six training days were organized.

1.12. A training course was held for SEPA staff in Guatemala on sampling methodologies, with support from the Mexican postgraduate college.

1.13. In Guatemala, training on quarantine regulations and procedures was organized for SEPA staff.

1.14. The third meeting of the pink conch working group of COPACO (Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission) was held in Panama, at which participants heard a presentation on "Pink conch traceability in trade".

1.15. In El Salvador, a simulation of the Trazar-Agro honey production traceability module was developed for the stages of production, harvesting, receipt and batch packaging of honey in two of the main exports plants.

1.16. The seventh qualification course for bovine traceability operators in Guatemala provided training for 29 new operators with profiles as private veterinary doctors, farm managers, producers and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA).

1.17. In Belize, a briefing on "Apicultural traceability, certification and market access" was organized in the context of the Belize Apicultural Symposium and Exhibition, with the participation of more than 100 bee-keepers and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment, Sustainable Development and Immigration (MAFFESDI).

1.18. A third training day was held in Guatemala, for an official delegation of 44 veterinary doctors, on the strategy for progressive control of brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis and the corresponding procedural manuals.

1.19. An online self-management training course was held on epidemiological surveillance in shrimp farming, with 123 participants from the public and private sectors and academic circles, drawn from OIRSA and other countries.

1.20. An online self-managed course was held on apicultural health and diagnostics for 130 professionals from the public and private sectors.

1.21. A honey facility production simulation (Trazar-Agro IT platform/El Salvador apicultural module) was organized in the VAPE enterprise, in El Salvador, with the participation of staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG).

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. OIRSA continued working to improve the regional quarantine early warning system, which issues a warning if quarantine pests are intercepted at border checkpoints of OIRSA member countries.

2.2. The Central American Technical Regulation on Veterinary Drugs was updated; the regulation governs good manufacturing and labelling practices.

2.3. A technical evaluation of the MAGA Animal Health Laboratory in Guatemala was performed in order to consolidate it as a national reference laboratory for the diagnosis of brucellosis, with support from OIE.

2.4. In El Salvador, in coordination with the MAG Veterinary Services, four socialization day courses were held on the proposal for a Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA) on brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis, for the benefit of the country's livestock associations and cooperatives.

2.5. The OIRSA Ad Hoc Group for revision of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code held a meeting in order to review the proposed amendments to the 2018 edition of the Code.

3 PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION ACTIVITIES (PROGRAMMES OR CAMPAIGNS)

3.1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) of El Salvador received support for the work of monitoring and research on locusts in the municipality of Tecoluca, San Vicente, and producers were given notice to take necessary measures to deal with the incidence of the pest in maize and bean crops.

3.2. In collaboration with FAO, a simulation exercise was conducted in El Salvador for the prevention of banana fusarium wilt disease (Foc TR4), which involved detection at quarantine points, monitoring, diagnosis, elimination of outbreaks and declaration of emergency. There were some 90 participants, including local producers, technical experts and national authorities.

3.3. The emergency plan for HLB control was concluded in Honduras, which seeks to reverse the impact of the disease and raise production of oranges from 110,000 to 250,000 tonnes. The producers also received training in certification of nurseries, handling and safe use of pesticides, farming practices, soil analysis, fertilization and leaf analysis in order to remedy crop deficiencies.

3.4. In Honduras, OIRSA, the Chinese Taipei ICDF and SAG provided technical assistance to mandarin producers in the municipalities of Cedros and San Ignacio, in the department of Francisco Morazán, on the use of pesticides and calibration of spraying equipment.

3.5. Panama was provided with support in the form of training and technical and operational assistance to help it identify approximately 100,000 bovine animals and register 1,500 establishments, in the context of supplementary activities relating to health alerts by the veterinary services of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA).

3.6. Support for the preparation of instructional material to prevent the entry of African swine fever (ASF) into the region.

3.7. The veterinary services of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua were provided with material to strengthen the epidemiological surveillance and control of populations of vampire bats in the affected and high risk areas.

3.8. Monoclonal conjugates were purchased for the veterinary services of Guatemala and El Salvador, to be used in the diagnosis of rabies by immunofluorescence.

3.9. El Salvador received support for the purchase of the Rose Bengal antigen (sieve test) for the diagnosis of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis in the field, as well as for the purchase of 3,000 doses of bovine PPD and 1,000 doses of avian PPD.

3.10. Action was taken to step up the prevention of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) H5N2, in the countries of the region, through the provision of inputs for epidemiological surveillance and laboratory diagnostics, as well as the printing of instructional material on the disease.

4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. In Honduras OIRSA and SENASA verified the status of Mediterranean fruit fly-free areas, as institutions that have been working since 2002 in the programme for maintenance of Mediterranean fruit fly-free status in the Aguan Valley.

4.2. Member countries received support in accessing the University of Georgia's platform for the use of the Distance Diagnostics through Digital Imaging system.

4.3. The sampling protocol for the determination of cadmium levels in cocoa beans was developed and made available to member countries.

4.4. Honduras's official laboratory received support for the purchase of inputs and reagents for the process of validation and subsequent extension of the scope of accreditation for the following methodologies: (a) accreditation of screening methods for analysis of nitroimidazoles and colouring matters in farmed shrimp and tilapia; (b) accreditation of screening methods for analysis of trenbolone, zeranol and clenbuterol in bovine meat; (c) implementation of a confirmatory method for analysis of nitrofurans in farmed shrimp and tilapia.

4.5. In Honduras, the National Council on Traceability (CONART), of which OIRSA is a member, was sworn in.

4.6. Provision of laboratory equipment to strengthen monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in Guatemala, Honduras and Belize.

4.7. Support and technical advice to Panama in compiling a dossier to apply to OIE for the international recognition of classical swine fever.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. OIRSA participated in the 42nd annual meeting of the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO).

5.2. An agreement was signed between OIRSA, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) of Guatemala and the Association of Independent Banana Producers, for the prevention and control of banana and plantain pests, which seeks to prevent musaceae production being affected by pests and diseases, such as Foc TR4 and others.

5.3. An interinstitutional coordination meeting was held between The Nature Conservancy (TNC), OSPESCA (Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization) and OIRSA, at which discussions took place on the synergies between the institutions in promoting conservation, the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the traceability of fishery products.

5.4. Establishment of technical cooperation with the IICA to strengthen the capacity of official representatives of the Central American countries in the area of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

5.5. Joint OIRSA-OIE activities were defined and established for 2019.
