

**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 53rd Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
27-29 March 2012

Reporting Period: October 2011-March 2012

The following communication, received on 23 March 2012, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

1. Training, technical assistance and dissemination activities relating to agricultural health and trade

1. A specialized national workshop on food safety was held in Honduras, with the participation of Codex Alimentarius officials, staff of the Food Safety Division of the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA), members of the National Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and quarantine officials.

2. A refresher course on agricultural quarantine was organized in Honduras for technical experts from the Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA).

3. Support was provided for the participation of coordinators of regional Palmaceae programmes and official technicians in the workshop on banana and palm quarantine pests held in Tabasco, Mexico.

4. A bi-national seminar on quarantine pests of Solanaceae was organized in Panama for technical staff from the Panamanian and Nicaraguan Ministries of Agriculture.

5. In coordination with the production sector and experts from Brazil, a regional seminar on the main phytosanitary problems affecting pineapple crops, in particular *Fusarium guttiforme*, was held in Panama for representatives of the relevant authorities of the Ministries and Secretariats of Agriculture of OIRSA member countries.

6. In Costa Rica, a meeting was held with the Costa Rican company DOLE and Ministry of Agriculture officials, with a view to working together to implement phytosanitary measures to prevent the entry of pineapple fusariosis and to establish monitoring strategies.

7. Five training events on poultry management and health were held in El Salvador and Nicaragua for small-scale producers.

8. Support was provided for the participation of nine fishery product inspectors from OIRSA member countries in a training course in Spain on fishery product safety in the context of the cooperation agreement signed with the Secretariat of Maritime Affairs of Spain's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment (MAGRAMA).

9. A regional training course was held on tools for designing disease control and eradication programmes for officials of the Epidemiological Surveillance Departments of the Ministries of Agriculture in the region.

10. Consultancy services were provided on the basic guidelines to be followed by OIRSA member countries in order to obtain international recognition of classical swine fever (CSF)-free status and advice and guidelines for the international recognition of CSF-free status for OIRSA member countries.

11. Design, layout and printing of 30,000 manuals entitled "Taenia and cysticercosis".

12. Preparation by the OIRSA Ad Hoc Group on Apicultural Health and Safety of a monitoring protocol on outbreaks of *Aethina tumida* (forwarded to the Directors of Animal Health for adaptation and implementation). The document has already been made official in El Salvador and Costa Rica.

13. Preparation and publication by the OIRSA Ad Hoc Group on Apicultural Health and Safety of a practical guide to apicultural health for producers.

14. Support by the OIRSA Ad Hoc Group on Apicultural Health and Safety for the revision of the manual on the pathology, diagnosis and control of the main pests and diseases affecting honey bees, updated by Mexico's National Technical Advisory Council on Animal Health (CONASA).

15. Publication of two editions of the technical bulletin NOTI-ARROZ in electronic format as a tool for the Phytosanitary Programme in Support of the Rice Food Chain.

16. Design and printing of technical material for the training of small-scale producers and the dissemination of information on the prevention, control and eradication of avian diseases.

17. In coordination with the Directorate-General of Agricultural Protection and Health (DGPSA)/Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry (MAGFOR), the National Agrarian University (UNA) of Managua and milk producer cooperatives and with support from the National Agricultural Health Centre (CENSA) of Cuba, a third technical mission was undertaken in the context of the implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for Improvement of Milk Production and Quality (PROCAL).

2. Support for regional trade facilitation

18. In accordance with European Union requirements, a pre-audit was conducted in Guatemala on the hygiene and safety of fisheries products (farmed shrimps) in coordination with the Department of Animal and Hydrobiological Products of the Food Safety Directorate of the Vice-Ministry of Agricultural Health and Regulations (VISAR)/Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA).

19. In Honduras, an inspection relating to good manufacturing practices (GMP), sanitation standard operating procedures (SSOP) and hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) was conducted, in coordination with the SENASA Food Safety Division, in companies processing fruit

and vegetable juices, nectars, concentrates, pulp and purée, in accordance with US Food and Drug Administration requirements.

20. Nicaragua was provided with technical assistance for the programme for the institutional strengthening of the milk product inspection and control system.

21. OIRSA supported the DGPSA/MAGFOR authorities in Nicaragua with preparations for aflatoxin contamination control, in accordance with European Union requirements.

22. Technical assistance was provided in Nicaragua to address the phytosanitary problem of the Zebra *Chip-Bactericera cockerelli* complex and to launch a campaign for the prevention and surveillance of *Tuta absoluta*.

23. In Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, support in relation to avian diseases in backyard poultry was provided for the education, health communication and vaccination campaigns.

24. Support was provided for consultancy services in respect of the poultry status of El Salvador in order to begin the process of establishing eligibility for the importation of poultry products into the United States of America.

3. Support for the harmonization and equivalence process

25. A technical meeting was held in El Salvador to support harmonization of the proposed animal health requirements for exporting live cattle from Central America into Mexico.

26. Consultancy services were provided in respect of the health requirements governing trade in swine and the products and by-products thereof in OIRSA countries.

27. In the context of the cooperation agreement on food safety signed with the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), both of which are agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and with the participation of FDA officials, OIRSA held a fourth technical meeting to review Central American Customs Union regulations (RTCAs) on the sanitary registration of foods and microbiological criteria for food safety and their equivalence with the regulations of the United States of America.

28. Avian guidelines for trade facilitation have been reviewed and updated and new guidelines have been drawn up on excreta management and control and on biosafety in poultry holdings.

29. A regional review was conducted of the Good Poultry Practices Manual, and the guidelines for the inspection and certification of farms and pest-/disease-free areas were updated.

4. Support for regionalization (establishment of pest-/disease-free and low-prevalence areas, development of protocols for their recognition)

30. Financial support was granted to, and technical follow-up provided for, the programme to maintain the northern part of Lake Xolotlán in Nicaragua as an area free of the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitidis capitata*).

31. Financial support was granted to, and technical follow-up provided for, Nicaragua's Huanglongbing (HLB) and citrus leprosis programme.

32. In Honduras, the strategy for eradication of the outbreak of the Mediterranean fruit fly and maintenance of fruit fly-free status in the Aguán Valley was defined and implemented.

5. Prevention, control and eradication activities (programmes or campaigns)

33. Epidemiological surveillance and control activities following the outbreak of classical swine fever (CSF) in Guatemala in October 2011:

- Receipt and dispatch of samples from Guatemala, Honduras, Belize and El Salvador to the Managua reference laboratory for CSF screening;
- Dispatch of samples from swine affected by the CSF outbreak from Guatemala to the Plum Island Laboratory, United States of America, for a phylogenetic study of the virus;
- Coordination meetings with representatives of the public- and private-sector CSF programmes of Central America, Belize, Panama and the Dominican Republic in relation to the sanitary activities to be conducted;
- Supervision of vaccination activities in agricultural markets and the smallholder sector in Guatemala;
- Supervision of vaccination and tagging activities in agricultural markets and at the borders of Guatemala with Belize, Honduras and El Salvador; and
- Supervision of border checkpoints and of trade in animals, meat and meat products at the borders of Honduras and El Salvador.

34. Development and immediate implementation of a regional emergency plan for the prevention and control of CSF in Guatemala and neighbouring countries.

35. In Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, education and vaccination campaigns to prevent avian diseases were conducted in 20 communities in the region.

36. Technical assistance was granted to Nicaragua for the development of the programme for the integrated management of the boll weevil (*Anthonomus grandis*).

6. Strengthening of national institutions in order to facilitate trade

37. With the support of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF)/WTO, STDF project 284, "Strengthening the Honduran National Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures", continues to be implemented. The document "An evaluation of the competitive capacity of strategic agrifood chains in Honduras to comply with the sanitary and phytosanitary regulations of international markets" has been prepared in recent months. The following training activities were organized: a specialized training course for instructors on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, a specialized national seminar on food safety, and a national seminar on "Multilateralism and trade treaties" and "Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures: the implications for trade".

38. Citrus Huanglongbing diagnostic capacity was strengthened in Honduras with the provision of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) equipment.

7. Strategic alliances for the promotion of health and trade

39. OIRSA signed a letter of understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to hold a regional workshop on the development of food safety emergency response plans, organized by the FAO, PAHO and OIRSA.

40. In response to the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) invitation, OIRSA participated in the open-ended workshop on the international movement of grain.

41. In its capacity as a Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO) under the IPPC, OIRSA took part in the Regional Workshop for the Review of Phytosanitary Surveillance in the Context of the IPPC Standard (International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 6): Identification of Challenges and Best Practice. OIRSA presented two instances of the application of ISPM No. 6: (1) the tomato leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*) surveillance programme and (2) the determination of *Ceratitis capitata* status by general surveillance procedures.

42. OIRSA participated in the regional meeting of coordinators of the IAEA/FAO regional technical cooperation project RLA/5/053 "Implementing a Diagnosis System to Assess the Impact of Pesticide Contamination in Food and Environmental Compartments at a Catchment Scale in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Region" (ARCAL CII).

43. A regional workshop on the development of food safety emergency response plans was organized by the FAO, PAHO and OIRSA.

44. OIRSA signed a cooperation agreement with the FAO for the development of educational material and health communication.

45. OIRSA signed a cooperation agreement (SENASA-OIRSA) with the citrus fruit industry and producers in Honduras.

46. In Honduras, OIRSA signed a technical cooperation agreement on export certification with the Honduran Federation of Agricultural Exporters (FPX) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG).

47. OIRSA participated in a World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Gap Analysis mission in the Dominican Republic.

48. In the context of the AI-Invest IV programme, at the third Exporter Encounter and in coordination with the El Salvador Exporters' Corporation (COEXPORT), OIRSA gave a presentation on food safety challenges in the immediate future.

49. OIRSA and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Agriculture signed a technical and financial cooperation agreement for the implementation of the prevention, rapid response and phytosanitary epidemiological surveillance programme for the tomato leafminer *Tuta absoluta*.

In order to comment on this report or obtain additional information on plant health activities, please contact: Edwin Aragón, e-mail: earagon@oirsa.org

For more information on food safety, please contact: Óscar García, e-mail: ogarcia@oirsa.org

For any queries on animal health activities, please contact: Abelardo de Gracia,
e-mail: adegracia@oirsapanama.org.pa

We invite you to visit our website: <http://www.oirsa.org>
