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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 56TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE
ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES
21 AND 22 MARCH 2013

The following communication, received on 16 March 2013, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. The updated food safety regulations of the United States of America (Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the European Union (DG-SANCO)), the Codex Alimentarius and the OIE were compiled and circulated to the OIRSA member countries.

1.2. Scientific and technical articles and information on food safety issued by the reference bodies, namely the Codex Alimentarius and the OIE Working Group on Food Safety, and the region's main trading partners were circulated.

1.3. In El Salvador, the first diploma course on apiculture was conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), the Salvadoran Exporters' Corporation (COEXPORT) under the AL INVEST programme, members of the honey chain and the Salvadoran Alberto Masferrer University (USAM), which acted as the accrediting institution. The course consisted of the following four modules: management, nutrition and health; queen rearing; apicultural safety; and marketing of honey bee hive products.

1.4. Three national assessment and strategic planning workshops for national organic production control systems were held in Honduras, in coordination with the Inter-American Commission for Organic Agriculture and the Organic Agriculture Department of the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA).

1.5. In Guatemala, the following four presentations were given in the framework of the First Congress of Central American Veterinary Surgeons, organized by the country's College of Veterinary Surgeons and Animal Husbandry Specialists: appropriate use of veterinary drugs, safety of and international regulations concerning animal products, European regulations on hydrobiological products, and the new international definitions of food safety issued by the Codex Alimentarius.

1.6. In Nicaragua, a workshop was held to define regional standards of animal welfare during the transport and slaughter of cattle, poultry and pigs.

1.7. In Nicaragua, a workshop was also held on European legislation on contaminants, such as aflatoxin, in peanuts and Codex Alimentarius standards for the prevention of mycotoxins in food.

1.8. In Costa Rica, the regional workshop on harmonization of the manual of good practices in the use of veterinary drugs and criteria for the application of the Central American Regional Technical Regulations on veterinary drugs and animal feed was held in coordination with the National Animal Health Service (SENASA).

1.9. In Guatemala, a training programme on the European Union's requirements in respect of veterinary drug residues and contaminants in animal products and on the Codex Alimentarius standards was conducted in coordination with the Food Safety Directorate of the Undersecretariat of Agricultural Health and Regulations (VISAR)/Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA); this programme was aimed at government officials, the food industry, distributors of veterinary drugs, the shrimp industry and the beekeeping sector.

1.10. In Panama, the regional seminar on bovine brucellosis and technical and socioeconomic aspects with a view to eradication of the disease in Central America was held jointly with the FAO and the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA). The seminar was attended by managers of the bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis control and eradication programmes in the National Veterinary Services of the OIRSA member countries; international economics and epidemiology experts from Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and the United Kingdom; and representatives of international technical and financial cooperation agencies (FAO, IICA, PAHO and OIE).

1.11. OIRSA is providing support for Panama's health authorities in meeting the requirements of the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) with a view to the marketing of poultry products in the United States.

1.12. The following documents were drafted and circulated to the various countries: a manual of good practices relating to fish; a manual of good practices concerning molluscs; a document on the pathology, diagnosis and control of the main pests and diseases affecting honey bees; a manual of good practices in the use of veterinary drugs; and four newsletters on veterinary drugs.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. In its capacity as a Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO), OIRSA attended the meeting of the Standards Committee of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as an observer.

2.2. At the IPPC's invitation, OIRSA attended the international workshop on electronic phytosanitary certification, held in Ciudad Victoria, Brazil.

2.3. The following results were achieved under the project being implemented by OIRSA with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on the definition of regional standards and public capacity building for the development and implementation of bovine traceability systems compatible between Central American countries: (1) a regional traceability standard, which has been agreed and approved; (2) a computerized system known as the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability (SARB), which has been successfully installed and adapted in Nicaragua and Belize; a regional study entitled "Analysis of the livestock chain, socioeconomic benefits of implementing bovine traceability systems in the countries of the region"; and draft bovine traceability regulations for Honduras.

3 SUPPORT FOR REGIONALIZATION (ESTABLISHMENT OF PEST-/DISEASE-FREE AND LOW-PREVALENCE AREAS, DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOCOLS FOR THEIR RECOGNITION)

3.1. In Nicaragua, technical and financial support is still being provided for the programme to maintain the area north of Lake Xolotlán as an area free from the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*).

3.2. In Nicaragua, technical and financial assistance is still being provided for the citrus leprosis-free area programme and the programme to maintain Nicaragua's status as a country free from the pink bollworm.

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

4.1. The regional emergency programme for the control of classical swine fever in Guatemala has been implemented, helping to keep the disease under control without further outbreaks and preventing it from spreading to neighbouring countries.

4.2. Pursuant to the decision adopted by the Ministers/Secretaries of Agriculture and Livestock of the OIRSA member countries to address the recent epidemic (epiphytotic) of coffee leaf rust, OIRSA has launched a regional programme in support of coffee leaf rust (*Hemileia vastatrix* Berk) control, and held a workshop in El Salvador to define measures for the phytosanitary management of coffee leaf rust, with the participation of the national managers of control programmes, representatives of coffee institutions and international experts.

4.3. The efforts made in coordination with the government authorities of Belize and Mexico and the support provided by the European Union in the form of a study on brucellosis and tuberculosis screening of herds in Belize have led to the first export of 44 head of live feeder and slaughter cattle from Belize to Mexico.

4.4. A study was carried out to determine the presence or absence of ovine and caprine brucellosis and tuberculosis and caprine arthritis/encephalitis in El Salvador. Moreover, a workshop on caprine and ovine management and determination of the presence or absence of any of these three diseases was held for technicians and specialists from the veterinary and animal health services of El Salvador's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

4.5. A regional simulation focusing on the main exotic diseases of animals and emergency systems and plans, especially for avian diseases, was conducted in Guatemala.

4.6. Under Project TCP/RLA 3311 (Support for OIRSA member countries in controlling Huanglongbing in citrus), a workshop was held in El Salvador on the management and capture of geographical data using the HLB-OIRSA tool (Geographical Information System (SIG)). This e-platform, to be administered by OIRSA, will make it possible to map the citrus crop situation and the quantitative incidence of HLB at regional level.

4.7. A field sheet for recognizing citrus Huanglongbing was also developed and phytosanitary HLB control campaigns were set up in the Dominican Republic and Panama, which will be using this control method, along with Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

4.8. In Nicaragua, technical and financial support is still being provided for the surveillance programme to prevent the entry of tomato leaf miner (*Tuta absoluta*).

5 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

5.1. Implemented with the support of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF/WTO), Project STDF/284 aimed at strengthening the National SPS Committee (CNMSF) of Honduras achieved the following results, amongst others:

- a. Implementation of the Committee's agenda.
- b. Greater prominence of the question of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures as a result of workshops and training involving key institutions and individuals such as the National Congress, business organizations, the National Competitiveness Commission, universities and the media, implementation of an outreach campaign through the written press, radio and television, production of outreach materials, and creation of the National Committee's website (<http://www.cnmsfhn.com>). All of the above have led to the allocation of a specific budget line for the operation of the Committee's Technical Secretariat.

- c. Drafting of proposals to enhance the proper application of SPS measures, such as: a policy for Honduras regarding sanitary and phytosanitary measures; evaluation of the economic impact of the application of sanitary measures on trade in strategic products of animal origin; evaluation of the economic impact of the application of phytosanitary measures on trade in strategic products of plant origin; evaluation of the competitive capacity of strategic agrifood chains in Honduras to comply with the sanitary and phytosanitary regulations in international markets; strengthening of the National Committee's institutional structure, medium-term plan and investment project; proposals for revising current legislation and a proposal for the drafting of new legal instruments; reform project for incorporating the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in undergraduate university curricula in Honduras; proposal for the organization and operation of the agricultural and animal health risk analysis unit to be established in the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA); and a method for following up and evaluating the proper application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.
- d. Organization of specialized seminars and workshops on: food safety, the programme for the control of pesticide residues in fresh fruit, application to aquaculture products of the hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP) system, IPPC standards with an emphasis on the application of ISPM-15, coffee leaf rust, health risk analysis, bovine traceability, socialization of Honduras' SPS policy, specialized SPS courses for facilitators, multilateralism and trade agreements, Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, SPS measures and their impact on the eligibility of Honduran products in international markets, and socialization of the proposal for a higher education curriculum including SPS measures, trade dispute settlement, transparency, and competitiveness and agrifood chains.

6 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

6.1. In El Salvador, a technical and financial cooperation agreement was signed between OIRSA and the Government of Chinese Taipei with a view to implementing the project entitled "Regional strengthening of the OIRSA region in matters involving HLB control and implementation of integrated citrus pest management". The project will enable OIRSA countries to benefit from Chinese Taipei's 60 years of experience in controlling the disease, as well as in setting up and putting into operation two regional germplasm banks and five nurseries for the production of healthy plants.

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