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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,
16 AND 18 OCTOBER 2013

The following communication, received on 12 October 2013, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. OIRSA, together with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), FAO and IICA, coordinated a regional workshop on risk management of campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis in chicken meat, in order to strengthen the management of programmes for the control and prevention of these diseases in the poultry production chain. Officials from ten countries (nine OIRSA members and Cuba) and technicians from Panamanian and Honduran private enterprises in the poultry sector took part.

1.2. In coordination with the Food Safety Department (DEPA) at the Panamanian Ministry of Health, OIRSA held a workshop in Panama on monitoring veterinary drug residues and on reviewing procedures for the inspection and control of fishing boats.

1.3. In Honduras, as part of the project to strengthen safety certification schemes for agricultural products from small and medium-sized producers and in coordination with the Food Safety Division and the Plant Phytosanitary Certification Programme (PROCEFVE/SAVE) of the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA), OIRSA ran an advanced course on good agricultural practices (GAP), which was attended by 89 Honduran enterprises. Four training sessions were also given on good manufacturing practices (GMP) and sanitary control procedures (SCPs) for the fishing and aquaculture sectors.

1.4. In Guatemala, OIRSA, in coordination with the Vice-Ministry of Agricultural Health and Regulations attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (VISAR/MAGA), and officials from the Hydrobiological Commission of the Guatemalan Exporters Association (AGEXPORT), held a seminar on hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) for fishery and aquaculture products: new guidelines of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

1.5. 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. This information was shared with officials from the public and private sector (producers, processors, exporters, trade unions and associations) and from academia.

1.6. OIRSA coordinated a technological mission to Colombia for countries of the region, focusing on successful experiences in the control of coffee rust (*Hemileia vastatrix* Berk), and organized a technological mission from the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation to visit OIRSA member countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) and interview producers, representatives of coffee institutions and Ministries of Agriculture.

1.7. At the OIRSA headquarters in San Salvador, officials from the National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) in OIRSA member countries were given training on the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures on pest risk analysis (ISPMs 02/2007 and 11/2004) and phytosanitary certification (ISPMs 07/2011 and 12/2011).

1.8. Mexico held a workshop for OIRSA member countries on using the PCR technique to detect Huanglongbing (HLB) in citrus fruits. The FAO-OIRSA project on HLB funded the participation of nine technicians specialized in monitoring and controlling HLB in OIRSA member countries in the International Workshop on Citrus Quarantine Pests.

1.9. As part of OIRSA's HLB joint project with the International Cooperation and Development Foundation (Chinese Taipei), phytosanitary experts advised producers and technicians from the OIRSA region on using technology from Chinese Taipei to control HLB and its vector.

1.10. In Panama City, training sessions were given on field identification, laboratory diagnosis and the application of phytosanitary surveillance of *Fusarium guttiforme*, and were attended by pineapple producers, exporters and traders.

1.11. OIRSA financed the participation of veterinary drug registration officials from the region in seminars on quality control of veterinary biologicals, good manufacturing practices for animal feed and safety of veterinary drugs, organized by the Committee of the Americas for Veterinary Medicines (CAMEVET/OIE) in Panama. The manual of good practices in the use of veterinary drugs was presented and distributed at the event.

1.12. OIRSA funded the participation of officials from the public sector and academia in a training course on bee traceability and developments in the control of the small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*), held in Mexico.

1.13. As part of the project on the harmonized system of bovine traceability in Central America, Belize, Panama and the Dominican Republic (BID-OIRSA) the following activities were carried out in El Salvador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic: a presentation on the technical equipment used in a pilot project to control cattle movements; an induction day on the development of a regulatory framework, an implementation plan and support tools for the establishment of the official bovine traceability system; and a session on using and applying a single format to record cattle movements, and the importance of controlling movements for traceability purposes.

1.14. As part of the Regional Avian Disease Programme (PREA) and the Regional Health Programme for Backyard Poultry (PRESAAT), funded by the Chinese Taipei Government, OIRSA organized 12 training events in El Salvador and Guatemala on poultry management and health and a training workshop on biosecurity for farm directors and managers. Five education, health communication and vaccination campaigns were carried out in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

1.15. A simulation exercise on Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS) was undertaken in Nicaragua and involved lectures and field activities.

1.16. In Belize, El Salvador and Guatemala, OIRSA trained quarantine officials to manage the regional early warning quarantine system.

1.17. In El Salvador, OIRSA's International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) organized regional courses on pest risk analysis and aircraft inspection.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. OIRSA and its member countries are in the process of formalizing regional regulations for the certification of citrus fruit nurseries. The Dominican Republic is the first country to have published these regulations under Decree No. 238-13 of 15 August 2013.

2.2. Under the FAO-OIRSA technical cooperation project TCP/RLA 3311, a manual on taking, forwarding and processing samples for the detection of HLB and a protocol for monitoring the HLB vector insect were drawn up for the OIRSA member countries. A manual on collecting, forwarding and processing samples for the diagnosis of HLB (*Candidatus Liberibacter* spp) in leaves and the presence of associated bacteria in the vector insect, and a field sheet were also prepared.

2.3. OIRSA and 200 delegates (OIE focal points, public and production sectors and academia) attended the 6th meeting of the OIE Aquatic Animals Commission on facilitating cooperation between production sectors, the public sector and academia in the field of aquaculture health, held in Mérida, Mexico.

2.4. Pursuant to the agreement on the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability in Central America, Belize, Panama and the Dominican Republic (BID-OIRSA), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and the Dominican Republic were provided with individual identification and data reading devices and equipment for cattle. Through the sale of these tools, OIRSA will create a revolving fund in order to sustain the programme.

2.5. OIRSA and its member countries established a panel of experts in order to compile a list of quarantine pests in the OIRSA region.

2.6. OIRSA held a regional workshop for the revision of draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM-IPPC). It also financed the participation of a delegate from the National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) of OIRSA member countries in the regional workshop for Latin America and the Caribbean organized by the Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs).

2.7. OIRSA drew up a contingency plan for an outbreak of *Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. Cubense* tropical race four in an OIRSA member country.

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

3.1. OIRSA provided technical assistance to the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Ministries of Agriculture, in order to develop a protocol on exports of fresh tomatoes from Costa Rica to Nicaragua.

3.2. Under the FAO-OIRSA technical cooperation project TCP/RLA 3311 to assist OIRSA member countries with the control of Huanglongbing in citrus fruits, an early warning IT platform was created to map citrus plantations and detect the presence of HLB and its vector insect. The system is based on the use of smartphones, yellow traps and QR codes. This technology, which is designed to facilitate decision making in the control of HLB and its vector, could also be applied to other pests and crops. The platform will indicate areas that are HLB-infected, HLB-free, or that have a low prevalence of the disease on the regional map.

3.3. 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*), the citrus leprosis-free area programme and the programme to maintain Nicaragua's status as a country free from the pink bollworm.

3.4. In Honduras, procedures to gain recognition of the Aguan Valley as an area free from the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*) are on-going. The technical file was accordingly submitted to the authorities in Mexico and the United States to enable both countries to recognize the area's pest-free status.

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

4.1. With the participation of the Ministries of Agriculture of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, a monitoring programme using trapping and exploration techniques for the early detection of the "tomato leaf miner" (*Tuta absoluta*) was introduced in the countries of the region. Field sheets on the tomato leaf miner and the *Bactericera cockerelli* - *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* complex were also prepared.

4.2. OIRSA, in coordination with technical staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in El Salvador, who organized the national campaign against coffee rust, gave a workshop on establishing the epidemiological surveillance circuit through the creation of sentinel plots in the coffee-growing area of El Salvador.

4.3. In connection with the implementation of the regional programme to provide support for the control of coffee rust, OIRSA presented an early warning system model to coffee institutions and the Ministries of Agriculture of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic, which takes into account the epidemiology of coffee rust, the phenology of coffee plants and relevant climate variables. OIRSA also drew up a protocol to establish sentinel plots for coffee rust surveillance in its member countries.

4.4. OIRSA, in coordination with the Honduran Coffee Institute, held a workshop to plan a communication campaign on integrated management of the coffee berry borer in Honduras. Furthermore, a seminar on coffee rust and outreach activities in Colombia was organized together with the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation and was attended by producers, technicians, directors and other actors in the coffee chain in Honduras.

4.5. OIRSA funded the participation of member countries in a workshop on laboratory twinning. Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and staff from the OIE and the World Reference Laboratory in Hannover, Germany, took part.

4.6. In coordination with authorities from its member countries, OIRSA developed a regional emergency plan for the prevention, control and eradication of the early mortality syndrome (EMS) in shrimps.

5 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

5.1. With the support of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF/WTO), OIRSA launched the draft regional veterinary legislation project (STDF/PG/358) for OIRSA member countries. The aim of the project is for OIRSA member countries to include necessary technical elements in their legislation to strengthen their national veterinary services through the development of programmes to control and eradicate selected diseases (in accordance with OIE standards). The project is being carried out with the support and cooperation of the OIE and FAO.

5.2. OIRSA supported the participation of three delegates from National Codex Alimentarius Committees in the 36th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and at meetings of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), and also the participation of OIRSA's Food Safety Regional Coordination. Health authorities belonging to the National Codex Committees of Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic took part in the event which was held in Rome, Italy.

5.3. With the help of the Netherlands CBI project, the Salvadoran Exporters Corporation (COEXPORT), the Association of Producers and Exporters of Nicaragua (APEN) and the Guatemalan Exporters Association (AGEXPORT), OIRSA coordinated the second working group meeting for the marketing of honey and apiculture products in the European Union, which was attended by enterprises from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and by producer and exporter associations.

5.4. Within the framework of the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability in Central America, Belize, Panama and the Dominican Republic (ATN/OC-11843-RG), dissemination and communication materials (posters, banners, roll-up banners, leaflets, maps, etc.)

were produced as support tools for training and promotional activities relating to official bovine traceability systems. Audio-visual communication, dissemination and training tools (traceability videos) were also developed in order to raise awareness and provide training on the implementation of the official traceability systems.

6 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

6.1. For the benefit of the Ministries of Agriculture of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama and the Dominican Republic, and also producers of *Solanaceae*, OIRSA carried out a joint project with the Antonio Narro Agricultural University in Mexico to research the *Bactericera cockerelli* - *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* complex in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama and the Dominican Republic and to establish sentinel plots in Nicaragua.

6.2. OIRSA provided technical and financial support for a study on determining the presence or absence of American foulbrood in El Salvador, with the participation of the public sector and the Salvadoran Alberto Masferrer University (USAM). The second certification programme on apicultural health, safety and production, targeted at producers, was also conducted jointly with the University.

6.3. In July, an agreement was signed between OIRSA and the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) on cooperation in biosecurity initiatives.

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