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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,  
25 AND 26 MARCH 2014

The following communication, received on 18 March 2014, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. Between October 2013 and January 2014, as part of the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability programme implemented by OIRSA with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), training was given to producers and technicians from Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic to raise awareness of the importance of implementing an official bovine traceability system. Training was provided on the use of official individual identification devices and radio frequency-operated electronic device readers.

1.2. From October 2013 to February 2014, under the auspices of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei agreement "Regional Health Programme for Backyard Poultry (PRESAAT)", 15 training events on poultry management and health were organized for small-scale producers in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama.

1.3. Officials from the OIRSA Regional Agricultural Quarantine Programme organized two training courses on quarantine treatment for 70 technicians from the Guatemalan International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC).

1.4. From 14 to 18 October 2013, in the district of Aguadulce, Panama, OIRSA, in coordination with the Food Safety Department (DEPA) of the Ministry of Health (MINSA), gave a seminar in preparation for the FVO/DG-SANCO audit on veterinary drug residues and contaminants in live animals and animal products. Fifty-eight people, including technicians and producers, participated in the event.

1.5. Under Mexico's OIRSA/SENASICA agreement, a workshop on quality management and the validation of analytical methods was held from 14 to 18 October 2013 in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. It was attended by representatives from animal health laboratories in the nine countries of the region.

1.6. In Panama, from 21 to 25 October 2013, OIRSA officials made inspection visits to six aquaculture sector companies in relation to the implementation of the HACCP system and veterinary drug residues and contaminants.

1.7. Under the agreement between OIRSA and the Australian Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAFF), two intensive courses were held in El Salvador from 22 October to 1 November 2013. The courses were led by Australian experts, who trained 60 quarantine

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technicians from throughout the OIRSA region on the application of the AQIS Methyl Bromide Fumigation Standard.

1.8. With a view to building capacity to deal with the spread of the citrus disease Huanglongbing (HLB), and within the framework of the conclusion of the TCP/RLA/3311 project, OIRSA, with the support of FAO, organised a workshop to support OIRSA member countries in controlling citrus HLB. This workshop was held in Costa Rica in October 2013 and was attended by 35 producers.

1.9. From November 2013 to January 2014, OIRSA officials provided training for Panamanian technicians and exporting producers on the field identification, laboratory diagnosis and epidemiological monitoring of *Fusarium guttiforme*, a quarantine pest affecting pineapple crops.

1.10. From 6 to 14 November 2013, public and private sector producers from Belize, El Salvador and Guatemala participated in OIRSA-led apiary assessment technical visits and apiculture training days.

1.11. At the 23<sup>rd</sup> Latin American Poultry Farming Congress, organized by *Aves de El Salvador* and held from 12 to 15 November 2013, OIRSA, through its Food Safety Department, gave a keynote address on the Codex Alimentarius and its importance for the poultry farming sector.

1.12. OIRSA sponsored the participation of nine veterinary drug registration officials from its member countries and ten representatives from the Central American veterinary industry in a regional workshop for the preparation, discussion and harmonization of a draft Central American Technical Regulation on veterinary drugs and related products, sanitary registration requirements and control. The event was held in Panama on 26 and 27 November 2013.

1.13. In Nicaragua, 35 technicians from the Seed Certification Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry participated in a workshop on the treatment of seed-borne diseases, which was held from 26 to 28 November 2013.

1.14. In Honduras, OIRSA sponsored a training event on bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis. Thirty-two public sector veterinary surgeons attended the event, which was held from 26 to 29 November 2013.

1.15. In Nicaragua, from 2 to 4 December 2013, OIRSA, in coordination with the Food Safety and Animal Health Directorates of the Directorate-General of Agricultural Protection and Health (DGPSA), provided training on European legislation and the scope of the FVO/DG-SANCO audit on veterinary drug residues and contaminants in live animals and animal products, and the use of the European Union's TRACES system. The event was attended by 21 public and private sector officials from the shrimp farming and natural honey sectors.

1.16. OIRSA, with the financial support of Chinese Taipei, organized a major convention on coffee leaf rust, which was held from 9 to 13 December 2013 in Honduras. The event was attended by 150 people, including regional producers and technicians, who were given training on coffee plant health with special emphasis on the control of coffee leaf rust (*Hemileia vastatrix* Berk et Br.).

1.17. From 10 to 13 December 2013 in Honduras, 37 officials received training on the four rules proposed in the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, i.e. agricultural product safety, preventive controls for human food, the foreign supplier verification programme, and the certification of accredited third parties. The officials also attended an advanced course on good manufacturing practices (GMP) and HACCP.

1.18. OIRSA sponsored epidemiological training for 34 public and private sector epidemiologists and veterinary surgeons from Guatemala. The event was held from 10 to 14 January 2014.

1.19. OIRSA, with the support of experts from Chinese Taipei, trained 20 producers from El Salvador and 35 from Panama on citrus HLB control. The training event was held in both countries from 12 to 24 January 2014.

1.20. Between 13 and 25 January 2014, OIRSA, in coordination with the Food Safety Department of the Panamanian Ministry of Health (DEPA/MINSA), conducted pre-audit visits for fishery and aquaculture products in preparation for two European Union audits of the competent authority (DEPA). The pre-audit focused on fishery product hygiene and veterinary drug residues and contaminants in live animals and animal products.

1.21. Sixty quarantine technicians from Belize participated in two training courses on quarantine treatment which were held from 27 January to 1 February 2014.

1.22. In Guatemala, from 15 to 17 February 2014, OIRSA held a regional course on pig farm biosafety which was attended by 21 participants, including regional pig farmers and public sector professionals, from various countries.

1.23. In Guatemala, from 25 to 27 February 2014, OIRSA conducted a simulation exercise on small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) outbreaks in OIRSA member countries. Twenty-five public, private and academic sector technicians from the region participated in the event.

## 2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. In October and November 2013, as part of the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability programme, regional workshops were held in the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic to prepare and revise technical manuals and procedures for the application of the Regional Bovine Traceability Standard.

2.2. From October 2013 to March 2014, the updated food safety regulations of the United States (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 OIRSA member countries.

2.3. OIRSA has established regional regulations for the certification of citrus fruit nurseries. The initiative provides the basis for improved and more technically-advanced citrus farming that is prepared for controlling citrus HLB and other diseases transmitted through grafting. From October 2013 to March 2014, a number of OIRSA member countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Panama and Guatemala, approved these regulations by national decree or resolution.

2.4. OSPESCA<sup>1</sup>/OIRSA Regulation No. 001-2013 for the prevention, control and eradication of disease in farmed shrimp in OIRSA countries and the SICA<sup>2</sup> was approved at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Special Session of the International Regional Committee for Plant and Animal Health (CIRSA), OIRSA's highest body. The OIRSA Extended Technical Commission (animal health directors, OSPESCA) also participated in the event, as did heads of aquaculture unions and associations.

2.5. On 13 November 2013, OIRSA held an online training course for 30 people on the application of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) Nos. 17-2002 and 19-2003. On 26 November 2013, 22 people were trained to use the IPPC Online Comment System (OCS) so as to be able to make comments on ISPMs.

2.6. On 17 February 2014, OIRSA, in conjunction with the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), held a preparatory regional workshop for the Ninth Session of the IPPC Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-9), which will take place in Rome, Italy. The event was attended by representatives from the ministries and secretariats of agriculture of all the countries in the OIRSA region. Also present at the workshop were Ana María Peralta and Sonya Hammons, IPPC training officials, who spoke to the participants about highly relevant matters such as the various types of CPM documents that exist and how to revise them, issues on the CPM agenda, how and why they should consult on national positions, how and why they should strengthen a regional strategy, how and why they should make written comments and oral statements, and the coordination of meetings during the CPM.

<sup>1</sup> Organization for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA).

<sup>2</sup> Central American Integration System (SICA).

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

3.1. From 27 November to 14 December 2013, OIRSA provided support to its member countries during an audit on the level of compliance of the activities scheduled in the 2013 Road Map, which seek to ensure the international recognition of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama as countries free of classical swine fever (CSF) in 2014-2015.

3.2. OIRSA drafted a proposal for the Guatemalan authorities on the compartmentalization of farms for CSF.

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

4.1. In October 2013, as part of the ICDF-OIRSA project on strengthening HLB control and the implementation of integrated citrus pest management (IPM), OIRSA began building covered greenhouses, using technology from Chinese Taipei, in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic. The aim is to produce the highest number of healthy plants in the shortest time possible with a view to replacing citrus trees infected with HLB.

4.2. OIRSA prepared a protocol for the monitoring of *Diaphorina citri kuwayama* (HLB vector) in the following four scenarios: (1) Detection of the presence of *Diaphorina citri*; (2) Detection of populations infected with the HLB bacteria; (3) Determination of the population trend of the vector during the course of the year; and (4) Detection of infestation outbreaks in commercial orchards. Furthermore, with a view to providing relevant information prior to the sampling of psyllids and plant material, and to serve as a guide for the description of sample-taking and forwarding procedures and laboratory diagnosis procedures for the detection of HLB, OIRSA prepared a manual on the collection, forwarding and processing of samples for the diagnosis of HLB in leaves and the presence of associated bacteria in the vector insect.

4.3. OIRSA collaborated with the poultry sector in El Salvador and Panama to gather sanitary information for the eligibility of poultry products in the international market.

4.4. From 20 to 24 January 2014, in Guatemala, OIRSA, with the support of experts from Chinese Taipei, held a workshop on diagnosing citrus HLB using molecular technology. The workshop was attended by 30 technicians.

4.5. OIRSA is supporting member countries with their tomato leaf miner (*Tuta absoluta*) monitoring programmes which use trapping and exploration techniques for the early detection of the pest. Field sheets on the tomato leaf miner and the *Bactericera cockerelli* - *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* complex were also prepared.

4.6. In accordance with an International Regional Committee for Plant and Animal Health (CIRSA) mandate emanating from CIRSA's 48<sup>th</sup> Special Session, held in Honduras on 11 August 2011, and with a view to ensuring the coherence of phytosanitary programmes on the control of Mediterranean fruit fly and other fruit flies, 25 technicians participated in a regional meeting on the control of the fruit fly complex, which was held in Belize on 14 November 2013.

### 5 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

5.1. From October to December 2013, as part of the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability programme, OIRSA provided technical support to Panama (Law No. 104), the Dominican Republic (Ministerial Agreement No. 82-2013) and Guatemala (Executive Decree) in relation to the establishment of a national livestock traceability programme.

5.2. With the support of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), OIRSA is implementing a regional veterinary legislation project (STDF/PG/358) for OIRSA member countries, under which a regional seminar on veterinary legislation was held in San Salvador from 9 to 11 December 2013. The seminar was organized in conjunction with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the

United Nations (FAO) and OIRSA and was attended by 49 animal health and veterinary legislation officials from all the member countries.

5.3. On 28 February 2014, as part of the Harmonized System for Bovine Traceability programme, an educational video was launched on the importance of traceability. This material serves as support for traceability training and awareness-raising activities in countries in the OIRSA region. Furthermore, the first edition of the regional traceability journal (First edition: The Regional Bovine Traceability Standard) was issued in January 2014.

## **6 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE**

6.1. On 15 November 2013, OIRSA and the Mexican Food and Development Research Centre (CIAD) signed a general cooperation agreement on the scientific, academic and technological strengthening of aquacultural diagnosis laboratories in the OIRSA region.

6.2. On 29 January 2014, in Barcelona, Spain, OIRSA signed a technical cooperation agreement with the autonomous government of Catalonia, with a view to promoting the strengths of both regions in terms of agricultural health.

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

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