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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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**PHYTOSANITARY EMERGENCY PLAN AGAINST FRUIT FLIES IN THE CITY
OF VILLA REGINA, PROVINCE OF RIO NEGRO, ARGENTINA**

COMMUNICATION FROM ARGENTINA

The following communication, received on 28 July 2015, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Argentina.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1. The Argentine Patagonia region has been a fruit fly-free area since 2006. It is composed of the districts of Villarino and Patagones in the province of Buenos Aires, sections XXIV and XXV of the department of Puelén and section V of the department of Caleu Caleu in the province of La Pampa, and the provinces of Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz, and Tierra del Fuego, Argentine Antarctica and the South Atlantic Islands.

1.2. The fruit fly-free status brings with it important advantages and benefits for the production and export sectors, as well as a series of obligations to ensure that this status is maintained.

1.3. Domestic legislation, through Resolution No. 152/2006 of the National Agriculture and Food Quality and Health Service (SENASA), sets out the procedures to follow in the event of the appearance of fruit flies in a free area. These procedures form the "Phytosanitary Emergency Plan for Fruit Fly-Free Areas", which has two main aims:

- to prevent the spread of the outbreak to the rest of the free area, thereby maintaining its status;
- to provide security to destination markets with regard to the host fruit marketed under the free-area status.

2 EMERGENCY PLAN IN THE CITY OF VILLA REGINA

2.1. The fruit fly programme in the Argentine Patagonia region has a trapping network made up of 2,500 traps that are checked on a weekly basis.

2.2. On 17 March 2015, following the confirmation of repeated Mediterranean fruit fly catches in a trap in the urban area of Villa Regina, SENASA launched a Phytosanitary Emergency Plan by means of Resolution No. 98/2015.

2.3. A regulated area with a 7.2 km radius was established around the epicentre of detection (latitude = -39.1064649, longitude = -67.0850325) and field operations, quarantine control and production monitoring were initiated.

2.4. The trap network was strengthened, with the establishment of five concentric working areas over a total of 9,216 hectares. This enabled the development of the outbreak to be observed and the monitoring activities to be managed.

2.5. Sterile fly release was stepped up, focusing on dwellings near the outbreak, and insecticide bait was applied to trees in urban and residential areas. Host fruit was intensely sampled to check for possible larval foci, and all potentially affected fruit within a radius of 200 metres was withdrawn and destroyed.

2.6. At the same time, the declaration of the emergency was publicized, along with the restrictions in force regarding the transportation of fruit applicable to producers and transporters and packing and/or refrigeration establishments in the regulated area. In addition, press releases targeted at the general community were issued.

2.7. Regarding the quarantine regulations, control posts have been established and the phytosanitary measures applicable to the host fruit produced in the regulated area have been defined. Furthermore, an IT system (SIG-TRAZA) ensures traceability of the origin of the host fruit, thereby reducing the risk of dispersion of the pest to the rest of the free area and providing more solid guarantees to third countries.

2.8. During the first few weeks of the control efforts, intensified trapping led to the detection of more adult Mediterranean fruit flies, bring the total number of specimens to 88, and two larval samples were found at private addresses in urban areas. The most recent catch was recorded on 2 June 2015.

2.9. The 14 weeks that have elapsed since the start of the emergency have witnessed the release of a total of 27.6 million sterile pupae in the regulated area, the destruction of more than 7,000 kilograms of fruit from 149 urban addresses and the point-source application of low-environmental-impact insecticide bait.

2.10. The activities undertaken are set to continue until the theoretical life cycle of the insect, as set out in the regulations in force, is concluded and the Emergency Plan is lifted.

2.11. It should be noted that this Emergency Plan guarantees the phytosanitary safety of Argentine products and does not affect usual trade flows, including to markets that have fruit-fly restrictions in place.
