



13 October 2017

(17-5538)

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: Spanish

**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
JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2017

The following communication, received on 13 October 2017, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. An online training course on plant production systems was held for safety auditors and was attended by 152 participants from the OIRSA region and other Latin American countries.

1.2. In conjunction with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), OIRSA organized the second online course for training trainers in good livestock, manufacturing and HACCP practices (in relation to cattle, pigs and poultry). The course was attended by 461 participants from the countries of the OIRSA region and other Latin American countries.

1.3. A joint OSPESCA-OIRSA videoconference launched the process of circulation and dissemination of OIRSA's work in developing online courses and good practice manuals for small-scale maritime fisheries, good aquaculture practices aboard small vessels and good manufacturing practices.

1.4. OIRSA produced videographic materials on the safety of hydrobiological products, filming tilapia and shrimp farms run by cutting-edge firms that export to the United States, Europe, Japan, Mexico and Central America. All these recordings are among the support materials to be used in the online course on good aquaculture practices currently being developed.

1.5. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, a training day on Huanglongbing (HLB) management and prevention and healthy citrus plant production systems was organized for 30 students from the University of Panama's Faculty of Agronomy.

1.6. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, a training event on integrated management of citrus HLB was held for 82 citrus fruit growers, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador.

1.7. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, a technical and practical training course on proper application of the technical standard on phytosanitary certification of citrus propagation material (NTON-11 038-13) was provided for 20 technical personnel of Nicaragua's Institute for Agricultural and Livestock Protection and Health (IPSA).

1.8. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, OIRSA ran a training event with support from the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) of Honduras for 70 citrus fruit growers, nursery gardeners and technical personnel. The focus was essentially on topics relating to the production of healthy plants, IPM, and phytosanitary diagnosis and surveillance.

1.9. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, OIRSA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) of Guatemala jointly coordinated and conducted a field day on integrated HLB management for some 30 first-year agronomy students from the Central National School of Agriculture (ENCA).

1.10. The first online course on integrated citrus HLB management, aimed at building capacity in the technical, biosafety and technological aspects of HLB management and the production of healthy citrus plants, was organized in OIRSA's virtual classroom for citrus fruit growers, nursery gardeners and technical personnel from the various Ministries or Secretariats of Agriculture of the OIRSA region, South America and the Caribbean. More than 1,100 people registered for the course.

1.11. An international regional meeting on HLB was held in Honduras under the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, bringing together world-class experts with proven experience in the production of healthy citrus plants, HLB diagnosis and integrated HLB management, who provided technical assistance for more than 90 technical personnel involved in national HLB programmes in Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

1.12. Jointly with IPSA and with support from Mexico's National Agriculture and Food Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA) and the FAO, OIRSA ran a workshop on epidemiological surveillance systems and phytosanitary simulation exercises on coffee leaf rust and *Tuta absoluta* in tomato crops, aimed at 40 technical personnel from all over the country.

1.13. A regional workshop on the establishment and validation of animal and plant health risk maps and climatic variables was held in El Salvador in order to develop clear and timely measures for the prevention and control of, and adaptation to, pests and diseases resulting from climate change. Training was provided for 32 technical personnel from the various OIRSA countries.

1.14. OIRSA took part as a panelist in Colombia's 7th Banana Technical Congress to ensure preparedness of the Mesoamerican region against the threat of banana Fusarium wilt (Foc TR4) and to draw up courses of action for the regional task force set up by OIRSA, together with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) and Mexico's SENASICA, to evaluate exclusion and outbreak management systems.

1.15. In August and September, awareness-raising talks on the importance of epidemiological surveillance in relation to vesicular diseases and cattle screwworm were attended by veterinarians and producers from Belize and Guatemala.

1.16. In August, OIRSA held a refresher course on cross-border diseases for agricultural quarantine officials in the Dominican Republic.

1.17. In September, it gave a refresher course on cross-border animal diseases for Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA) personnel in Honduras.

1.18. An international workshop on building capacity to respond to health emergencies (GEMP), jointly organized by OIRSA, the FAO and APHIS-USDA, was held in Antigua, Guatemala, in August. The workshop was attended by veterinarians from the veterinary services of Belize, El Salvador and Guatemala.

1.19. An online course on shrimp diagnostic methods, using the OIRSA platform, was held from 24 July to 1 September. The course was attended and successfully completed by 201 students.

1.20. The third online course on epidemiological surveillance in shrimp farming, using the OIRSA platform and bringing together 233 students, began on 11 September and is still ongoing.

1.21. Together with the OIE, OIRSA ran a workshop in Panama on legislation and biological threat reduction, aimed at strengthening biological threat reduction capabilities, contributing to the drafting of legislative proposals, and following up and supporting the commitments undertaken by the region's veterinary authorities.

1.22. OIRSA delivered a talk entitled "Follow-up to the Programme for the Progressive Control of Brucellosis and Bovine Tuberculosis in Central American Countries" at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Central American Federation of the Dairy Sector (FECALAC).

1.23. Final-year students of veterinary medicine at Nicaragua's National Agrarian University (UNA) received training in the Codex Alimentarius and WTO sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

1.24. OIRSA gave a talk during the course on biosafety measures in the event of an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, organized by IPSA in Nicaragua. The course was attended by 60 animal health professionals and technical personnel.

1.25. Also in Nicaragua, technical support was provided for IPSA's national simulation exercise on highly pathogenic avian influenza. Forty IPSA veterinarians took part.

1.26. OIRSA gave a talk on the role of veterinarians in the 21st century to veterinary medicine and animal husbandry students and lecturers at the University of San Carlos of Guatemala (USAC), as well as professionals from the College of Veterinary Surgeons.

1.27. A virtual meeting was held with the directors of veterinary services of the OIRSA member countries to define regional support measures for the prevention and control of diseases of concern to these countries.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. The 16th meeting to review draft International Standards of Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) submitted by the IPPC for comments took place in El Salvador and was attended by officials from Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic.

2.2. OIRSA participated in the 2017 IPPC Regional Workshop for Latin America, held in Peru, which reviewed and provided first comments on draft ISPMs. The workshop was also attended by the Southern Cone Plant Protection Committee (COSAVE), the Andean Community and the IICA, among others.

2.3. OIRSA took an active part in a National Codex Alimentarius Committee meeting in El Salvador to examine and put forward draft standards with a view to the 40th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 17 to 22 July 2017.

2.4. The health authorities of Guatemala's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) received support in preparing and delivering two draft ministerial decisions on the National Programme for the Progressive Control of Brucellosis and Bovine Tuberculosis, drawn up on the basis of regulatory proposals resulting from Project STDF/PG/358 and decisions adopted by the MAGA/ASODEL/OIRSA working group.

2.5. Regional guidelines on the inspection of broiler chicken facilities were adopted at the meeting of the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health (CTRSA) and the Federation of Poultry Farmers of Central America and the Caribbean (FEDAVICAC).

2.6. The 5th meeting of the technical group on plant and animal health and food safety (SAIA) of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) was held to discuss regulatory proposals for the progressive control of brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis resulting from Project STDF/PG/358.

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

3.1. OIRSA assisted Honduras in identifying the yellow sorghum aphid pest and its natural enemies, carrying out field visits and providing on-site training for more than 60 technical personnel and producers in the main sorghum and millet production areas.

3.2. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project in Honduras, a technical meeting, bringing together about 150 Honduran citrus fruit growers, nursery gardeners and traders, was organized jointly with Ministry of Agriculture officials to discuss marketing and HLB control.

3.3. Three sanitary warnings were issued in support of measures to prevent the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) at the countries' ports of entry and to strengthen epidemiological surveillance.

3.4. In El Salvador, FMD update sessions were held for agricultural quarantine personnel of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, with an emphasis on survival and resistance of the virus and its response to the use of disinfectants.

3.5. Guatemala received technical advice on products of animal origin and their marketing according to the OIE's risk criteria, adjusted to the realities of the region.

3.6. Technical support was provided for Guatemala's activities to eradicate low-pathogenicity H5N2 avian influenza.

3.7. El Salvador received technical support to develop a sampling design for determining the presence or absence of low-pathogenicity H5N2 avian influenza.

3.8. Honduras was given technical support in developing random sampling designs for detecting Newcastle disease and avian influenza.

3.9. Ten mist nets for vampire bats were provided to assist Belize in its paralytic rabies control and epidemiological surveillance activities.

3.10. OIRSA provided the official veterinary services of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua with diagnostic kits for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and animal proteins in feed.

3.11. Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama received support in obtaining ELISA diagnostic kits for the detection of antibodies against classical swine fever (CSF).

3.12. OIRSA helped Panama establish a work schedule for the "Dr Gerardino Medina H." veterinary diagnostic and research laboratory (LADIV), with a view to setting up an equine encephalitis diagnostic service for the OIRSA member countries.

3.13. In conjunction with the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA), OIRSA arranged for bovine paralytic rabies diagnostic conjugates to be obtained for Guatemala's laboratory.

3.14. OIRSA continued to support CSF epidemiological surveillance activities in Guatemala and provided assistance in compiling the dossier that will be used to apply for OIE recognition of the country as free from the disease.

4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. In August and September, OIRSA assisted the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) of El Salvador with the evaluation of sampling and microbiological analysis of fluid milk and dairy produce entering the country.

4.2. With the help of SENASICA's National Reference Centre for Pesticides and Contaminants (Mexico), OIRSA drew up a questionnaire to assess the situation of laboratories run by the member countries' Ministries and Secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock, with a view to defining a strategy in support of their development.

4.3. In El Salvador, OIRSA participated in a meeting of the National Bacterial Resistance Committee, headed by the Ministry of Public Health, to promote strategies for action under the National Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance in agri-food systems and animal health, including the rational use of antibiotics in animal health and agriculture.

4.4. In Honduras, OIRSA provided technical assistance on meat inspection in export abattoirs slaughtering animals with lesions suspected of being induced by bovine tuberculosis. Veterinarians and technical personnel of the National Agricultural Safety Service (SENASA) received training on the subject.

4.5. OIRSA took part in a working session organized by the Vice-Minister of Plant and Animal Health and Regulations (VISAR) of Guatemala to formalize the status of slaughterhouse inspectors, so as to facilitate beef exports to other countries.

4.6. A working meeting was held with officials of the Veterinary Service of the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAGA) to draw up projects to be implemented under the national programmes for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases in the 2018-2019 biennium.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. A partnership between OIRSA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) of Costa Rica (through its State Phytosanitary Service (SFE)) and the National Banana Corporation (CORBANA) was established to prevent fusariosis or *Fusarium* wilt in banana and plantain plantations. *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* tropical race 4 is the main threat to the continent's banana and plantain crops.

5.2. A Latin American task force composed of specialists from OIRSA, Brazil's EMBRAPA, Costa Rica's CORBANA, Mexico's Postgraduate College and SENASICA, and Cuba's Plant Health Directorate was set up to prevent and deal with potential outbreaks of Foc TR4 and other banana quarantine pests.

5.3. OIRSA is working together with the FAO on the harmonization of an epidemiological information system common to the countries of the region.

5.4. OIRSA is continuing to support the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) in coordinating the implementation of the Honey Chain Traceability in Guatemala project (STDF/PG/515).

5.5. OIRSA is implementing the Regional Project for the Accreditation of Laboratory Diagnostic Tests for Animal Diseases (STDF/PG/495).

5.6. OIRSA is also implementing a regional project on support for the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) national action plans in Latin America and the Caribbean (FMM/RLA/215/MUL).

5.7. The FAO-OIRSA technical cooperation project on the strengthening of agricultural health services between the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic (TCP/RLA/3502) is under way.
