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Page: 1/6

**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,  
OCTOBER 2017-JANUARY 2018

The following communication, received on 8 February 2018, 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. OIRSA prepared and circulated its 2014-2017 activity report.
- 1.2. An online training course on risk analysis and food safety was organized for participants from the OIRSA region and from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Spain and Venezuela.
- 1.3. An online training course on good aquaculture practices, good practices aboard small vessels, and good manufacturing practices in processing plants was organized for participants from the OIRSA region and from Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Peru and Venezuela.
- 1.4. OIRSA produced a selection of videographic materials on the safety of foods of plant origin and good agricultural practices in respect of fresh fruit and vegetables for export. These are used as support materials for the current OIRSA/IICA online course on good agricultural practices.
- 1.5. OIRSA, in coordination with Mexico's National Agriculture and Food Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA), organized training for food safety laboratory staff from the Honduran National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) on quality management systems and pesticide residue analysis.
- 1.6. In coordination with SENASICA (Mexico), OIRSA organized training for staff from the SENASA food safety laboratory (Honduras) on procedures for validating analytical methods for multi-residues in fruit and vegetables, quality management systems, ISO Standard 17025:2005 and its more recent version ISO Standard 17025:2017, and ISO Standard 9001.
- 1.7. A course on sampling procedures at border checkpoints was held in Costa Rica.
- 1.8. Three courses on the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) were held in Nicaragua.
- 1.9. An AFAS course was also held in Costa Rica.

1.10. OIRSA, in coordination with the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) of Panama and SENASICA (Mexico), organized training for canine units in Panama and Honduras.

1.11. Traceability operators and MIDA officials working on Panama's borders and in the fields of regional animal health, quarantine and regional livestock received training on bovine traceability and were informed of regional developments in this area.

1.12. Training was organized in Guatemala for staff from the Vice-Ministry of Agricultural Health and Regulations of the Animal Health Directorate – Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (VISAR-MAGA) on the use of the apicultural traceability module of the Honey Chain Traceability in Guatemala project (STDF/PG/515).

1.13. Training was provided to staff from the Livestock Traceability Department of the National Animal Health Directorate and the Executive Directorate for Agricultural Quarantine of MIDA, in order to support the implementation of Panama's National Bovine Traceability Programme within the framework of bovine animal movement control.

1.14. As part of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, OIRSA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) organized a day of intensive training on the integrated management of Huanglongbing in citrus fruit. The training was aimed at fifth-year agronomy students from the *Escuela de Agricultura de Nor-Oriente* (EANOR).

1.15. A field day was organized at the citrus foundation stock and shoot multiplication greenhouses. Communication materials on the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project were provided by El Salvador.

1.16. OIRSA shared its expertise on HLB at the first international seminar on citrus HLB management in Colombia. The event brought together experts from Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Central America.

1.17. Within the framework of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project, an international forum on citrus HLB was held in El Salvador. The event was attended by delegates from 14 countries, Ministry of Agriculture technical staff, citrus producers and nursery workers, and university and research centre staff.

1.18. A training workshop on healthy citrus plant production technology was organized for Nicaraguan nursery workers at the nurseries of the National Agrarian University (UNA) of Nicaragua.

1.19. A presentation on healthy plant production using methodology developed by Chinese Taipei was given to artisans and producers at the 37<sup>th</sup> orange fair in Churuquita Grande, Panama.

1.20. A workshop was organized on the declaration of *Xylella fastidiosa*-free production areas. Participants included officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala, SENASICA (Mexico), and the State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) of Costa Rica.

1.21. A regional workshop for national fruit fly programme coordinators was held in the Dominican Republic with a view to reviewing and concluding the regional diagnostic study on fruit fly management, control, eradication and information dissemination capacities.

1.22. OIRSA and the Institute for Agricultural and Livestock Protection and Health (IPSA) organized a workshop on biology, ecology and management in relation to the Central American locust. The aim was to train technical personnel and producers from the west of the country and enhance the knowledge and capacities of IPSA plant health officials, so that they are better equipped to detect, diagnose, prevent, control and eradicate infestations of locusts of the species *Schistocerca piceifrons*.

1.23. OIRSA organized a workshop entitled "Action Plan against Coffee Berry Disease (CBD)", which covered protocols for diagnosis, surveillance, detection, outbreak control, exclusion and risk communication in relation to this disease.

1.24. A workshop on the epidemiological surveillance of coffee plants in the OIRSA region was held in Mexico with a view to harmonizing national epidemiological surveillance systems for coffee pests in countries in the OIRSA region and strengthening epidemiological surveillance, thereby ensuring the detection of pests and a quick response to outbreaks.

1.25. An online course on epidemiological surveillance in shrimp farming was made available on OIRSA's virtual platform. 216 professionals and technical personnel took part in the course, which ran from September to October 2017.

1.26. OIRSA organized an online course for 165 professionals and technical personnel on sampling techniques for aquatic animals and the packaging and handling of samples destined for reference laboratories.

1.27. The first inter-agency meeting on antimicrobial resistance was held in Guatemala.

1.28. The first 2018 meeting on antimicrobial resistance and the need for inter-agency coordination, organized by OIRSA and involving FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Health, professional associations, universities and the pharmaceutical industry, was held in Guatemala on 26 January 2018.

1.29. OIRSA gave awareness-raising talks on the importance of epidemiological surveillance in relation to vesicular diseases and screwworm, to veterinarians and producers from El Salvador and Costa Rica.

1.30. An international workshop on building capacity to respond to health emergencies (Good Emergency Management Practices, GEMP), jointly organized by OIRSA, FAO and APHIS-USDA, was held in Managua, Nicaragua from 17 to 20 October 2017. The workshop was attended by specialists from the veterinary services of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

1.31. OIRSA encouraged and financially supported the participation of four delegates from OIRSA member countries in a theoretical and practical course on the diagnosis and epidemiology of emerging and re-emerging bacterial and parasitic diseases in bovine animals. The course, organized by the United Nations University, was held from 13 to 25 November 2017 in Quito, Ecuador.

1.32. OIRSA provided technical, logistical and financial support for a day of training and discussion with Salvadoran beekeepers. The event was jointly organized by the Honey Chain Association (*Cadena de la Miel*), Mielles Joya de Cerén, Swisscontact and OIRSA, with a view to unifying sanitary aspects and requirements in relation to the quality and safety of apicultural products.

1.33. OIRSA provided financial support for a regional workshop on the Incident Command System (ICS). The workshop, organized in conjunction with USDA-APHIS, was held in Guatemala from 29 January to 1 February 2018.

## **2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS**

2.1. OIRSA produced a number of manuals on the safety of foods of animal and plant origin. These covered the following areas: basic procedures governing food safety risk analysis; good aquaculture practices (GAP); good practices aboard small vessels; good manufacturing practices for fishery and aquaculture products; training on plant production systems for safety auditors (primary production, packing plants and HACCP system); and training on cattle, swine and poultry production systems and the HACCP system for safety auditors. OIRSA also prepared a quick-start guide for statistical sampling in epidemiological surveillance programmes, covering microbiological agents and toxic residues.

2.2. OIRSA, with the support of SENASICA's National Reference Centre for Pesticides and Contaminants (Mexico), concluded a diagnostic study of the analytical capacity and quality management systems of the laboratories of the Ministries and Secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock of the member countries of the OIRSA region. The aim of this activity was to define a strategy to enhance the performance of these laboratories.

2.3. Material support was provided to improve the National Animal Health Service laboratory that analyses veterinary medicines and contaminants of animal origin in Costa Rica.

2.4. OIRSA provided support to the BAHA laboratory in Belize to help it through the initial phase of accreditation for *Salmonella* testing.

2.5. OIRSA helped to organize six working sessions of the National Veterinary Drug Committee in Guatemala. The purpose of these sessions was to harmonize criteria for the interpretation and implementation of the Central American Technical Regulation on veterinary drugs, in order to facilitate its implementation in Central America.

2.6. OIRSA organized and participated in the sixth meeting of the Technical Group on Plant and Animal Health and Food Safety (SAIA) of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), held in El Salvador in October 2017. The purpose of the event was to discuss and approve the proposed regulations on the prevention, control and eradication of Newcastle disease resulting from project STDF/PG/358, so that they could subsequently be sent to the Executive Secretariat of the CAC for national approval and, in turn, be approved by the CAC Council of Ministers for adoption as a Central American Technical Regulation.

2.7. OIRSA continued working to improve the regional quarantine early warning system, which issues a warning if quarantine pests are intercepted at border checkpoints of OIRSA member countries.

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

3.1. An event was held in Nicaragua to mark the conclusion of the OIRSA-Chinese Taipei/ICDF HLB project and to launch a crop of healthy citrus plants. Nicaragua now has a new and modern citrus shoot multiplier greenhouse and facilities for cultivating healthy citrus plants, with a total yearly production capacity of at least 80,000 healthy citrus shoots for certified nurseries and 40,000 commercial citrus plants.

3.2. A simulation exercise was organized to prepare for a Foc TR4 outbreak in Guatemala. Practical exercises focused on the steps to be taken in the event of an outbreak of banana Fusarium wilt caused by the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *cubense* (Foc-TR4).

3.3. A Foc TR4 outbreak simulation workshop was held in the Dominican Republic with a view to ensuring surveillance and the application of control measures in the event of an outbreak. Participants were updated on the current situation and on continental action plan requirements should the fungus be detected.

3.4. OIRSA continued to support and monitor epidemiological surveillance activities in respect of classical swine fever and related diseases in Guatemala.

3.5. OIRSA monitored the implementation of national epidemiological surveillance programmes for vesicular diseases and cattle screwworm.

3.6. Steps were taken to monitor low-pathogenicity H5N2 avian influenza control and eradication activities in Guatemala and El Salvador. Work plans and levels of compliance therewith were reviewed in conjunction with the veterinary services of each country.

3.7. OIRSA monitored the implementation of the national epidemiological surveillance programme for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Guatemala.

3.8. OIRSA supported and monitored the Honduran National Poultry Programme restructuring process. It also gave its support in the review of the epidemiological sampling design for Newcastle disease and avian influenza.

3.9. OIRSA provided technical and financial support to the Dominican Republic to help the country control and eradicate outbreaks of low-pathogenicity H5N2 avian influenza.

3.10. OIRSA provided technical and financial support to Guatemala for the self-declaration of areas free of low-pathogenicity H5N2 avian influenza in the Verapaz departments.

#### **4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE**

4.1. OIRSA participated in the SPS working group at bilateral meetings of the Guatemala-Honduras customs union, an initiative recently joined by El Salvador.

4.2. OIRSA support was also given to the Honduran National Agriculture and Food Health and Safety Service to ensure compliance with trade requirements concerning traceability of origin for exports of farmed shrimp.

4.3. OIRSA conducted the second stage of a research study to determine the cause of higher than acceptable levels of glycerol in Salvadoran honey, with a view to establishing a roadmap to manage and control the situation.

4.4. OIRSA provided Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama with diagnostic kits for classical swine fever in order to enhance epidemiological surveillance for this disease.

4.5. Guatemala and Honduras were provided with diagnostic kits for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

4.6. OIRSA, in conjunction with the veterinary service of Guatemala and the private dairy sector, reviewed and updated the procedural manual for the national programme on the progressive control of bovine brucellosis, a product of the SDTF/PG/358 project.

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

5.1. Work continued on the creation of the International Consortium on Risk Analysis and Safety with the participation of North American universities and international bodies involved in the safety of food of animal and plant origin.

5.2. Chinese Taipei formalized the tenth financial contribution to the continuation of the activities of the HLB project, an initiative under which 14 greenhouses have been built for the production of healthy citrus plant material, and more than 5,500 citrus fruit growers have received training, in Belize, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

5.3. Mexico's National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) and OIRSA signed a memorandum of understanding with a view to enhancing cooperation on forest health through specific programmes in different areas of interest.

5.4. OIRSA and the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) have signed a letter of understanding to collaborate in activities that facilitate the safe movement of regulated plants, products and other items in North and Central America and the Dominican Republic.

5.5. OIRSA participated in the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of regional plant protection organizations, where it discussed technical developments and progress made in capacity building during technical consultations with counterpart organizations from around the world.

5.6. OIRSA took part in the second regular meeting of the PROMECAFE Technical Committee in Nicaragua.

5.7. OIRSA actively participated in the technical working groups of the International Cargo Cooperative Biosecurity Arrangement (ICCBA).

5.8. OIRSA signed technical cooperation agreements with the National Agriculture and Food Health and Safety Service (SENASA) on the development of a traceability, health and safety module.

5.9. OIRSA is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) in the implementation of the Honey Chain Traceability in Guatemala project (STDF/PG/515).

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

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

5.12. 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 being finalized.

5.13. A technical administrative cooperation agreement has been concluded between MAGA and OIRSA to implement the programme for the control and gradual eradication of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis in Guatemala.

5.14. A FAO - USDA/APHIS - OIRSA alliance has been formed to implement the Incident Command System (ICS) in the OIRSA region.

5.15. FAO and OIRSA formed an alliance to establish an interface between the TICSAN programme (FAO) for epidemiological surveillance and TRAZAR AGRO (OIRSA), with a view to creating a single technological platform to record epidemiological events in Central American countries.

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