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Page: 1/5

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
JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2019

The following communication, received on 11 October 2019, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. In Guatemala, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), a simulation exercise to prepare for handling a possible outbreak of banana *Fusarium oxysporum f.sp.cubense* (Foc TR4) was conducted with the participation of the Independent Banana Producers Association (APIB) and the local FAO mission.

1.2. In Panama, a simulation exercise for the containment and management of a banana *Fusarium* wilt (Foc TR4) outbreak was conducted jointly with the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) and the COBANA enterprise.

1.3. In Guatemala, in response to a regional alert issued by OIRSA, joint action was taken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) with OIRSA to prevent the introduction of Foc TR4 into the country.

1.4. In Nicaragua, the Institute for Agricultural and Livestock Protection and Health (IPSA) and OIRSA conducted a simulation exercise to prepare for handling the eventuality of an outbreak of Foc TR4. This was a capacity-building exercise for the exclusion and prevention of a possible outbreak of *Fusarium* wilt of musaceae (bananas and plantains) in the country.

1.5. In conjunction with FAO, a virtual course on Foc TR4 was officially launched as part of a training strategy to prevent outbreaks of *Fusarium* wilt disease (Foc TR4) on plantain and banana plantations. Two thousand, three hundred technicians from 28 countries of the Americas, and representing the entire banana production chain, participated in this course.

1.6. Guatemala received support for the training of a canine unit at the MIDA canine school in Panama.

1.7. In Nicaragua, two canine units were trained at the SENASICA canine school in Mexico.

1.8. Training was provided to staff of the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) on the use of equipment to measure the concentrations of substances used in fumigation processes.

1.9. Support was granted for non-intrusive X-ray inspection at the Juan Santamaría airport in Costa Rica and the El Salvador International Airport.

- 1.10. The staff of SITC in Guatemala were certified, subject to Australian norms on fumigation.
- 1.11. In Guatemala, OIRSA gave a lecture on the intrinsic link between food safety and food security in a panel of experts on agricultural health as a guarantee for food security. The aim of the discussions was to reinforce the knowledge of participants from public, private and academic institutions on animal and plant health as a component for ensuring food safety.
- 1.12. In Guatemala, OIRSA participated in the roundtable "Safe Food is Everybody's Business" on 7 June, during the first celebration of World Food Safety Day, which had been declared by the United Nations in December 2018.
- 1.13. In support of the celebration of World Food Safety Day, video material was produced to assist the Ministries/Secretariats of the OIRSA region in their dissemination, awareness-raising and sensitization efforts on this topic.
- 1.14. A course on hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) for fisheries and aquaculture products was developed and organized and offered simultaneously on a virtual platform to all OIRSA countries in the region.
- 1.15. The editing of the OIRSA manual, "Introduction to Food Safety", was completed.
- 1.16. Thirteen public sector officials from seven countries of the region, except Belize and Mexico, were trained in the validation of microbiological control measures in the food industry.
- 1.17. The regional course on risk analysis in food safety, offered through the OIRSA virtual classroom, is under way. It is the final course for the Diploma in Food Safety established by OIRSA, in coordination with the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, for public sector officials from the countries of the region.
- 1.18. Awareness-raising talks on "Good poultry practices, biosafety, and the welfare of broiler chickens" were attended by Panamanian veterinary doctors and producers at various National Poultry Commission (COTAN) training sessions.
- 1.19. At the first national symposium on animal welfare, organized by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Panama in August 2019, OIRSA participated in the chat session and forum on animal welfare during transport and on slaughtering practices.
- 1.20. OIRSA attended the sixth Latin American Pig Farming Congress, organized by the Latin American Organization of Pig Farmers (OIPORC), moderating the talks on the global status of African swine fever.
- 1.21. It also participated in the Tenth Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Framework on Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) in the Americas, at which progress in the prevention of the spread of African swine fever in the region was highlighted.
- 1.22. A self-managed course on epidemiological surveillance in shrimp farming was offered through the OIRSA virtual classroom from June to September 2019.
- 1.23. A keynote speech on health threats facing the OIRSA region was delivered at the 62nd anniversary celebration of the foundation of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Husbandry at the San Carlos University in Guatemala.
- 1.24. A speech about the work of OIRSA in the control of bovine paralytic rabies in the region was delivered in celebration of World Rabies Day in Costa Rica.
- 1.25. In Guatemala, a training workshop for the delegation of veterinarians from the National Programme for the Control and Gradual Eradication of Bovine Brucellosis and Tuberculosis was offered to 21 veterinary doctors in private and government practice. The workshop was based on procedural manuals for handling both diseases.

1.26. In Guatemala, at the Agrovision Expo, OIRSA gave a talk on the Programme for the Control and Gradual Eradication of Bovine Brucellosis and Tuberculosis, to 60 persons, including livestock farmers, veterinarians, technical personnel and students of veterinary medicine.

1.27. In El Salvador, OIRSA organized a workshop on procedural manuals for the control and gradual eradication of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis, within the framework of the adoption of a new strategy. Fourteen veterinary doctors from the Salvadoran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) attended the workshop.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. OIRSA conducted a regional risk analysis on African Giant Snails.

2.2. Honduras received support to update a manual of procedures on plant quarantine at borders.

2.3. Support was granted to Guatemala to define strategies for increasing its active and effective participation in the technical subcommittees of the Codex Alimentarius.

2.4. Eight working sessions of the National Veterinary Drug Committee were organized for the purpose of harmonizing criteria for the implementation of the Central American Technical Regulation on Veterinary Drugs, and revising the Central American Customs Union's Technical Regulation on Animal Feed.

2.5. Support was granted to El Salvador for the completion of Salvadoran Technical Regulation (RTS) No. 65.05.01.19 on the epidemiological surveillance and prevention of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and other transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs).

2.6. OIRSA supported El Salvador in its process of discussion and analysis of RTS No. 65.05.02:19 on the national identification and traceability system for livestock, apiculture, poultry and aquaculture products.

2.7. The regional project for the accreditation of laboratory diagnostic tests for animal diseases (STDF/PG/495) took place from June to September 2019.

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

3.1. In light of the warning of the presence of Foc TR4 in Colombia, OIRSA arranged for regional officials in the field of agriculture to meet in Ecuador. At that meeting, the heads of agriculture and livestock portfolios in the OIRSA region stressed that given the threat they faced, the strengthening of phytosanitary, biosafety and diagnostic surveillance of Foc TR4 was vital.

3.2. The pocket manual on biosafety on pig farms was updated and printed.

3.3. Diagnostic kits for classical swine fever were acquired and distributed to reinforce the epidemiological surveillance work carried out by OIRSA member countries.

3.4. Talks were held on African swine fever, its current status, and measures to strengthen the prevention of the disease in the region.

3.5. OIRSA visited farms and the Costa Rican genetics centre, under the epidemiological surveillance programme for vesicular diseases, and gave a presentation on cross-border animal diseases, with emphasis on vesicular diseases and African swine fever.

3.6. Technical and financial support were granted for the implementation of the Programme for the Control and Gradual Eradication of Bovine Brucellosis and Tuberculosis in Guatemala, and for the acquisition of diagnostic materials, reagents and kits for both diseases.

3.7. Nets and materials for the capture of vampire bats were acquired and distributed, in support of national programmes for the control of bovine paralytic rabies in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

3.8. Kits for the diagnosis of bovine brucellosis were acquired and distributed in tandem with the implementation of the national programme for the gradual control of the disease in El Salvador.

3.9. Support and follow-up in the implementation of the regional plan for the prevention, control, eradication and strengthening of surveillance of avian influenza H5N2 increased by 65% for each country.

4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. El Salvador was given support for developing a plan for monitoring residues in foods of animal origin, in order to avoid export restrictions on dairy products intended for the export market.

4.2. Countries in the region were assisted in establishing regional baselines for heavy metal content in food (cadmium in cocoa and arsenic in rice); similarly, they were supported in the accreditation of tests for cadmium in cocoa and arsenic in rice, according to ISO 17025-2017.

4.3. Nicaragua and Panama received support for the compilation and revision of their applications concerning classical swine fever (CSF), which were submitted to the OIE by the official authorities.

4.4. The heads of animal health programmes at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) were trained in the design and development of results-based programmes.

4.5. Eight sessions of the National Swine Technical Commission were organized to prepare the CSF application for Guatemala to receive OIE recognition as a country free from this disease.

4.6. A meeting was held with the authorities of SENASICA in Mexico to contribute to the regularization of the movement of live animals at borders.

4.7. OIRSA delivered a bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) diagnostic kit to the MAGA animal health laboratory in Guatemala, in support of the epidemiological surveillance efforts carried out in Belize, El Salvador and Guatemala.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. OIRSA and ICDF/Chinese Taipei signed a letter of understanding for the development of joint cooperation for the integrated management of citrus pests from 2019 to 2022, with respect to the detection of diseases affecting citrus crops. Support is also given to government laboratories for the implementation of new diagnostic techniques for pathogens and a system for sowing healthy plants certified in countries of the OIRSA region.

5.2. OIRSA, in conjunction with FAO, granted support to the Ecuadorian Agency for Agricultural Product Quality Assurance (AGROCALIDAD) for the development of the second national simulation exercise to assess response capacity and minimize the risk of entry of *Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 (Foc TR4).

5.3. In Ecuador, OIRSA organized a technical mission to support AGROCALIDAD in its efforts to prevent the entry of the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 into Ecuadorian territory.

5.4. OIRSA participated in a seminar on the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV) in Mexico, organized by the Sinaloa State Plant Health Committee, at which technicians from the National Agriculture and Food Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA) gave presentations on the symptoms, harm and identification of the genus Tobamovirus, with a special focus on the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus.

5.5. OIRSA participated in the 8th Ecuadorian Potato Congress, under the theme "Food Sovereignty and Nutrition", organized by the International Potato Center (CIP), the Technical University of

Ambato (UTA), and the National Agricultural Research Institute (INIAP), among others. There was discussion on the strategies for the integrated management of the pest "potato purple-top wilt phytoplasma" (PMP), an issue that is being addressed by OIRSA in Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic.

5.6. OIRSA took part in the 55th Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Food Crops Society, at which more than 100 presenters dealt with topics including the tomato leaf miner, the African Giant Snail, and food production in a controlled and safe environment.

5.7. Support was given to the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock in Costa Rica and El Salvador for non-intrusive inspections by canine units belonging to Guatemala and Honduras, for a period of ten days in each country, at the Juan Santamaría airport in Costa Rica and the El Salvador International Airport.

5.8. During the seminar "Better Training for Safer Food", held in Costa Rica on the use of the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) of certification and information developed by European Union health authorities, OIRSA raised the possibility, with the officials representing the Directorate-General for Health, of establishing alliances with OIRSA for continued training in the region on TRACES and on EU health legislation.
