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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
OCTOBER 2019-JANUARY 2020

The following communication, received on 25 February 2020, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. In conjunction with FAO, an online course on Foc TR4 took place as part of a training strategy to prevent outbreaks of the Tropical race 4 strain of the fungus *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* in plantain and banana plantations. Two thousand four hundred people from 28 countries in Asia, Europe and the Americas, and representing the entire banana production chain, participated in this course.

1.2. An online course on coffee production technology and plant health was organized in conjunction with the Guatemalan National Coffee Association (Anacafé) for 1,600 people from the Americas and Europe.

1.3. Support was provided for the 2nd National Simulation for a Potential Foc TR4 Outbreak in Ecuador. One hundred and thirty people, including producers, exporters, academics, research centre staff, people in governance and technical experts from international organizations, participated in this exercise.

1.4. In conjunction with Chinese Taipei's International Cooperation and Development Fund and the Honduran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG), the 2nd International Citrus Forum was held in Honduras. The event was attended by more than 300 people, including citrus producers, nursery gardeners, exporters and other members of the region's citrus fruit production chain, who shared information on citrus greening disease (HLB) and other topics.

1.5. In Belize, a simulation exercise was organized to prepare for possible outbreaks of Foc TR4. The event served to assess responsiveness to a possible outbreak of *Fusarium Tropical Race 4* in bananas.

1.6. In the Dominican Republic, a simulation exercise was organized to assess responsiveness to a possible outbreak of Foc TR4 in plantain and banana plantations.

1.7. A regional workshop for the diagnosis and integral management of cucurbit viruses was organized in conjunction with the Panamanian Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) to strengthen the diagnostic capacities of official laboratories in countries in the OIRSA region.

1.8. In Guatemala and Nicaragua, plant health officials from national risk analysis and epidemiological surveillance units received training on methodologies for conducting agricultural quarantine pest risk analysis and for assessing pathways in international trade.

1.9. In the Dominican Republic, the first workshop on the use of European Union information management systems for official sanitary and phytosanitary checks under the "Better Training for Safer Food" initiative was attended by 43 officials working in the areas of food safety, animal health, plant health and the private sector.

1.10. Officials from Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Guatemala (including from Guatemala's academic sector) attended the OIRSA-University of San Carlos of Guatemala (USAC) food safety risk analysis course. In total, 43 people completed the course.

1.11. At the Pre-Honey Harvest Training Day 2019-20 held in El Salvador, OIRSA gave a keynote address on areas such as food safety and the latest European Union (EU) rules and regulations.

1.12. In Honduras, OIRSA and the Subdirectorato-General of Agri-Food Safety, which is part of the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA), organized a day-long event to review instruments for inspecting aquaculture products at the national level.

1.13. Also in Honduras, the technical team at the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Products of the Subdirectorato-General of Agri-Food Safety at SENASA received a knowledge update on relevant EU legislation.

1.14. In Guatemala, OIRSA gave a keynote address on the intrinsic link between food safety and food security at the Agricultural Health and Food Security Forum.

1.15. In the Dominican Republic, OIRSA took part in the 4th National Beekeeping Meeting (2019), where it delivered a keynote address on the requirements for honey exports to the EU.

1.16. In Guatemala, 52 official delegates from Mexico, Central America, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Brazil took part in an international workshop, held at the University of San Carlos (USAC), that involved a regional simulation of the African swine fever virus.

1.17. In El Salvador, 14 official veterinary surgeons attended a workshop on fieldwork related to the use of tuberculins for bovine animals. The workshop took place in the context of the adoption of a new regional strategy for the progressive control of bovine tuberculosis.

1.18. In Honduras, three knowledge update workshops were organized for bovine traceability operators:

- Tocoa, Colón: 5 November 2019, attended by 18 technical experts.
- San Pedro Sula, Cortés: 6 November 2019, attended by 11 technical experts.
- Comayagua: 7 November 2019, attended by 27 technical experts.

1.19. Training sessions were organized for two laboratory technicians from Guatemala and one from El Salvador at the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) reference laboratory in Argentina. The sessions focused on improving the brucellosis diagnostic capacities of the central animal health laboratories of the two countries' agriculture ministries, reinforcing good practices in respect of the quality control of diagnostic kits and reagents for brucellosis, standardizing and validating official tests for brucellosis, and implementing the new complement fixation test to confirm brucellosis diagnoses.

1.20. Support was provided for the Pre-Honey Harvest Training Day 2019-20 held at the Salvadoran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), which was attended by 100 producers and specialists in the sector.

1.21. OIRSA helped organize and participated in a training day on improving the monitoring, control and detection of Tilapia lake virus (TiLV) through public-private partnerships. The event took place in Mexico City within the framework of FAO-OIRSA technical cooperation.

1.22. A regional manual of best practices for dealing with health emergencies and several videos on how to put on and remove personal protective equipment (PPE) were added to the *Biblioteca OIRSA* mobile application.

1.23. OIRSA took part in the second high-level meeting of fisheries and aquaculture ministers organized by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA). At this event, the Harmonized Regional System for Agricultural Traceability (Trazar-Agro) was presented to the fisheries authorities of OIRSA and CARICOM member countries.

1.24. Technical support was provided for training the new animal traceability coordinator of the Salvadoran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

1.25. Technical support was also provided for migrating the databases of the bovine, aquaculture and fisheries sector in Nicaragua, the aquaculture and fisheries sector in Panama, and agricultural producers in the Dominican Republic, to the Trazar-Agro database.

1.26. In December 2019, a reorientation strategy was drawn up for Panama's national livestock traceability programme, and support was provided for implementing other traceability systems, such as those for the swine, aquaculture and fisheries sectors.

1.27. Training was provided to 35 people in Honduras whose main activity is fishing sea cucumbers. The training covered the traceability system for fisheries products and the use of traceability labels in relation to operating licences.

1.28. Also in Honduras, technical support is being provided for training activities and to ensure follow-up for a plan for controlling the movement of animals and products and by-products of agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries.

1.29. In Guatemala, staff at the Service for Agricultural Protection and the International Quarantine Treatment Service received training on methyl bromide fumigation based on the Australian fumigation standard.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. OIRSA member countries, and Ecuador and Colombia, received support for creating regulatory instruments to contain the arrival of Foc TR4, which causes Fusarium wilt.

2.2. OIRSA's basic manual on risk-based inspection was developed while taking into consideration the following: 1. International organizations involved in food safety and food quality; 2. The use of risk analysis in food safety and risk-based inspection; 3. The establishment of epidemiological surveillance programmes and the design of statistical sampling; and 4. Risk-based inspection for animals, plants and food.

2.3. OIRSA developed a sampling protocol for monitoring heavy metals, which drew on Codex Alimentarius standards and guidelines and other regulations of importance for international trade.

2.4. With regard to requirements concerning maximum levels of cadmium in food products, including items containing cocoa, a monitoring exercise was conducted in conjunction with OIRSA Member States to determine the levels of cadmium present in cocoa beans. The participating countries were Belize, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

2.5. Support was provided for the drafting of biannual operational plans for the various animal health programmes run by the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food.

2.6. Five meetings of the National Technical Commission for the Guatemalan swine sector were held to put together a dossier on classical swine fever and to prepare an application for OIE recognition as a country free from the disease.

2.7. Support and follow-up were provided for the final stage of the regional plan for the prevention, control, eradication and increased surveillance of low pathogenic avian influenza H5N2.

2.8. OIRSA joined forces with FEDAVICAC to organize a meeting of the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health (CTRSA), which was attended by veterinary service and private sector officials from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

2.9. OIRSA organized and participated in the first meeting of beekeepers in the city of Siguatepeque in the Honduran department of Comayagua. The purpose of the meeting was to support Honduras in the initiative to open up the honey market in the countries of the region.

2.10. OIRSA reviewed procedures for capturing information in the laboratory and in the field for the Guatemalan programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis. It also approved the functioning of the Bovine Sanitary Module (MSB), which incorporates laboratory and field forms into the Trazar-Agro platform.

2.11. A workshop to discuss and approve the Regional Harmonized Traceability System for Fisheries Products took place in El Salvador and was attended by officials and fisheries sector representatives from OIRSA member countries.

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

3.1. In Guatemala, a joint event was organized with FAO to discuss Foc TR4 in Musaceae crops. The purpose of the discussion was to raise awareness among government authorities and representatives of small-scale banana and plantain producers of the domestic risk level, existing vulnerabilities and the need to provide support to increase the domestic response capacity.

3.2. In Panama, OIRSA supports coffee producers in Chiriquí province by providing technical guidance on the integrated management of coffee leaf rust over a 1,000 hectare area of cultivated land that produces 20,000 quintals of coffee beans a year.

3.3. OIRSA took part in an international workshop on strategies to tackle Foc TR4, which was attended by officials from several countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Paraguay. The event highlighted the need for coordinated regional action.

3.4. In Colombia, OIRSA participated in a workshop on the research agenda for Foc TR4. The event sought to identify priorities in an integrated research agenda with the aim of excluding, preventing and managing Foc TR4 outbreaks in Latin America.

3.5. In Guatemala, OIRSA and the deputy minister responsible for the affairs of the department of Petén jointly organized a day-long event for coordinating actions to strengthen safety measures and prevent microbiological contamination on papaya plantations.

3.6. OIRSA supported the Salvadoran Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) in its review of the programme for monitoring residues and contaminants in compliance with the requirements of trading partners.

3.7. Under the agreement between OIRSA and the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), technical, administrative and financial cooperation was provided to help implement the official programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis.

3.8. The Honduran National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) received support in the form of biological agents to control equine encephalitis, through cooperation from the Mexican National Agricultural Health Service (SENASICA) laboratory.

3.9. A presentation of the Trazar-Agro platform to the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health (CTRSA) highlighted the platform's importance as a tool to support poultry health programmes.

4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. OIRSA's regional list of quarantine pests was updated so that Member States could be advised on which pests should be monitored to contain their entry into certain countries in the region.

4.2. In Mexico, OIRSA has held regular virtual meetings with SENASICA to share experiences and to encourage joint action on measures to control the movement and entry of livestock through the southern border.

4.3. In El Salvador, OIRSA participates actively in the Salvadoran National Technical Regulation Committee's work to create a national livestock and aquaculture traceability system, which will constitute the regulatory framework for traceability in El Salvador.

4.4. The Institute for Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA), the Nicaraguan Fishing and Aquaculture Institute (INPESCA), the Central American Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization (OSPESCA) and OIRSA held an interinstitutional meeting at which the traceability system was presented. It was also decided which activities would initially be carried out to ensure the traceability of fisheries and aquaculture products.

4.5. Panama received OIRSA support for drawing up a proposal to reorient its national livestock traceability programme. The proposal includes an operational structure, an implementation plan and a legislative bill.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. In Colombia, OIRSA participated in a technical capacity-building mission to measure the emergency currently faced by the country and to shape and identify priorities in order to continue moving forward with the national strategy for Foc TR4, which will guide the national action plans of other countries in the region.

5.2. OIRSA took part in the 43rd annual meeting of the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), at which both regional plant protection organizations cooperated to promote and implement relevant regional and international plant health regulations.

5.3. OIRSA signed a letter of agreement with the Andean Community (CAN) that provides for harmonized sanitary and phytosanitary measures against pests and diseases in both regions, thereby facilitating technical cooperation on animal and plant health and promoting the development of joint cooperation projects.

5.4. Initial contact was made with the United States Food and Drug Administration, the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture to deliver a training-for-trainers course on preventing the contamination of fresh food.

5.5. Contact was initiated with the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories with a view to supporting the approval and certification of food safety testing methods in OIRSA Member States.

5.6. A simulation workshop for food safety emergencies was scheduled with the International Food Safety Authorities Network.

5.7. The Regional Project for the Accreditation of Laboratory Diagnostic Tests for Animal Diseases (STDF/PG/495) was finalized and its scope extended following the incorporation of new diagnostic techniques.

5.8. OIRSA oversaw a technical cooperation project with FAO on African swine fever with a view to devising a regional strategy to prevent the introduction of this disease.

5.9. A technical cooperation agreement was concluded between OIRSA and the Guatemalan Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare to facilitate the implementation of an official system for inspecting factories that process foods of animal origin, which is an export requirement in Central America.
