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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 2020-JANUARY 2021

The following communication, received on 25 February 2021, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. A meeting was held with plant health officials and managers from the Ministries and Secretariats of Agriculture of Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic with regard to updating locust management in the OIRSA region.

1.2. A workshop was held in Costa Rica on the Central American locust (*Schistocerca piceifrons piceifrons*) to assess the current situation regarding preventive locust management in the region. This was a joint activity with the State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) of Costa Rica.

1.3. In virtual format, the first session was held of the "Regional training workshop on locust prevention and integrated management". This was a joint activity of the FAO, OIRSA and the Regional Agricultural Technology Fund (FONTAGRO).

1.4. A animated video on locusts was produced, with the aim of providing information for producers, technicians and the general public on methodology for investigation, detection and timely diagnosis in relation to the Central American locust.

1.5. A workshop was held on the "Integrated management of bark beetles", where information was provided on forest care and health in the Mesoamerican region in relation to bark beetles and other forest pests.

1.6. The "1st International Plant Health Congress" and the "XIV National Congress on technology and innovation in plant protection, climate change and post-COVID-19 value chains" were held in Guatemala. These activities were organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) of Guatemala and OIRSA.

1.7. A "3rd citrus plant day" was held online. It covered issues relating to certification programmes for citrus plants, integrated pest management, diagnosis, *Huanglongbing* (HLB) and Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV) management strategies, among others. This activity was organized together with the University of Manizales, the Agricultural Research Institute (AGROSAVIA) of Colombia and the Sinaloa State Plant Health Committee (CESAVESIN) of Mexico.

1.8. The FAO and OIRSA held virtual forums on agricultural recovery and management following hurricanes Eta and Iota.

1.9. The FAO and OIRSA gave presentations during the first and second sessions of the "Regional training workshop on the detection, prevention and exclusion of the khapra beetle (*Trogoderma granarium*)", in the context of the International Year of Plant Health, with the support of experts from Mexico and Honduras.

1.10. The FAO and OIRSA organized the "International forum on *Xylella fastidiosa*", a regulated quarantine pest, for Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic, in the context of the International Year of Plant Health, with the support of PHYTOMA España.

1.11. OIRSA and BIOIBERICA of Spain developed a massive coffee trap as an alternative to fruit fly control, with the support of national programmes.

1.12. The assembly of the Central American Regional Commission for Veterinary Medicines and Animal Feed (CORMEVA) was held, focusing on training on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), with the experiences of Argentina and Costa Rica.

1.13. In El Salvador, 11 professionals and technicians were trained in microscopy for the detection of ruminant proteins in concentrated animal feed, in order to strengthen the diagnostic capacity and epidemiological surveillance of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

1.14. OIRSA trained technicians, producers and academics from the region on biosecurity issues in poultry farms, animal welfare, avian influenza and Newcastle disease.

1.15. OIRSA trained producers in Panama on health plans for buffalo management (differential considerations in the diagnosis of brucellosis and tuberculosis).

1.16. OIRSA provided a training course for 24 members of the National Interinstitutional Security Force (FUSINA) in Honduras, on activities carried out at movement checkpoints, within the legal framework of the National System for Agricultural, Aquaculture and Fishery Traceability (SINART).

1.17. OIRSA trained 45 officers from the National Police of Honduras, who participate as collaborators in the implementation of the country's National System for Agricultural, Aquaculture and Fishery Traceability (SINART).

1.18. OIRSA trained and evaluated 18 inspectors and 15 military personnel assigned to movement checkpoints in Honduras.

1.19. OIRSA held a course on "Risk analysis in connection with the importation of aquatic animals and aquaculture products" for veterinary surgeons from the Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA) of Honduras, in coordination with the FAO.

1.20. OIRSA took part in the 3rd extraordinary meeting of the Hemispheric Committee for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (COHEFA), which analysed and approved the proposal for the new action plan relating to the "Hemispheric programme for the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease (PHEFA)".

1.21. OIRSA took part in the third session of the 11th meeting of the Global Steering Committee of the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), at which the new provisions and guidelines on tackling transboundary animal diseases were presented.

1.22. The "Manual on cleaning and disinfection in animal health within and outside the OIRSA region" was updated and published.

1.23. The "Manual of good management practices for the cultivation of Pacific white shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) within and outside the OIRSA region" was published.

1.24. The "Guide to recommended withdrawal periods for the correct use of veterinary drugs, Guide No. 1 Pest control products" was updated; and "Guide No. 2, Injectable antibiotics, Withdrawal periods for the main injectable antibiotics" was drawn up.

1.25. A video on the Asian giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) was produced and published.

1.26. Support was provided to 40 food safety officers from Honduras, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua, in the form of training for the "Diploma in food safety" held at the University of San Carlos (USAC) in Guatemala.

1.27. OIRSA coordinated with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Latin America Office the "New era in food safety" conference and discussion, which was provided through the OIRSA platform for the OIRSA region and other Latin American countries.

1.28. Support was given to 26 officials from all countries in the region through the training course accredited by the International HACCP [hazard analysis critical control points] Alliance (IHA), which was delivered through AIB International. At the end of the course, participants received the IHA gold seal and were registered with the organization.

1.29. The 5th edition of the online course for "Training trainers in good agricultural practices" was provided in the OIRSA virtual classroom for Latin America and the world.

1.30. An exchange of experiences on the khapra beetle was held, promoted by the Australian Department of Agriculture, in which countries from Latin America and OIRSA member countries participated.

1.31. OIRSA took part in the "Custody procedure and responsibility" training course, provided for managers from the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) and Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA) by staff from the National Agrifood Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA) of Mexico.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. The "Harmonized regional guide to good risk-based agricultural practices" and its annex ("Sampling procedure and inspection procedure") have been developed and are undergoing final harmonization.

2.2. The "Protocol on epidemiological and statistical sampling for aflatoxins in maize in OIRSA member countries" has been developed and is undergoing final harmonization.

2.3. OIRSA took part in the 43rd session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

2.4. OIRSA is participating in the initiative to expand the study of cadmium levels in cocoa produced in OIRSA member countries, together with the Cocoa Committee of Central America and the Dominican Republic (SICACAO), the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) MOCCA project, the Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SECAC) in Costa Rica, Rikolto and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

2.5. OIRSA held a workshop for Panama on the equivalence determination process of the US Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) and risk-based inspection.

2.6. OIRSA took part in the 3rd session of the National Codex Alimentarius Committee (CONACODEX) of El Salvador, and also in other Codex mirror committees.

2.7. Protocols were drawn up for the inspection of products entering OIRSA member countries as donations.

2.8. Three working sessions of the National Veterinary Drug Committee were held for the revision of comments made on the Central American Customs Union's Technical Regulation on veterinary drugs and related products.

2.9. Three meetings of the regular assembly of the Antimicrobial Resistance Network in Guatemala were held. The final draft of the "Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) action plan" is being drawn up.

2.10. Together with national animal health directors and aquaculture health professionals from OIRSA member countries, technical and scientific criteria were analysed to enable a regional approach to the Andean Community initiative to remove the infectious hypodermal and

haematopoietic necrosis virus (IHHNV) from the list of diseases contained in the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Code.

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

3.1. OIRSA coordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) of Mexico the donation of the strain of the fungus *Metarhizium acridium* for reproduction in each member country and use as a biological control agent for locusts.

3.2. OIRSA issued an alert to agricultural producers and the Ministries and Secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock of Mexico and Central America regarding infestations of the Central American locust (*Schistocerca piceifrons piceifrons*) in the state of Yucatán, Mexico and the department of Petén, Guatemala.

3.3. To strengthen the communication campaign in support of countries affected by hurricanes/tropical storms Eta and Iota, OIRSA developed video resources in English and Spanish on basic health and safety recommendations to prevent food-borne diseases in emergency situations.

3.4. OIRSA supported the Dominican Republic in the revision and restructuring of the strategy for the control and eradication of classical swine fever (CSF), as well as in the country's controls on movement.

3.5. OIRSA provided technical and administrative support for the implementation of the national programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis, as an officially delegated authority for the implementation of the programme.

3.6. A total of 6,000 doses of bovine tuberculin PPD (purified protein derivative) and 500 doses of avian tuberculin PPD were acquired for Guatemala and El Salvador as part of the programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis.

3.7. Bovine serum samples from Guatemala were sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) centre in Ames, Iowa (USA), in order to confirm the sanitary status of three bovine herds of high genetic value, registered under the programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis.

3.8. Technical and financial support was provided, in the wake of hurricanes/tropical storms Eta and Iota, in the implementation of national animal health emergency plans in the event of natural disasters in OIRSA member countries.

3.9. Support was provided for the development and revision of the action plan for strengthening the tilapia health system and the prevention of emerging diseases, with a focus on the tilapia lake virus for countries in the Central American Integration System (SICA) region, in coordination with the FAO.

3.10. A risk assessment study was prepared on possible pathways for entry of the Asian giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) into OIRSA member countries.

3.11. A meeting was held with the Honey Chain and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) of El Salvador to coordinate technical support measures for bee-keeping in the country.

4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. The risk-based sampling matrix for monitoring the quality of pesticides was revised and adjusted at the request of the State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) of Costa Rica.

4.2. OIRSA supported El Salvador in drafting and updating the "National plan for monitoring contaminant residues in milk and milk by-products".

4.3. OIRSA provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic on various matters, including: strengthening the national programme for monitoring contaminants, reinforcing the national food safety laboratory, private sector initiatives, etc.

4.4. The transition to the “digital diagnostics through digital imaging (DDDI)” system, provided by the University of Georgia to OIRSA, was carried out.

4.5. OIRSA provided support to:

- Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama, for updating their CSF (classical swine fever) dossiers and continuing with the process of recognition as CSF-free countries for 2021-2022;
- Belize, for resuming the compilation of the CSF dossier, in order to obtain international recognition as a CSF-free country;
- Panama, for the implementation and improvement of swine traceability in Panama through the Trazar-Agro platform;
- Panama, for the implementation of the project “Development of technological tools for epidemiological surveillance in Panama”.

4.6. OIRSA prepared and revised the regulatory proposal for the establishment of the National Directorate of Veterinary Public Health at the Ministry of Health of Panama.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. OIRSA is one of the partners of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) RLA5080 project ‘Strengthening the regional collaboration of official laboratories to address emerging challenges for food safety (ARCAL CLXV)’.

5.2. OIRSA took part in the “Strengthening INFOSAN” virtual forum in the Americas organized by the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN).

5.3. OIRSA took part in the meeting of the International Cargo Cooperative Biosecurity Arrangement (ICCBA), and its steering committee, a forum promoted by the Australian Government, where methyl bromide fumigation methodology was discussed.

5.4. OIRSA signed a technical cooperation agreement with the Guatemalan Chamber of Milk Producers to promote traceability and the national programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis.

5.5. A letter of understanding was drawn up with the University of Glasgow in Scotland with a view to carrying out the regional project “Molecular characterization of the rabies virus in animal outbreaks in OIRSA member countries”.

5.6. OIRSA met with the Honduran National Association of Fish Farmers (ANDAH) and National Agriculture and Food Health and Safety Service (SENASA), with the aim of strengthening measures to implement the traceability programme for farmed shrimp.

5.7. The terms of reference were revised for setting up the Permanent Group of Experts on Classical Swine Fever (PGE-CSF) for the Americas, which will be coordinated by the OIE and OIRSA.

5.8. Seventeen of the 22 diagnostic tests covered by the first phase of the regional project for the accreditation of animal health laboratory diagnostic tests (STDF/PG/495) relating to aquatic diseases and terrestrial animals were accredited. This project is being conducted with the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF).
