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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,
MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2021

The following communication, received on 5 October 2021, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. Courses on the prevention and control of bovine paralytic rabies (BPR) were organized and coordinated in response to several outbreaks in different parts of Honduras. The courses were attended by 275 professionals. The National Agriculture and Food Health and Safety Service (SENASA) was provided with technical guidance on strategies to control BPR outbreaks and was given assistance with the preparation and publication of instructional material.

1.2. A virtual seminar on classical swine fever and its impact on trade was held for veterinarians in Guatemala.

1.3. A workshop on African swine fever (ASF) prevention and control measures was organized for professional and technical staff of the Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA) of the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food. Virtual talks were also held on the biosecure disposal of carcasses of ASF-infected pigs and the cleaning and disinfection of buildings and vehicles where ASF is present. Furthermore, an operational manual for the biosecure disposal of animal carcasses was developed as an annex to the regional manual of best practices for dealing with health emergencies.

1.4. Virtual training was provided on the phytosanitary status of *Musaceae* and on *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* tropical race 4 (Foc TR4) prevention strategies in Venezuela. It was attended by 400 specialists representing 12 countries. In addition, a monitoring simulation was carried out to prepare technical teams in the Dominican Republic for a potential Foc TR4 outbreak.

1.5. OIRSA presented its activities in response to phytosanitary threats or emergencies in its region to the IPPC.

1.6. A training workshop was held for plant pest surveillance, quarantine and pest risk analysis specialists of OIRSA member States on the Crop Protection Compendium (CPC) and PRA tool of the CABI platform. Approximately 110 professionals took part.

1.7. Citrus producers and nursery workers in El Salvador were trained on the healthy plant production process with the aim of preventing citrus greening disease, or Huanglongbing (HLB), and other diseases affecting their crops.

1.8. An international phytosanitary conference on the giant African snail was held and 580 people from countries across the American continent attended to hear experiences of the integrated management of this pest in countries where it had been reported. Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic were given advice on the implementation of activities in the context of the regional emergency caused by giant African snails. Canine-human teams were also trained to "plant" the scent of these snails in the dogs' olfactory memory.

1.9. Canine units in the Dominican Republic and Belize began training for the non-intrusive detection of plant and animal products in luggage and packages. This means that all OIRSA member States will have canine units.

1.10. Costa Rica's State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) was given advice on fumigation chambers to be installed in the country. A virtual course was run to certify staff at the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) of Guatemala and the SITC and SEPA of Honduras under the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme.

1.11. Webinars were developed on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements for the growing, harvesting, packing and holding of fresh agricultural produce and on the labelling and quality requirements for food exports to the European Union.

1.12. A training course on remote audits was provided to food safety delegates from OIRSA member States.

1.13. A dialogue was held on food safety challenges for sustainable production.

1.14. Online training days and ongoing technical support was provided to internal and external users of the electronic registration management system of Honduras.

1.15. In Panama, training was provided on the use of the Trazar-Agro system under the following modules: agricultural, aquaculture and fishery registration, aquaculture traceability, and movement control and traceability of fishery products. Furthermore, traceability specialists and National Animal Health Directorate specialists in Panama were trained on the use of the Trazar-Agro system, with the aim of building local capacities to enhance the traceability of livestock and strengthen the veterinary services' activities.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. Twenty-two laboratory diagnostic tests for animal diseases were accredited.

2.2. Meetings were held with the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health with the aim of facilitating harmonization of international animal welfare standards on laying hens.

2.3. A working meeting of the National Veterinary Drug Committee of Guatemala was organized to follow up on the activities to harmonize the register of veterinary drugs and animal feed.

2.4. OIRSA was involved in the development and signing of the Strategic Plan for the National Codex Alimentarius Programme together with the El Salvador National Codex Committee.

2.5. The harmonized protocol on epidemiological and statistical sampling for aflatoxins in maize was submitted to the Technical Group on Plant and Animal Health and Food Safety at the Central American Agricultural Council for approval.

2.6. Belize and El Salvador were assisted with their work on their respective national lists of regulated quarantine pests.

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

3.1. As part of the implementation of the national programme for the progressive control of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis in Guatemala, OIRSA supported the development of biosecurity guides and sanitation plans for both diseases. It also provided support to the programme for the progressive control of tuberculosis in El Salvador and rendered technical assistance to SENASA (Honduras) with the aim of developing approaches and strategies for farms affected by bovine brucellosis.

3.2. Kits were acquired for the regional diagnosis of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Guatemala.

3.3. Guatemala was given advice on dealing with "nonconformities" presented by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) with the classical swine fever (CSF) dossier.

3.4. In response to the emergency due to the ASF outbreak in the Dominican Republic: (a) regional health warning material, containing recommendations for the other OIRSA member States, was developed and disseminated; (b) joint action was taken in coordination with other cooperation agencies (the OIE, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)); (c) on-site technical assistance was provided to support the campaign to control and eradicate ASF in the Dominican Republic; (d) training was given to emergency brigades; (e) a plan of action and logical framework were developed to contain, control and eradicate the ASF outbreak in the Dominican Republic; and (f) support was provided in conjunction with the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Agriculture for the design, development and implementation of a mobile application to record outbreaks, establishments, the animal population and the gathering of field samples in order to improve the ASF information system.

3.5. The citrus HLB project carried out by the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, the Chinese Taipei International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF) and OIRSA was evaluated. The needs identified included the improvement of HLB diagnostic laboratories, the construction of net houses for the production of healthy plants and the creation of demonstration plots. Furthermore, Costa Rica was assisted in the process of donating specimens or breeding stock of the biological control insect *Tamarixia radiata* to Panama in order to reinforce strategies against the citrus HLB vector. Moreover, the El Salvador Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock was supported in its activities to handle and control the phytosanitary emergency caused by citrus HLB.

3.6. OIRSA carried out a technical field mission jointly with SFE specialists in Costa Rica to support the confinement and eradication of the giant African snail (*Achatina fulica*) pest. A regional phytosanitary alert was issued for the exclusion of *A. fulica* from OIRSA member States. The alert recommended taking steps such as banning the entry of snails into countries in the region, strengthening plant pest surveillance and quarantine systems, and enhancing diagnostic capacities.

3.7. Technical analysis and advisory meetings on Central American locust (*Schistocerca piceifrons piceifrons*) forecast indicators were held in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Furthermore, action was coordinated with the FAO and the ministries of agriculture to prevent pest outbreaks in the region. A regional technical group on Central American locusts was set up with the participation of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. The aim is to identify a focal point in each of these countries and provide all necessary tools to implement the action plan when required.

3.8. The swine traceability module was developed and approved in cooperation with the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food in support of the implementation plans and the requirements for submission of the application dossier for recognition of CSF disease status to the OIE.

3.9. The purchase of official individual identification devices was arranged to support the bovine vaccination programme in Honduras.

3.10. A programme to monitor inorganic arsenic in polished rice in OIRSA member States was launched in cooperation with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture.

4 STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. Support was provided in the process of deep integration towards the free movement of persons and goods between Guatemala and Honduras, in the field of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic were provided with the swine traceability module as part of the move to strengthen the national traceability systems and in support of the implementation plans and the requirements for submission of the application dossier for recognition of CSF disease status to the OIE and, in particular, in support of regional ASF alert activities.

4.2. The Honduras National Traceability System was kept operational and expanded with movement controls on bovine animals, pigs and aquaculture products using movement checkpoints.

4.3. Support was provided to the authorities of the Dominican Republic in improving the Central Veterinary Laboratory's analytical capacities for pesticide residues.

4.4. Meetings of the Guatemalan National Technical Commission on Swine were coordinated to monitor the activities of the swine health programme and to establish measures to prevent the entry of ASF into national territory.

4.5. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food of Guatemala, the faculty of veterinary medicine and animal husbandry of San Carlos University and OIRSA held an inter-institutional meeting to improve the diagnosis of animal diseases at the Regional Animal Health Reference Laboratory (LARRSA).

4.6. To support the process of exporting live cattle to Mexico, the national traceability systems of Guatemala and Nicaragua were given assistance in preparing the single guide on sanitary movement and control (GUIASA) for exports. Proof of origin, official individual identification and the sanitary status of animals are requirements for entry into the destination country.

4.7. The section on characterizing establishments of the mobile application for agricultural, aquaculture and fishery registration was developed with assistance from the epidemiology department of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) of Panama. This is an important tool for learning about species of epidemiological significance within a production unit.

4.8. The electronic registration management system, an IT platform for the systemization of the animal health, plant health and food safety services, was launched in Honduras. It is available to sectors involved in the production, processing, marketing and distribution of animal and plant products and by-products from agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. OIRSA signed a technical cooperation agreement together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food and the Palm Growers Association (GREPALMA) of Guatemala to strengthen action for the prevention of, protection against and inspection for economic and quarantine palmaceae pests in the country's territory.

5.2. A phytosanitary task force on (Foc TR4) was formed. It is a group of experts from Bioversity-CIAT, the National Banana Corporation of Costa Rica (CORBANA), the National Agri-Food Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA) and OIRSA that provides technical and scientific support to the phytosanitary authorities of countries that request it and recommends measures for the exclusion, prevention, containment and phytosanitary management of such pests.

5.3. The Regional Directorate of Quarantine Services and the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) carried out joint work to train canine units at the USDA's canine schools. Dogs are being trained to recognize the scents of new invasive alien species in cooperation with SENASICA of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Mexico and the Executive Directorate for Agricultural Quarantine of MIDA in Panama.

5.4. A roadmap for the implementation of swine traceability in Panama was developed with the support of the private pig farming sector. It includes training, skills transfer, awareness-raising and standard-setting activities and a pilot scheme for the individual identification of animals for breeding, group identification and movement control.

5.5. A partnership was established with the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification (AENOR) to build capacities in OIRSA member States through technical training on food safety.

5.6. A partnership was established with the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture to monitor inorganic arsenic in polished rice in OIRSA member States.
