



**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
MARCH TO MAY 2022**

The following communication, received on 23 May 2022, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. In the context of the African swine fever (ASF) emergency in the Dominican Republic, OIRSA carried out training activities on "health intervention exercises in response to the emergence of the ASF virus" in Panama and a national ASF simulation exercise in Nicaragua. In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, OIRSA delivered a regional simulation workshop on the basics of early detection and reliable diagnosis of ASF. Farmers in the Dominican Republic received training on biosecurity measures to prevent ASF outbreaks on pig farms.

1.2. In response to the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the United States and Mexico, OIRSA issued regional alerts, with recommendations to prevent the disease from spreading to other member states. It also convened the Regional Technical Commission on Poultry Health (CTRSA) to recommend measures in response to the outbreak.

1.3. A presentation was delivered to 150 farmers and 30 veterinary surgeons based in Guatemala on the work carried out by OIRSA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) under the programme to control brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. Attendees were also informed what they were required to submit to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and how Guatemala could achieve the status of having a negligible risk of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

1.4. The first simulation exercise on care for animals in natural disasters targeted residents of a community in Guatemala and 25 veterinary surgeons from the Animal Welfare Unit at the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture.

1.5. At the Regional Seminar for OIE Focal Points for Aquatic Animals, OIRSA presented its work on aquatic animal health.

1.6. Working with officials from MAGA and the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Chinese Taipei, OIRSA provided 90 banana growers in Guatemala who also grow coffee with training on integrated pest management, biosecurity measures for Musaceae cultivation and the recognition of symptoms of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* tropical race 4 (Foc TR4) and other diseases.

1.7. To mark the International Day of Plant Health, OIRSA organized a day of activities to promote phytosanitary programmes that are important to the region. In Honduras, OIRSA delivered a presentation to students and teachers on the importance of plant health and agricultural quarantine for the production of healthy, environmentally friendly food.

1.8. Staff at the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC), the Service for Agricultural Protection (SEPA) and the MOSCAMED Programme of OIRSA in Honduras were certified in the application of quarantine treatment that is compliant with Australian fumigation regulations.

1.9. To strengthen quarantine inspections, OIRSA enrolled its own officials and officials from the region's ministries and secretariats of agriculture in the Central American Master's Programme on Entomology, in Panama City, to allow them to specialize in entomology.

1.10. In El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, staff were hired and trained in canine management and control to strengthen quarantine inspection services.

1.11. Official MAGA staff, private-sector staff and academics in Guatemala received training on inspections at cattle slaughterhouses and processing plants; ante- and post-mortem procedures; sampling; and pre-shipment official verification based on United States law and on the regulations of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

1.12. OIRSA supported Nicaragua's Institute for Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA) in implementing controls on the movement of offal and bovine and swine products not for human consumption. This support will give the Institute the necessary tools to better monitor disease, namely BSE and ASF.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. During the second phase of the regional project for the accreditation of animal health laboratory diagnostic tests (STDF/PG/495), two of the 14 laboratory tests considered were approved.

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

3.1. In the Dominican Republic, OIRSA supported the ASF Incident Command System (SCI) set up by the Ministry of Agriculture by hiring staff for a national pig census, renting the premises used to operate the SCI, acquiring computer equipment, strengthening the operating capacity of disinfection teams for active focal points and perifocal points, and acquiring inputs and materials for sampling in the field. In cooperation with USDA/APHIS, OIRSA improved biosecurity at the Central Veterinary Laboratory (LAVECEN).

3.2. Under the agreement between OIRSA and the University of Glasgow, in Scotland, brain samples from rabies-infected animals (bovine, equine, canine and feline animals and mongooses) were sent to the university's laboratory so that a phylogenetic classification of the rabies virus in Central America could be carried out, which will allow the development of better programmes to control the disease.

3.3. With the support of the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Chinese Taipei, OIRSA used satellite imagery to obtain spectral reflectance signature data that can be used for the early remote detection of Foc TR4 and other banana diseases in Guatemala. In Panama, Foc TR4 diagnostic kits were delivered to the Phytosanitary Diagnostic Laboratory of the Ministry of Agricultural Development's National Directorate of Plant Health. In Honduras, OIRSA, the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) and the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Chinese Taipei carried out inspections at an established point used to acquire satellite imagery to obtain spectral reflectance signature data.

3.4. Countries in the region have dogs that can detect the scent of the giant African snail, thus supporting non-intrusive quarantine inspections.

3.5. OIRSA coordinated a meeting with MAGA and the Guatemalan Pig Farmer's Association (ASOGUA) to define a work strategy to implement swine traceability and to control animal movements in response to the regional alert for African swine fever.

4 STRENGTHENING NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. To facilitate exports between Mexico and Guatemala, a meeting was held between the two countries to revise the protocols for Mexican imports of Guatemalan bovine animals. Also, as part of the marketing process, OIRSA visited the inspection pen and lairage facilities in the Mexico-Guatemala border area.

4.2. OIRSA validated the food-safety module linked to the Trazar-Agro system, which improved the processes for inspecting and registering establishments and inspecting products and processes related to trade in the agri-food sector.

4.3. To support the Panamanian Aquatic Resources Authority, OIRSA incorporated the movement of domestic and international fishery products into the Trazar-Agro system, covering everything from the catch (fishing logbook) and the movement of the fish to the import and export processes. This will facilitate Panamanian trade with the European Union.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. The FAO-OIRSA agreement, "Animal health emergency preparedness and management systems and management of complaints and notification to improve early detection of animal diseases, with special emphasis on ASF in the Dominican Republic", was signed.

5.2. An agreement was signed between USDA/APHIS and OIRSA to support the control and eradication of ASF in the Dominican Republic, with three specific action plans: one on active surveillance in the field, one on the strengthening of quarantine areas, and one on the strengthening of the diagnosis area of the Central Veterinary Laboratory (LAVECEN) of the Dominican Republic.

5.3. An inter-agency cooperation agreement was signed between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System and OIRSA that will allow the development of regional phytosanitary programmes.

5.4. In Honduras, OIRSA presented the Foc TR4 prevention project and shared the experience of Colombia and Chinese Taipei in containing the disease and the work of canine units at ports, airports and borders.
