WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Original: Spanish

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 TO SEPTEMBER 2022

The following communication, received on 15 October 2022, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

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

1.1. In coordination with various international cooperation agencies, private companies and ministries of agriculture, the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA) launched campaigns and training workshops to raise awareness of the symptoms of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* tropical race 4 (Foc TR4) and the differences between this and other banana plant diseases, and provided information on the application of biosecurity and prevention measures that would help prevent the disease from entering the OIRSA region.

1.2. OIRSA, in conjunction with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), prepared and launched a basic guide to the world's main fruit fly species.

1.3. Online training days on plant and animal health risk management were organized in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Agricultural Council (SE-CAC).

1.4. Following the declaration of a regional African swine fever (ASF) emergency, OIRSA provided training in the following areas: cleaning and disinfection to promote animal health; the biosecure disposal of carcasses; and epidemiological surveillance for the prevention and control of ASF. Training was also provided to improve quarantine control points. In Honduras, as part of the national ASF simulation exercise, OIRSA provided an update on the ASF situation in the Dominican Republic. OIRSA attended the 5th meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on ASF for the Americas, and participated in a round-table discussion with regional and sub-regional organizations, which addressed priority actions under the regional ASF strategy and key challenges, and provided an overview of the region's ASF status.

1.5. The measures taken in response to the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 alert were presented at the 2nd annual meeting of the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health (CTRSA) and the 27th Latin American Poultry Farming Congress (OVUM). A verification proposal and a biosecurity guide for hatcheries and breeding establishments were reviewed. In this context, OIRSA participated in the HPAI desk-based simulation exercise conducted in Honduras.

1.6. OIRSA supported the antimicrobial resistance surveillance network in Guatemala by organizing and conducting a regional online workshop entitled "The importance of diagnosis when making decisions regarding antimicrobial treatment".

1.7. OIRSA attended the 49th regular meeting of the South American Commission for the Fight Against Foot and Mouth Disease (COSALFA). At this meeting, it presented a short report on regional activities supporting the Hemispheric Program for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PHEFA).

1.8. The following courses were prepared and delivered: training for safety auditors on plant production systems; course on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system for honey collection and packaging plants; and courses on animal welfare and microbiology in meat-product processing.

1.9. The risk-based Harmonized Regional Guide to Good Agricultural Practices was drawn up in both English and Spanish.

1.10. OIRSA took part in an event entitled "Food Safety and the Codex Alimentarius; Impact on National Productivity and Public Health", which was organized by the National Codex Committees of El Salvador and Guatemala.

1.11. OIRSA supported the national authorities and the OIRSA representative office in Guatemala by holding a virtual conference on poultry traceability for the Guatemalan Poultry Farmers Association and Poultry Specialists Guild.

1.12. Online training on developments concerning traceability mechanisms was made available to officials from the meat certification office and technical team that form part of the OIRSA traceability service in Nicaragua.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. OIRSA's Regional Technical Group for the revision of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures held a meeting with a view to reaching regional consensus within the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

2.2. Support was provided to the Ministry of Health of Panama to ensure equivalence with US Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) standards for beef exports.

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

3.1. In Mexico, measures were taken to control locusts using the biological fungus *Metarhizium anisopliae* in maize crops. Other measures taken include sampling for pests and disease.

3.2. In order to strengthen phytosanitary surveillance activities in Honduras, laboratory kits have been provided to help diagnose viruses in cucurbit crops.

3.3. Support was provided to validate methods for diagnosing ASF and classical swine fever (CSF) at the Central Veterinary Laboratory (LAVECEN) of the Dominican Republic, with a view to ensuring the accreditation of both tests.

3.4. A meeting was held with the Livestock Farmers Association of Honduras to present a proposal for the creation of a brucellosis- and tuberculosis-free zone in the country.

3.5. OIRSA presented the results of a monitoring exercise for inorganic arsenic in polished rice to the Costa Rican, Salvadoran, Honduran and Panamanian authorities responsible for safe food production.

3.6. Sampling began with a view to establishing aflatoxin (B1, B2, G1, G2) levels in imported and domestically produced maize kernels in the OIRSA region.

3.7. Fourteen newly trained canine-human teams were brought in to strengthen non-intrusive quarantine surveillance in the countries of the region. Dog trainers were also trained for Nicaragua and Honduras, thus building local capacity to continue training and retraining dogs.

3.8. In order to strengthen surveillance systems in Panama, the Trazar-Agro agricultural, aquaculture and fishery registration system was integrated into the country's phytosanitary surveillance platform.

3.9. The databases of the Trazar-Agro application's bovine health module were updated by adding vaccinations for bovine paralytic rabies and vaccination certificates for three diseases: bovine brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis and bovine paralytic rabies.

3.10. The Dominican Republic's movement control system was analysed with a view to combatting ASF and other diseases affecting the country's livestock.

4 STRENGTHENING NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. OIRSA provided support to facilitate the export of live cattle from Belize to Mexico by helping to select personnel and by providing training on the quarantining and inspection of livestock prior to shipment.

4.2. In order to build institutional capacity to diagnose disease and detect pests and contaminating residues, steps were taken to improve laboratories. Actions included: the purchasing of real-time PCR equipment for the Honduran Institute for Medico-Veterinary Research (IHMV), so as to strengthen the accreditation processes for diagnostic tests for terrestrial and aquaculture diseases; support for LAVECEN in obtaining accreditation for the pesticide residue analysis method under ISO 17025; and support for Costa Rica's National Animal Health Service (SENASA) in maintaining laboratory test accreditation for exporting farmed shrimp for human consumption to the European Union.

4.3. Support was provided to prepare a draft Government Decision on the creation of a national traceability system for livestock, aquaculture and apiculture products in Guatemala.

4.4. OIRSA reviewed the regulatory framework of the Honduran national traceability system and studied the possibility of incorporating the Agricultural Code and the bovine traceability instrument into that framework.

4.5. OIRSA worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador to create a roadmap and strategies for agricultural traceability in the country in 2022.

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. OIRSA attended the 34th Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organizations (RPPOs), in London, England. At this meeting, OIRSA reported on regional plant health-related challenges and developments. Proposals for cooperation were also presented with a view to enhancing phytosanitary surveillance in the OIRSA region. The proposed projects included risk maps with climatic and genetic variables, satellite monitoring, video surveillance, and monitoring and surveillance using mobile platforms and applications.

5.2. OIRSA took part in the 2022 IPPC Regional Workshop for Latin America. Topics of discussion at this event included draft fruit-fly standards, pest-free areas, plant health innovations for food security, the strengthening of pest outbreak alert response systems and e-commerce.

5.3. Agreement ATN/OC-19057-RG, RG-T3990 VigiMusa, was signed with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) to implement the project for a Latin American and Caribbean phytosanitary surveillance platform for musaceae.

5.4. A cooperation agreement was signed between OIRSA, citrus fruit producers and the National Agriculture and Food Health and Safety Service (SENASA) of Honduras, on the phytosanitary management of citrus crops in Sonaguera, Colón.

5.5. In order to help the ministries and secretariats of agriculture of OIRSA member countries to reliably diagnose pathologies affecting citrus crops, steps were taken to conduct inter-laboratory tests with the support of the Ibero-American Programme on Science and Technology for Development (CYTED) and the Valencia Institute for Agricultural Research (IVIA) in Spain.

5.6. FAO and OIRSA signed and began implementing a letter of agreement on animal health emergency preparedness and management systems, and complaint management and notification systems, with a view to improving the early detection of animal diseases, with special emphasis on ASF in the Dominican Republic. Revisions have been made to the draft protocol, drawn up by FAO, on movement-control posts for animals and products of animal origin.

5.7. OIRSA and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) signed and began implementing a letter of agreement to support the control and eradication of ASF in the Dominican Republic. The letter of agreement contains specific action plans for active surveillance in the field, the strengthening of quarantine areas, and the strengthening of the LAVECEN diagnosis area.

5.8. In coordination with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), support was provided to OIRSA member countries to help them acquire inter-laboratory tests for ASF and CSF, in order to ensure the accreditation of diagnostic tests as a preventive measure to address the health emergency in the Dominican Republic.

5.9. In coordination with PROGRESAN-SICA, Level I certification was obtained for the classification of food and nutritional insecurity in phases.

5.10. In coordination with the Regional Cooperative Programme for the Technological Development and Modernization of Regional Coffee Growing (PROMECAFE), OIRSA is providing its support as an expert in the 2022 Innovative Coffee Production Diploma Course, through the module on good agricultural practices for pesticide use.