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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 2022 TO JANUARY 2023

The following communication, received on 16 February 2023, 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. Regarding citrus farming, the Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Protection (GICSV) organized the first citrus event on the topic of phytosanitary intelligence on citrus and early warning systems; training on integrated management of HLB has also been provided to technicians, producers and nursery workers in Panama, and in Honduras training was provided on citrus production, establishment and management, with an emphasis on Persian lime, where topics such as the certified healthy plant production system and its use as a pest containment strategy were addressed.

1.2. Together with the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Chinese Taipei, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), it organized an International Expert Forum on *Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense* Tropical Race 4 (Foc TR4) and a field school on the contingency plan and biosecurity for Foc TR4. Colombia's experience of containment and its response to this disease in banana crops were presented at both events. In Belize, OIRSA, the International Cooperation and Development Fund of Chinese Taipei and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) provided banana and plantain producers with training on the prevention and identification of Foc TR4.

1.3. Training days and workshops on forest health have been carried out with an emphasis on bark insects, how to manage thrips in agricultural crops, the integrated management of cucurbit viruses and the integrated management of Central American lobster in the OIRSA region.

1.4. In conjunction with the International Atomic Energy Agency, it prepared a basic guide to the world's main fruit fly species.

1.5. In Honduras, a course on quarantine treatments was conducted for staff of the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) and the Agricultural Protection Service; in Guatemala, training was conducted for SITC staff on the handling of dangerous chemical substances; in Panama, SITC staff were certified in quarantine treatments under the Australian fumigation accreditation scheme (DAFF).

1.6. At the regional level, OIRSA participated in the Methyl Bromide Alternative Outreach (MBAO) conference held in Orlando, Florida (United States of America).

1.7. Trainers of dog-handler pairs from Honduras and Nicaragua were trained at the canine school of the National Health, Food Safety and Agri-food Quality Service (SENASICA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) of Mexico; 10 dog-handler pairs for the Dominican Republic and 4 dog-handler pairs for Guatemala were also trained.

1.8. Entomology specialists were trained at the University of Panama in order to strengthen the diagnostic capacities of pests in Belize, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

1.9. Support is provided to Nicaragua within the framework of the project, in collaboration with FAO-Mesoamerica "Risk reduction in agriculture in the face of phytosanitary and animal health threats in the SICA Region, in a COVID-19 context", in the construction and validation of the National Pest Risk Analysis for Foc TR4, including a first risk map, in collaboration with Nicaragua's Institute for Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA), the Nicaraguan Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA), the National Agrarian University (UNA) and the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response (SINAPRED) of Nicaragua.

1.10. In the Dominican Republic, technical staff of the Plant Health Department and the Ministry of Agriculture were trained to prepare the first national pest risk analysis study for *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4, with an epidemiological approach.

1.11. In Honduras, a workshop was held on the strengthening of technical and analytical capacities in the development of different types of risk analysis for emergency attention and phytosanitary emergencies, for the operational staff of the Agricultural Protection Service (SEPA), the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) of OIRSA and official technical staff of the Technical Plant Health Department of SENASA-Honduras.

1.12. Workshops and training were conducted to strengthen diagnostics of cross-border diseases, as well as apiculture diseases and pests. The workshop on quantitative risk analysis in animal health was also carried out to strengthen prevention capacities in the region's countries.

1.13. The second version of the mobile application "*Biblioteca OIRSA*" (OIRSA Library) was developed, which contains technical documents, manuals, and practical and demonstration videos related to animal-health issues for official, private, academic and international organizations, among others, to consult.

1.14. The "Live Training on Virtual Use of the SIMUVIMA/Food Database" was developed with the support of the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil. This activity provided information on the steps for the electronic submission of data on chemical substances in food and diet under the SIMUVIMA/Food programme, with the aim of collecting and making accessible data on food contamination from different countries to summarize, evaluate and present them at the global level.

1.15. In Panama, officials received training on the basic hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) for domestic honey collection and packaging plants.

1.16. The following courses are available in the OIRSA virtual classroom: "*Microbiología en el procesamiento de cárnicos*" (Microbiology in meat processing) and "*Bienestar Animal*" (Animal welfare).

## **2 PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION ACTIVITIES (PROGRAMMES OR CAMPAIGNS)**

2.1. A regional phytosanitary alert was issued in the OIRSA region for the prevention of banana wilt disease caused by Foc TR4, following the official confirmation of outbreaks of the disease in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) of the region were urged to strengthen their capacities for the identification of potential risk pathways in each of their territories, timely detection, phytosanitary diagnosis and pest management, based on their national circumstances, with a number of recommendations.

2.2. Under the Law for the Protection of Banana Crops, Government officials from Guatemala visited Aurora Airport to verify *Fusarium* TR4 exclusion measures and the work of eight canine units to prevent the entry of products with pests and diseases.

2.3. Banana producers in the Dominican Republic were trained on phytosanitary surveillance and on-farm biosecurity measures in order to prevent pests and diseases in their crops.

2.4. A campaign was carried out to identify and combat bark boring insects in the forests of the Malinche region, Tlaxcala (Mexico).

2.5. Continuous support has been provided to OIRSA member countries to step up non-intrusive inspections with canine and X-ray units for the detection of agricultural and livestock risk pathways. In addition, the application of quarantine measures and quarantine treatments has successfully prevented the entry of pests and diseases into the region, and is a measure for facilitating international trade.

2.6. Advisory and technical support has been provided to the veterinary services of Panama, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala to prepare and review national emergency plans for avian influenza in conjunction with the veterinary service and organized poultry producer associations. The diagnostic capacities of two level 3 biosecurity laboratories, which are a regional point of reference, will also be bolstered.

2.7. Computing platforms for epidemiological surveillance and laboratories have been developed to support the health programmes of Panama, Guatemala and Honduras.

2.8. Technical assistance and support continues to be provided to the Dominican Republic to control and eradicate African swine fever (ASF), and to prevent the entry of ASF into countries free of this disease.

2.9. The Progressive Pathway for Emergency Preparedness (PPEP) process has been initiated in OIRSA member countries, in conjunction with FAO-OIRSA, in order to enable each country to assess its animal health emergency preparedness so that the priority and key areas as identified by each country can be worked on and managed.

2.10. The monitoring of aflatoxins in corn was initiated to establish the regional base line. Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador sent their samples, which were analysed to determine levels of this contaminant.

### **3 STRENGTHENING NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO FACILITATE TRADE**

3.1. Support has been provided for the process of exporting live cattle from Honduras to Mexico, through the training of professionals from the SENASA Animal Health Directorate, Honduras.

3.2. In Costa Rica, analytical capacity-building was supported through international interlaboratory test comparisons, which are required to maintain accreditation of the tests to determine residues in plant products under INTE/ISO/IEC 17025:2017 of the Technical Standards Institute of Costa Rica (INTECO); calibration kits and certified vials were provided for the analysis of dye residues in aquaculture products and marine toxins in bivalve molluscs; follow-up assessments were carried out for the accreditation of the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (LANASEVE) with the Costa Rican Accreditation Body (ECA); and continued support is provided to maintain laboratory testing to export shrimp for human consumption to the European Union.

3.3. Through the acquisition of a chromatograph, support was provided to build analytical capacities for residues of veterinary drugs and pesticides of the laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)-OIRSA of El Salvador.

3.4. The analysis matrix of fruits and vegetables in the Dominican Republic was expanded, with the addition of analytical standards. Support was also provided to manage the establishment of the quality management system for pesticide residue tests for fresh fruits and vegetables.

### **4 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND TRADE**

4.1. The regional project to prevent and control *Fusarium* Tropical Race 4 in banana and plantain crops was launched, financed by the Development and International Cooperation Fund of Chinese

Taipei. In Belize, Guatemala and Honduras, this project will build capacities to diagnose diseases in Musaceae, including by establishing field technology and building laboratories' technical capacities.

4.2. A Phytosanitary Commission meeting was held on *Fusarium* Tropical Race 4 in Musaceae crops. The expert group provides technical and scientific support to national phytosanitary authorities on how to prevent and manage Foc TR4.

4.3. In coordination with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the methyl bromide fumigation methodology is constantly being updated.

4.4. An agreement between OIRSA, the Executive Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Health of Central America and the Dominican Republic (SE-COMISCA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was signed to implement a regional programme for the detection, prevention and control of respiratory zoonotic disease, with an emphasis on avian influenza, in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

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