

**REPORT ON ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL
ORGANISATION FOR PLANT AND ANIMAL HEALTH (OIRSA) IN RELATION
TO THE AGREEMENT ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

The following communication, dated 11 March 2004, is being circulated at the request of the OIRSA.

Report to be submitted during the 29th Meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures on 17 and 18 March 2004.

Technological Masters' Degree in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

1. In view of the satisfactory results of the first courses of the Technological Masters' Degree Programme, the Ministers/Secretaries of Agriculture and Livestock of the OIRSA region agreed on the organization of a third course. The purpose of this programme, which is being implemented by the OIRSA with the academic coordination of Colegio de Posgraduados de México (Postgraduate College of Mexico), is to train academically recognized, high-level human resources so that they can contribute to the modernization and implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, as well as to help foster international trade in Mexico and Central America.

To date, the following modules have been completed: (a) Leadership, Human Development and Basic Statistics; (b) Food Safety, theory and practice; (c) Global Economy and International Trade. The last of these modules, for example, involved the study, *inter alia*, of the development of the multilateral trade framework, the main WTO agreements, globalization, stages of economic integration, and trade negotiation techniques.

Support for the prevention, control and eradication of pests and diseases

2. Monitoring activities were developed in coordination with the authorities of the countries of Central America for two pests, "citrus leprosis" and "citrus cancrisis", and the countries developed plans for their control and eradication.

3. The Technical Animal Health Commission of H.CIRSA (technical directors of the countries) held its emergency meeting to address the emerging subject of **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy** and to define regional strategies to prevent the disease from entering the region.

Training and dissemination in the area of agricultural health and trade

4. In connection with the implementation of the United States Public Health Security and Bio-Terrorism Preparedness and Response Act (Public Law 107-188), between October 2003 and

February 2004 nine dissemination and training seminars were held in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

5. A course was organized for officials from Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama on laboratory diagnosis for the detection of the West Nile virus. The course was conducted in the high security laboratory of the Mexico – United States Commission for the Prevention of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Other Exotic Animal Diseases, SAGARPA/SENASICA, in Mexico.

6. Simulation courses were conducted on the subject of Avian Influenza in Panama and Foot-and-Mouth disease in El Salvador.

7. The following courses were organized through the Regional Project for the Strengthening of Phytosanitary Surveillance in Non-Traditional Export Crops (VIFINEX): good manufacturing practices and geographical information systems in Guatemala; production and post-harvest management of pineapples for export in El Salvador; good agricultural practices and integrated management with respect to melons and watermelons in Honduras; plant health in peanut cultivation in Nicaragua; and good agricultural practices with respect to organic coffee in Costa Rica.

8. Farmers from the Nicaraguan Chamber for the Dairy Industry (CANISLAC) received training on the subject of exotic diseases for central america, and the regional animal health situation in relation to the Central American Customs Union.

9. At the request of the College of Veterinary Surgeons of Costa Rica, a talk was organized on the topic: Animal Health at the Forefront of Sanitary Measures for International Trade.

10. At the request of the Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Chamber of El Salvador (CAMGRO), a talk was organized on the topic: Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in Free Trade Agreements.

11. During the Seventh Meeting of Agricultural Quarantine Decision-Makers from the OIRSA region, a talk was organized on the topic: International Trade and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

12. Officials and inspectors from the Agricultural Quarantine Division of El Salvador received training on the subject: Obligations and Ethics in International Trade.

Strengthening of regional sanitary institutions to facilitate trade

13. The FAO/OIRSA project on phytosanitary capacity building in OIRSA member countries was launched. This project seeks to strengthen the capacity of regional phytosanitary institutions by evaluating their capacity, identifying development strategies, providing training on phytosanitary regulations, and modernizing phytosanitary legislation to bring it into line with the IPPC and the WTO SPS Agreement.

14. In the framework of the IDB/OIRSA project on support for agricultural trade through the harmonized implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in mesoamerica, work was begun on identifying the structures, procedures and mechanisms of the region's sanitary and phytosanitary services.
