

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

The following communication, received on 24 January 2006, is being circulated at the request of the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA).

Training and dissemination in the area of agricultural health and trade

1. In Honduras, a workshop on epidemiology and risk analysis was held at the request of the National Agricultural Health Service of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. The aim was to give veterinary service officials an introduction to the knowledge and use of these epidemiological tools.
2. In Nicaragua, in the context of the regional seminar on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures organized by the Secretariat of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and other international organizations, a practical case-study was conducted on the application of SPS dispute settlement procedures.
3. The following seminars/workshops were held in Panama: "Preparation of a Technical Guide on Good Animal Production Practices (GAPP)" and "Training of Technical Advisers in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Phytosanitary Measures (PM)".
4. Support was given to the University of San Carlos in Guatemala for the development of a specialized post-graduate course on international trade in agricultural products, through the delivery of lectures on: SPS negotiations for market access purposes, international standards for sanitary measures, food regulations and animal health regulations.
5. In El Salvador, in the context of a seminar for small and medium-sized enterprises organized by the Salvadoran Exporters Corporation (COEXPORT), a talk was given on the topic: "Agricultural Trade and Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures for Export".

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

6. A simulation exercise on avian influenza was organized in Honduras in cooperation with the national authorities and the private sector.
7. In Guatemala, the Technical and Financial Cooperation Agreement for the official recognition, implementation and operation of the National Poultry Health Reference Laboratory was

signed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), OIRSA, the University of San Carlos and the National Poultry Farmers' Association.

8. Belize, Costa Rica and Panama are being supported in their efforts to declare themselves free of classical swine fever (CSF) *vis-à-vis* the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and trading partners, using the services of international experts to review the sanitary condition of those countries.

Support for dissemination of international standards

9. A regional workshop was organized in Costa Rica to review the draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) released for country consultation in 2005 by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC):

- (a) Requirements for the establishment and maintenance of pest-free areas for tephritid fruit flies;
- (b) guidelines for consignments in transit;
- (c) principles for the protection of plant health;
- (d) requirements for the submission of phytosanitary treatments;
- (e) diagnostic protocols for regulated pests.

10. A review is being conducted of the control, inspection and approval procedures applied by animal and plant health and quarantine services in countries in the OIRSA region, which have an impact on international trade, and their conformity with Annex C of the WTO SPS Agreement is being assessed.

11. The "Handbook of Good Manufacturing Practices for Honey Export Plants" and the "Harmonized Technical Regulation on Natural Honey Traceability" were submitted for consideration by the public and private sectors of the member countries.

Strengthening national sanitary institutions to facilitate trade

12. Five-year strategic plans for individual countries, a regional harmonized plan and a proposal for immediate strategic actions were drawn up in coordination with the national authorities of the OIRSA member countries. This planning exercise is an important means of adapting and preparing the institutional agro-sanitary structures of member countries to cope with the challenge of regional and international trade.

13. Continued support is being given to the Sub-Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures in the framework of the Central American Customs Union, through presentation of the following proposals: "Emergency Plan for Avian Influenza", "Emergency Plan for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy", "Emergency Plan for Foot-and-Mouth Disease", "Database for the Elaboration of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Requirements for Imports".

Strengthening OIRSA's relations with other international agencies

14. There was OIRSA participation in the meeting of the ad hoc group on epidemiological surveillance of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) held in Fort Collins, Colorado (United States). This led to the preparation of a type-B surveillance system for BSE, which was submitted for

consideration to the BSE Commission, and it is hoped that changes can be included in the regulations for adoption at the OIE's May 2006 meeting.

15. At the World Meeting on Avian Influenza held at the headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO) in November, the OIRSA delegate made a statement outlining the measures being taken in the Central American countries, with OIRSA support, to prevent high pathogenic avian influenza, and expressed the view that Central America was currently free of the disease. Similar presentations were made at the Hemispheric Conference on the Surveillance and Prevention of Avian Influenza and the Ministerial Meeting on National Plans for Avian Influenza Surveillance and Prevention, both of which were held in Brazil in December 2005.

16. An OIRSA panellist took part in the public meeting organized by the Food Safety Institute of the Americas (FSIA, a USDA initiative), on the theme: "Experiences with Existing Food Safety Programmes", which was held in Miami, Florida (United States).
