

**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**

Communication from OIRSA

The following communication, received on 27 March 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 Mexico and the Central American countries, a seminar has been held on the subject of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and the ways in which they relate to and affect international trade and business competitiveness. Designed for government, private and academic circles, the seminar is geared towards analysis and discussion of the interaction and linkages between the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) and international trade, distinguishing between situations in which SPS measures become barriers to trade or are warranted in the multilateral context. In particular, case methodology is used in order to illustrate the effects of SPS measures on the competitiveness of agribusiness. The broad themes covered include the following:

- The global environment of agricultural trade;
- Brief analysis of country agricultural trade;
- Agriculture in the multilateral negotiations: State of play:
 - Key outcomes of the Uruguay Round;
 - Doha;
- Plant and animal health: The Agreement:
 - The principles;
 - Practical exercises in application;
- Plant and animal health: Major differences. Lessons learnt;
- Plant and animal health as a non-tariff barrier and a factor of competitiveness;

- Plant and animal health: Case study (country-specific experiences).

2. In El Salvador, the "First Regional Workshop to Prepare the Manual of Good Practices for the Sanitary Production and Handling of Milk" will take place between 28 and 30 March 2006.

Support for dissemination of international and regional standards

3. In El Salvador, the "Manual of Good Practices for the Production and Manufacturing of Balsam of El Salvador" was submitted to the public and private sectors for consideration.

Strengthening national sanitary institutions to facilitate trade

4. In the Dominican Republic, support was provided for the induction and training of Agrifood Safety Department staff at the Ministry of Agriculture, by defining the Department's workplan for 2006-2007. Support was also given for the revision of the technical regulations on Good Agricultural Practices and Good Livestock Practices.

5. Continued support is being provided, within the context of the Central American Customs Union, to the Sub-Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, which is currently revising regional guidelines for the international transit of animal and plant products and by-products, and reviewing contingency plans for pests and diseases of quarantine and economic significance.

Strengthening OIRSA's relations with other international agencies

6. OIRSA took part in the First Meeting of the OIE's Inter-American Committee on Aquatic Animal Health, held in Panama City on 17 and 18 January 2006. The objectives of the meeting were to strengthen contacts between experts in this field and to develop strategies to promote the implementation of OIE guidelines, rules and standards, the exchange of scientific and technical information, and the harmonization, approval and strengthening of Veterinary Services.

7. OIRSA participated in the Sub-Regional Workshop on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, held in Panama City, Panama, from 20 to 24 February 2006. The workshop was hosted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO), with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and participation by organizations such as OIRSA. The outcomes of the workshop included: (a) Central American pandemic simulation exercise validated; (b) level of critical and shared knowledge of the WHO Global Plan and checklist; (c) Checklist for the National Pandemic Response Plan revised, extended and agreed; (d) Updated self-evaluation document for each country's National Pandemic Response Plan; and (e) undertaking for immediate, prioritized and specific action, designed to supplement each country's National Pandemic Response Plan and its operation and implementation at the local level.
