

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

Report to the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
28 February and 1 March 2007

The following communication, received on 23 February 2007, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

The OIRSA institutional restructuring process

1. In October 2006, OIRSA initiated a restructuring process with a long-term horizon for the year 2015, in accordance with the guidelines issued by its highest executive authority, which comprises the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture and Livestock (H. CIRSA), agricultural production chains and the agricultural trade. This process is based on six (6) pillars: (a) Shared vision; (b) human capital; (c) performance evaluation; (d) risk management; (e) operational excellence; and (f) sanitary and phytosanitary solutions for the productive sector.

Training and dissemination in the area of agricultural health and trade

2. The fourth and final videoconference on the prevention of H5N1 avian influenza, entitled "The risk to the poultry sector and preventive measures", was organized in conjunction with the Regional Unit for Technical Assistance (RUTA). The videoconference linked up all the countries in the OIRSA region and participants included authority representatives, producers and academics.

3. In Mexico, OIRSA participated in the 14th annual meeting of the National Technical Advisory Council on Animal Health (CONASA), presenting a seminar entitled "How to establish a professional animal health risk analysis system which supports decision-making".

4. In El Salvador, within the framework of activities for the prevention of avian influenza, a sanitary communication and dissemination strategy was established at a "Training for trainers" event in order to strengthen the biosecurity culture and promote the notification of avian diseases.

5. In El Salvador, OIRSA has worked in conjunction with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to organize a seminar on biosecurity in live bird markets, which will be held from 6 to 8 March 2007.

6. In Guatemala, a workshop-seminar on the standardization of laboratory testing for the diagnosis of avian diseases was attended by officials from the whole of the OIRSA region.

7. In Guatemala, field workers involved in the Programme for the Control and Eradication of Classical Swine Fever were given training on communication and epidemiological surveillance strategies in the eradication phase.

8. In Panama, the ELISA diagnostic test for Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis was harmonized.

9. In Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, national training workshops on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) systems and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) were held, whilst in Honduras, a regional workshop was held on these same topics. They were organized by OIRSA, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO) and the IICA/ILRI – CFC project.¹

10. In Guatemala, a regional training workshop on traceability in the livestock sector was held with the cooperation of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

11. In Panama, a regional workshop was held on the drafting of the Food Code or Law, as provided for within the framework of the PAHO-WHO-OIRSA Agreement.

12. In El Salvador, four training courses were held at national level on safety systems, basic concepts, GMP, SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures), HACCP and traceability. These events were aimed at technical staff from municipal slaughterhouses, businessmen and official inspectors of products of animal origin.

Support for the dissemination of international and regional standards

13. Taking as a reference the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code and the sanitary status of the country of origin and destination, animal health requirements were drafted and proposed for the importation into Panama of beeswax from Argentina.

14. The competent authority in the Dominican Republic was issued with the interpretation of surveillance for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) under Appendix 3.8.4 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, with the aim of establishing a points system for different sizes of adult bovine populations in countries in which no cases of BSE have been detected.

15. Regional guidelines have been developed to facilitate trade in poultry products and are in the process of being approved by the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health which is made up of representatives from the public and private sectors of OIRSA member countries.

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

16. In El Salvador, technical and financial support has been provided to help implement the National Programme for the Prevention, Control and Eradication of Classical Swine Fever (CSF). The control phase of this programme was successfully completed, involving *inter alia*: (a) Administration of 344,167 doses of vaccine against CSF in a two-day vaccination sweep across the country, with coverage of 78.5 per cent and 82.0 per cent respectively; and (b) 72,572 small pig farmers on family-run farms, 67 per cent of whom were women, benefited from the programme.

¹ Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and International Livestock Research Institute Project on Common Fund Commodities.

Strengthening national sanitary institutions in order to facilitate trade

17. Continued support has been provided, within the context of the Central American Customs Union, to the Sub-Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, with the following documents being submitted for review:

- (a) Contingency plans for the following pests: Fruit fly, pink hibiscus mealybug, *Thrips palmi*, lethal yellowing of the coconut palm, khapra beetle, *Tilletia barclayana*, cyst nematodes and citrus canker.
- (b) Contingency plans for the following diseases: Foot-and-mouth disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, classical swine fever and avian influenza.
- (c) Standard on the overland transit of live animals.

18. In Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, simulation exercises on outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza were carried out.

Strengthening OIRSA's relations with other international agencies

19. OIRSA participated in the OIE Permanent Commission of the Americas on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies in Animals (COPEA), which reviewed the progress made and problem areas faced by the countries of the Americas in complying with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code's provisions on bovine spongiform encephalopathy and its appendix on surveillance.

20. A proposal for a poultry sector safety plan was developed in coordination with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the Federation of Poultry Farmers of Central America and the Caribbean (FEDAVICAC).

21. OIRSA also participated in a seminar on traceability for bovine animals, organized in conjunction with the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI), and the 18th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.
