

**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 Fiftieth Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
18 and 19 October 2007

The following communication, received on 9 October 2007, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

1. At its fifty-first extraordinary meeting held last May, the International Regional Council for Plant and Animal Health, made up of the Ministers and Secretaries of Agriculture and Livestock of the nine OIRSA member countries, decided to approve the new organizational structure and strategy for operationalizing support for agri-food chains.
2. It will thus be possible for OIRSA activities in the area of plant and animal health and food safety to have a more direct impact on the production sector by strengthening its competitiveness.
3. Priority has been given to the following agri-food chains:
 - Phytosanitary support programme for the citrus and fruit agri-food chain;
 - support programme for the aquaculture chain;
 - regional support programme for the poultry production chain;
 - regional support programme for the bovine production chain;
 - phytosanitary support programme for the agri-food vegetable and plant chain;
 - regional support programme for the pig production chain;
 - programme to strengthen the quarantine system in the OIRSA region.

Training and dissemination activities in the areas of agricultural health and trade

4. In support of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), a workshop was held in Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, with the participation of all member countries, for the purpose of

reviewing the following draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), released for consultation in 2007 by the IPPC:

- Annex to ISPM No. 27 (Diagnostic protocols for regulated pests) *Thrips palmi*;
- amendments to ISPM No. 5 (Glossary of phytosanitary terms);
- supplement to ISPM No. 5;
- supplement No. 3, Debarked and bark-free wood;
- establishment of areas of low pest prevalence for fruit flies (*Tephritidae*);
- classification of products in categories according to their phytosanitary risk;
- development of a strategy to reduce or replace the use of methyl bromide for phytosanitary purposes;
- sampling of consignments.

5. With the support of the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI) and the technical assistance of Spain's Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAPA), an international course was developed in the OIRSA regional framework on selected plant health topics, which included consideration of the following:

- Plant health in the international framework;
- organization of plant health in Spain;
- regulation of the entry and movement of plants in the European Union: Directive 2000/29/EC;
- plant quarantine;
- phytosanitary inspection methodology;
- phytosanitary information.

6. OIRSA member countries were also provided with training and support in pest risk analysis.

7. The OIRSA prepared a draft OIRSA Regional Standard on Plant Health: "Phytosanitary measures for the control of *Thrips palmi*", which was released for member country consultation.

8. As a Regional Plant Protection Organization (RPPO), OIRSA participated in the 19th Technical Consultation among RPPOs convened by the Director General of FAO, which addressed a number of topics including the role of the RPPOs in the review and the implementation of International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), and the exchange of phytosanitary information.

9. Risk analysis courses were given for official staff of the veterinary services of the Dominican Republic and Guatemala.

10. Within the framework of activities for the prevention of avian influenza, and under the "Training for trainers" strategy, sanitary communication and dissemination activities were implemented in order to strengthen the biosecurity culture and promote the notification of avian diseases in OIRSA member countries.

11. A further element of avian influenza prevention activities between March and September involved the coordinated organization, with the United States Department of Agriculture, of seven seminars on biosecurity in live bird markets, with the participation of the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Labour, as well municipal authorities, poultry producers, live bird market traders and NGOs. This resulted in the establishment of a follow-up group in each country to submit recommendations emanating from the seminars to the competent authorities. The relevant follow-up activities are currently being coordinated.

12. In the context of the USAID-PAHO Project of Cooperation on Avian Influenza and Pandemic Influenza, support was given to a workshop on avian influenza geographical risk analysis conducted by the panel for the identification of critical risk factors for the introduction and spread of H₅N₁ avian influenza in the region.

13. At the request of the United States Department of Agriculture, support was provided for "Training on packaging and consignment of infectious substances", resulting in the accreditation of ten employees of the public and production sector in Honduras to send samples to the United States National Veterinary Services Laboratory.

14. A regional workshop for trainers in the auditing of GMP, SSOP and HACCP systems was organized and coordinated jointly with PAHO and the IICA's ILRI-CFC project. Practical auditing exercises were conducted in four establishments that process products of animal origin.

15. A course on the latest international market trends and requirements, organized by the Costa Rican Association of Agricultural Engineers, dealt with traceability in agricultural products and was attended by 60 technicians.

Support for the dissemination of international and regional standards

16. The competent authority in the Dominican Republic was issued with the interpretation of the chapter on surveillance for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, with the aim of establishing a points system for different sizes of adult bovine population in countries in which no cases of BSE have been detected.

17. Support was provided for the participation of a Belize delegate in the OIE General Session, in his capacity as Secretary of the OIE Regional Commission for the Americas.

18. Proposed amendments to the chapters on avian influenza and Newcastle disease of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code were reviewed at the meeting of the Regional Technical Commission on Poultry Health in San Salvador, El Salvador.

19. Coordination and support was provided for the participation of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Nicaragua in the thirteenth CAMEVET Seminar on Harmonization of Registration and Control of Veterinary Medicines.

20. Support was provided for the process of drafting the regulation to the new Mexican Federal Law on Animal Health through the "Regional Guideline for inspection and approval of animal product processing or slaughtering establishments". The Guideline was prepared as an instrument to aid compliance with Annex C to the SPS Agreement on "Control, Inspection and Approval

Procedures". The above-mentioned document is available to interested parties at the following electronic address:

<http://www.oirsa.org/aplicaciones/subidoarchivos/DirectricesRegionales/DirectrizinspapestBelize.pdf>

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

21. Three preparatory seminars were held for the eradication phase of classical swine fever in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. Particular emphasis was placed on regionalization concepts.

Transparency of animal health information

22. The monthly Regional Epidemiological Bulletin continued to be distributed, with information on the incidence of animal diseases in the countries of the OIRSA region, in order to support transparency in epidemiological information and surveillance.

Strengthening national institutions in order to facilitate trade

23. In relation to poultry surveillance, within the framework of the United States-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) OIRSA collaborated with the US Department of Agriculture in a round table on "Central American Poultry Trade, Disease Surveillance and US and International Standards" and in a round table on "Next Steps for the Establishment of Poultry Health Systems", in order to provide guidance on the requirements to be met by the countries of Central America for the entry of poultry products into the United States market.

Specific support for production chains for agricultural products

Bovine chain

24. The seminar on Standards and Sanitary Inspection of Dairy Products at the Sixth Nicaraguan Dairy Sector Congress organized by the Nicaraguan Chamber for the Dairy Sector (CANISLAC) was attended by 200 producers, processors, students and government officials.

25. The seminar on the importance of implementation of the Handbook of Good Dairy Farming Practices for Central America, Panama and Belize, held during the third Central American Dairy Farming Congress organized by PROLECHE, was attended by 150 producers, processors, students and government officials.

26. A regional workshop on traceability was organized and coordinated jointly with the IICA and the IICA's ILRI-CFC project in San José, Costa Rica, from 22 to 24 May 2007. It was attended by 200 participants from 15 Latin American countries, Canada and Spain.

27. Work was completed on the preparation, design, publication and distribution to member countries of the Handbook of Good Dairy Farming Practices for Central America, Panama and Belize.

28. Work was completed on the preparation, design and publication of posters on good manual milking practices and good mechanical milking practices for Guatemala and Honduras.

29. Technical farm inspection visits were made in connection with milking and hygienic handling of milk and the inspection of small-scale cheese processing plants, under the Ciudad Dolores project of El Salvador's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; a plan of action to improve the dairy sector in Ciudad Dolores was also developed and followed up.

Fisheries and aquaculture production chain

30. A Latin American workshop on certification of programmes on toxic residues and aquaculture traceability was organized and coordinated jointly with the Ibero-American Programme of Science and Technology for Development (CYTED), the Panamanian Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA), the Panamanian Aquatic Resources Authority (ARAP) and the OIE, and was held in Panama City from 7 to 10 May 2007, with the participation of 60 public and private sector delegates from 13 countries.

31. A regional workshop-seminar on the identification of areas of cooperation for the improvement of health and production as an aid to marketing fisheries and aquaculture products in the OIRSA region was organized and coordinated jointly with MAPA, MIDA and the Organization for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA), and was held in Panama City with the valuable participation of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAPA). It was attended by 45 technicians from member countries.

32. A regional course on health and food security in aquaculture was held jointly with MAPA, AECI and OIRSA. The 36-hour course, attended by 37 public sector technicians, dealt with aquatic health, residue analysis laboratories and the safety of fisheries and aquaculture products.
