

# WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

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## 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 44<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures,  
25 and 26 February 2009

The following communication, received on 23 February 2009, is being circulated at the request of the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA).

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### 1. Specific support for agricultural production chains

1. The International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), in conjunction with national sanitary and phytosanitary authorities and the private sector, has continued to implement sanitary and phytosanitary programmes in support of agri-food chains. The following action has been taken over the past three months:

#### Honduras

2. With a view to supporting the bovine production chain, a national programme for the prevention, control and eradication of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis was developed, with a special focus on the milk-producing areas of Atlántida, Yoro, Olancho and Cortéz. This programme is a joint effort by the authorities of the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA), OIRSA and the private sector.

#### Nicaragua

3. In the framework of the phytosanitary programme in support of the fruit and vegetable production chain, the following action was undertaken:

- OIRSA has continued to grant financial support to, and provide technical follow-up for, the citrus leprosis and fruit fly control programmes.
- Technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry (MAGFOR) to enable the area to the north of Lake Xolotlán to be declared free from *Ceratitis capitata*.
- OIRSA has continued to provide technical and financial support for pink bollworm monitoring to allow Nicaragua to maintain its status as a country free from this pest.
- OIRSA has continued to provide technical and financial support for locust monitoring and control.

### El Salvador

4. With a view to supporting the bovine production chain, a national programme for the prevention, control and eradication of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis was developed and officially launched. This programme, which will be implemented at national level, is a joint effort by the authorities of the Directorate-General of Plant and Animal Health of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (DGSVA/MAG), OIRSA and the milk producers' association PROLECHE.

5. Within the framework of the programme in support of the pig production chain, the authorities of the national veterinary services will shortly be declaring El Salvador free from classical swine fever, mainly as a result of a successful prevention, control and eradication programme which benefited from technical and financial assistance from OIRSA.

### Guatemala

6. Within the framework of the health programme in support of the vegetable production chain, OIRSA organized a workshop on the development of a phytosanitary and safety programme for potato production. The workshop, which took place on 16 and 17 October 2008, was attended by representatives of the public, private and academic sectors. This programme, which will receive support from OIRSA, will facilitate the prevention and control of pests that restrict international trade in potatoes from Guatemala.

7. With regard to fisheries and aquaculture, a seminar-workshop was held on 3 December 2008 on the development of a health programme in support of the fisheries and aquaculture production chain and on the restructuring of this chain. This programme is a joint effort by the Ministries of Agriculture, the Project in support of the Central American fisheries and aquaculture integration process (PRIPESCA) of the Organization for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) and OIRSA.

## **2. Training, technical assistance and dissemination activities relating to agricultural health and trade**

8. In Honduras, within the framework of the International Congress on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), hosted by the El Zamorano Pan-American School of Agriculture, a lecture was given on the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) and its relationship with integrated pest management. Particular attention was drawn to the following issues: international phytosanitary regulations and market access; agricultural health threats to the region; IPM and market access, the relationship between IPM and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs); the importance of GMPs to market access; new GMP-related regulations; the importance of regulations to trade; and the regional role of OIRSA in sanitary and phytosanitary issues.

9. In Honduras, an inspection visit was organized, in conjunction with SENASA specialists, to Cantaloupe melon exporting companies with a view to preparing these companies for an inspection by the US Food and Drug Administration. The various efforts in this regard resulted in the reopening of the US market.

10. In El Salvador, as part of the celebrations for the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Department of Veterinary Medicine of the University of El Salvador, a lecture was given on the agricultural health risks and threats to the region. It highlighted the factors that lead to an increased risk of quarantine pests and exotic diseases being introduced into the OIRSA region, the type of problems involved and the expected economic impact.

11. In El Salvador, OIRSA organized a preliminary inspection for a tuna-processing company and a course on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) and the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system for 75 fishing industry specialists from the departments of Usulután and La Unión.

12. In Guatemala, training in inspection, GMPs, SSOPs and the HACCP system was provided for 30 specialists from fish farms which export to the European Union and the United States and for officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) working in the area of hydrobiological resources.

13. In Guatemala, OIRSA supported MAGA authorities during the inspection of four establishments authorized to export fishery and aquaculture products for human consumption to the European Union.

14. In Guatemala, in conjunction with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, OIRSA coordinated and participated in a workshop on European Community regulations on fishery and aquaculture products in relation to trade, pursuant to the EU-Central American Association Agreement.

15. In Panama, OIRSA provided training in international and regional legislation on fishery product safety for 30 officials from the Ministries of Agriculture and fisheries institutes of Central American countries.

16. In the Dominican Republic, OIRSA provides support for the national authorities in their fight against the recent outbreak of the Huanglongbing ("citrus greening") disease by offering technical assistance from international and regional experts, which has enabled a control and eradication strategy to be developed for the disease.

### **3. Support for the regional harmonization process**

17. In Nicaragua, with the support of the OIE, OIRSA organized a regional technical meeting to discuss draft amendments to international animal health standards, such as the OIE Code and Manuals.

### **4. Support for risk analysis**

18. In Nicaragua, fact-sheets were prepared for the pests *Acidovorax avenae* (Schaad et al., 1978) Willems et al., 1992, a bacterium which attacks Cucurbitaceae, and *Agilus planipennis* Fairmaire, a beetle which damages trees.

### **5. Strengthening of national institutions in order to facilitate trade**

19. In Honduras and the Dominican Republic, OIRSA provides continued support for the national sanitary and phytosanitary committees.

20. A technical assessment was conducted of the performance of and the quarantine measures applied by the border checkpoints of the Central American Customs Union, Belize and Panama. A detailed report was submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Region (CIRSA), which led to the establishment of an ongoing assessment programme, an early warning system and a plan to strengthen quarantine services.

## **6. Strategic alliances for promoting health and trade**

21. A cooperation agreement was signed by the Federation of Chambers and Associations of Exporters of Central America and Panama (FECAEXCA) and OIRSA to coordinate cooperation efforts aimed at improving access for the region's agricultural export offer by means of actions ensuring compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary regulations.

22. Within the framework of the AgroCafta programme, OIRSA has provided technical support for the preparation of technical data sheets (technical requirements and SPS measures) in respect of access to the US market for fresh and processed products which are already being exported or which have export potential.

23. As a partner organization, OIRSA has held coordination meetings with the trade institutions and associations coming together under the region's chambers of exporters in order to support the implementation of Phase IV of the AI-Invest initiative. This programme is a joint effort between interested European parties and Central American business organizations with a view to facilitating the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region.

24. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) pre-approved the project on regional standards and public capacity-building for the development and implementation of bovine traceability systems which are compatible between Central American countries, the objective of which is to establish the regional bases (conceptual, legal and technological) and strengthen national public capacity to subsequently develop and implement such systems.

## **7. Strengthening of inter-institutional relations with other international bodies**

25. The Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) project on the strengthening of the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) prevention mechanism and adoption of good animal feeding practices is now underway, thanks to the collective efforts of the FAO, OIRSA and national authorities.

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