

**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 45th Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures,
22 to 24 June 2009

The following communication, received on 17 June 2009, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

1. Specific support for agricultural production chains

1. In conjunction with national sanitary and phytosanitary authorities and the private sector, OIRSA is continuing 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. Concerning the poultry production chain, OIRSA has helped Honduras obtain recognition as a country free from trade-restrictive diseases, by strengthening its quarantine inspection service and the National Laboratory for Residue Analysis (LANAR).

Nicaragua

3. The following action was taken under the phytosanitary programme in support of the fruit and vegetable production chain:

- (a) Continuing technical and economic support for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry (MAGFOR) in implementing the programme to maintain the citrus leprosis-free status of the Departments of Rivas and Río San Juan. The Costa Rican authorities have recognized the status of these areas, thus facilitating the import of 72,000 tonnes of fresh fruit from Nicaragua;
- (b) technical support for the MAGFOR authorities with a view to having the area north of Lake Xolotlán declared free from *Ceratitidis capitata*; an area of 484 km.² has been declared free by ministerial decision. To secure recognition of that status, discussions are under way between the Nicaraguan authorities and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA); and

- (c) preparation of factsheets to spread technical information on agricultural health. The latest articles published were: (i) "Áreas libres de moscas de las frutas, una oportunidad para invertir" (Fruit fly-free areas, an opportunity for investment); (ii) "MAGFOR y OIRSA en alerta contra el Thrips Palmi" (MAGFOR and OIRSA on the alert to combat *Thrips Palmi*); and (iii) "Urge activar plan de contingencia contra Huanglongbing de los cítricos" (Urgent need for a contingency plan to combat huanglongbing disease of citrus).

El Salvador

4. Within the framework of the programme in support of the swine production chain, in April the national veterinary services declared El Salvador free from classical swine fever. A three-phase programme had to be implemented over a four-year period in order to achieve that goal:

- (a) Control phase (2004 – 2006): Two immunization campaigns, covering 100 per cent of the national territory and more than 80 per cent of the hog population, were carried out for the benefit of 136,872 small-scale breeders.
- (b) The eradication phase was completed in 2007: During this phase the national authorities banned the use of vaccines, stepped up epidemiological surveillance, tested blood samples for antibodies and cancelled import authorization for biological products for classical swine fever. Diagnostic techniques were improved, as was the capacity of the Veterinary Diagnostic and Quality Control Laboratory.
- (c) The epidemiological surveillance phase was conducted from 2008 to March 2009: the second sampling was carried out all over the country, involving backyard hogs in semi-industrial and industrial farms, markets, slaughterhouses and sentinel farms; the health education and outreach campaign was stepped up, with more stringent control of hog movements including surveillance at seaports, airports and borders. Finally, the Emergency Plan was activated.

El Salvador was declared free from classical swine fever in April 2009.

In addition to providing financial support for the programme, OIRSA carried out inspections and technical audits during this time.

Panama

5. The following action was taken under the phytosanitary programme in support of the fruit production chain:

- (a) Technical and financial support to maintain the Azuero Peninsula's status as an area free from the Mediterranean fruit fly. Promotion of this area through technical assistance for 40 ha. of papaya for export;
- (b) technical and financial support to maintain the *Thrips palmi*-free area through containment of the pest in the Arco Seco region of Panama; and
- (c) technical and financial support to contain *Anastrepha grandis*, also known as the South American curcurbit fruit fly, in the province of Darién (bordering on Colombia) and the rest of the province of Panama.

Guatemala

6. Under the regional programme for the prevention, control and eradication of classical swine fever, OIRSA is cooperating with the Guatemalan authorities so that the country can be declared free from the disease by late 2009. The implementing strategy for the control and eradication programmes in Nicaragua and Honduras was re-directed in order to achieve the objective of declaring both countries free from the disease within the next couple of years.

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

7. An audit of eight fisheries was conducted in Honduras in cooperation with SENASA specialists. The visit covered five plants in La Ceiba and another three in Roatán, and six vessels. A report was presented to each plant during the visit and at the final meeting with the official veterinary inspectors and plant management and staff. A meeting was held with technical experts from the Tilapia production sector to review and analyse the European regulations on aquaculture, the use of veterinary drugs (specifically Methyltestosterone for the induction of sex reversal in fry in the initial weeks of life), and implementation of the Residue and Contaminant Control Plan.

8. In Belize, OIRSA is providing support to the national authorities by offering the technical assistance of international and regional experts to combat the recent outbreak of huanglongbing ("citrus greening") disease. This has led to the implementation of contingency measures and the development of a control strategy. Under a regional emergency fund, OIRSA is also helping the Dominican Republic and Belize with the implementation of their respective programmes.

9. Jointly organized by the University of Panama and OIRSA, with Dr Arturo Goldarazena of Spain's Instituto NEIKER as the key speaker, the Regional Course on Thysanoptera, focusing on *Thrips palmi* and control of the pest, was held in Panama from 20 to 25 April 2009.

10. In a joint venture between the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Agriculture, Fundecitrus (Brazil), INRA (France), APHIS (United States) and OIRSA, the First Regional HLB Course was held in the Dominican Republic from 27 April to 1 May 2009.

11. In Panama, a workshop on traceability issues, organized by the National Directorate of Animal Health of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIIDA) discussed the topic "EU sanitary requirements for fisheries and aquaculture products and traceability system for fisheries and aquaculture products". OIRSA also coordinated the revision of the draft Hazard Analysis in the Cultured Shrimp Production Chain and the draft Tracing Guide for the Shrimp Farming Chain from the standpoint of end product safety.

12. In Nicaragua, technical audits were performed in five establishments authorized to export to the European Union. An action plan based on the recommendations made by the FVO/DG-SANCO in its 2006 inspection report has been established and implemented.

13. In Costa Rica, the State Phytosanitary Service was given help in preparing for the next visit of the European Commission's DG-SANCO on pesticide residues in plant products. A pre-evaluation visit was made to seven pineapple farms, one mango farm and one melon farm, each of which received a technical report detailing the results of the visit, and a general report was provided to the members of the Governing Board of the National Chamber of Pineapple Producers and Exporters (CANAPEP).

14. In Guatemala, OIRSA helped the national authorities prepare for the DGSANCO's visit to inspect fish farms for veterinary drug residues in animal products. Producers and experts covered by

the Agro-CAFTA programme received training in maximum chemical residue levels in food (proper and integrated use of pesticides) and Good Agricultural Practice.

3. Support for the regional harmonization process

15. The countries of the OIRSA region jointly declared a phytosanitary state of emergency following the emergence of HLB foci. Measures were taken to detect the bacterium *Candidatus Liberibacter spp.* and its vectors, *Diaphorina citri* and *Trioza erytreae*.

16. Under the Regional Contingency Plan for the Control and/or Eradication of Fruit Flies of Quarantine Importance, which has been adjusted to deal with the South American curcubit fruit fly *Anastrepha grandis*, introduced into Panama and officially declared present in the national territory in May 2009, phytosanitary measures are being harmonized in terms of:

- (a) Emergency and containment measures under a standard regulatory framework;
- (b) methodology suited for trapping in cucurbits (trap height, food attractants); and
- (c) eradication of foci, application equipment and insecticide.

The Plan is in line with International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 6 (Guidelines for surveillance), No. 8 (Determination of pest status in an area) and No. 9 (Guidelines for pest eradication programmes).

17. A PCR protocol for HLB diagnosis, developed by the University of Florida, is being implemented in HLB-affected OIRSA countries, using DNA isolation of the bacterium from the veins of affected citrus leaves.

18. Harmonization of the region's position in international fora has been achieved by analysing the draft amendments to the Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes and the revision of draft ISPMs.

19. The Poultry Regional Technical Committee, the Technical Committee and the Council of Ministers (CIRSA) have adopted the following five sets of regional guidelines regulating the regional poultry industry:

- (a) Technical guidelines regulating the regional poultry industry;
- (b) Health technical guidelines for the prevention, control and eradication of avian influenza;
- (c) Health technical guidelines for the prevention, control and eradication of Newcastle disease;
- (d) Health technical guidelines for the prevention, control and eradication of pullorum-typhoid disease; and
- (e) Regional technical guidelines regulating the inspection and certification of poultry establishments.

4. Strengthening of national institutions in order to facilitate trade

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

5. Strategic alliances for promoting health and trade

21. A cooperation agreement was signed between the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and OIRSA with a view to creating conditions conducive to animal and plant health and to facilitating trade in the region's agricultural products.

22. Under the project in support of the Central American fisheries and aquaculture integration process (PRIPESCA), OIRSA is working with the Organization for the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA) to draft manuals on good aquaculture practice.

6. Strengthening of inter-institutional relations with other international bodies

23. OIRSA will support the OIE in coordinating the Inter-American Aquatic Animal Health Committee.

24. The draft technical cooperation programme with the FAO to monitor the Influenza A subtype H1N1 virus among hog populations in Central America and neighbouring countries is currently being revised.
