

**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 46th Meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures,
28 and 29 October 2009

The following communication, received on 23 October 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.

Belize

2. For the fruit production chain, OIRSA coordinated technical assistance provided by Dr Joseph Bové, a plant pathologist from France's Agricultural Research Institute (INRA), for the control of huanglongbing (HLB) disease.

3. OIRSA supported Belize with an emergency fund of US\$50,000 to deal with the HLB regional emergency. The disease was detected in Belize in May 2009. A plan of action was drawn up together with the authorities concerned and the industry with a view to its implementation.

4. The Belize Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) received emergency financing in the amount of US\$700,000, drawn from OIRSA funds earmarked for Mexico, from Mexico's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA), in order to establish an HLB control plan.

Honduras

5. In the fruit production chain, OIRSA supported the programme for Mediterranean fruit fly-free areas and containment of other fruit flies, the citrus pest (HLB and citrus leprosis) prevention and control programme, and the contingency plan for HLB and containment of *Thrips Palmi* in cucurbits and oriental plants or mini plants for export.

- (a) Support for the detection of HLB and its insect vector, covering the citrus-growing areas adjacent to the Aguán valley to begin with.
- (b) The programme for Mediterranean fruit fly-free areas in Honduras will receive support in the form of prime fruit genetic material (pest-resistant or -tolerant) for the pest-free areas and identification of support in the mango fly (*Anastrepha oblique*) and Mexican citrus fruit fly (*Anastrepha ludens*) breeding and sterilization laboratory.
- (c) Technical assistance for citrus leprosis control included phytosanitary pruning, since this is a viral disease transmitted by an acarion, and the use of trapping shrubs such as the achiote (*Bixa orellana*).

Nicaragua

6. The following activities were implemented under the phytosanitary programme in support of the fruit and vegetable production chain:

- (a) With the support of the United States Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/AHIS), 60 MAGFOR phytosanitary and quarantine inspectors received training on the following topics: (1) HLB, sampling and dispatch of samples, and contingency plan; (2) fruit chain operation; (3) citrus leprosis; (4) *Thrips palmi*; (5) pests of quarantine significance such as the red palm and musacea mite.
- (b) Preparation of the factsheet on *Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. cubense Tropical Race 4* (TR4).

El Salvador

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

- (a) Training of Plant Health Department officials in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to deal with HLB, citrus leprosis, *Anastrepha grandis* and other pests of quarantine significance.
- (b) Detection of HLB in citrus-growing areas.
- (c) Keynote address on phytosanitary threats to regional fruit production and their impact on agribusiness, at the Fifth World Agribusiness Forum on tropical fruits.
- (d) Establishment of the National Citrus Phytosanitary Commission.

Panama

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

- (a) Continued support for the National Plant Health Directorate of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) in maintaining, recognizing and promoting the Azuero Peninsula as an area free from the Mediterranean fruit fly. OIRSA provided support in setting up five internal quarantine posts at the main points of entry to the

Peninsula, in order to reduce the risk of the Mediterranean fruit fly being introduced in the pest-free area.

- (b) OIRSA's contingency plan for flies of quarantine significance was activated following the emergence, in February 2009, of the South American curcurbit fly (*Anastrepha grandis*) in specific parts of the province of Darién (bordering on Colombia) and the commune of Chepo in the province of Panama. The outbreak was circumscribed and a chemical control, trapping and sampling programme was implemented. Training and outreach activities were also organized.
- (c) Continued support for containment of *Thrips palmi* in the Arco Seco region, maintaining insect populations under *Thrips* terminal outbreak levels. Assistance was provided in eliminating seven foci in the Renacimiento district in the province of Panama, which borders on Costa Rica.
- (d) Three regional teleconferences on *Anastrepha grandis* were broadcast from Panama for the whole OIRSA region. Participants in these events included scientific experts such as Allan Norrbom from USDA, Aldo Malavasi of Brazil, Cheslavo Korytkowski of Panama and the economist José Benavent of Panama. Teleconferences were also held on HLB and *Thrips palmi*. The teleconferences were attended by 226 technical personnel from the OIRSA region.
- (e) OIRSA is promoting the development of a Regional Citrus Network, made up of government officials, citrus growers, researchers and scientists with an interest in citrus plant health. The network is coordinated by the OIRSA office in Panama.
- (f) Maps have been drawn up to situate commercial citrus-growing areas and citrus leprosis and HLB outbreaks in the region.

Guatemala

9. Guatemala's health authorities declared the country free from classical swine fever on 9 October 2009. Guatemala thus joins Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama and Mexico, which all have classical swine fever-free status in the region. Guatemala has not reported any outbreak of classical swine fever since September 2007, and the authorities therefore set August 2008 as the final month of the immunization phase. Over the years during which the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) implemented the programme, financial support was provided by the Government of Chinese Taipei and technical assistance by OIRSA, under the regional programme for the prevention, control and eradication of classical swine fever.

Dominican Republic

10. Under the phytosanitary programme in support of the fruit production chain, continued support has been provided to the Secretariat of State for Agriculture (SEA) and to citrus-growers in order to combat an outbreak of HLB. OIRSA recently coordinated the visit of Dr Mike Irely, an expert from Southern Gardens, Florida.

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

11. In El Salvador, the basic further training course on quarantine procedures for inspectors responsible for plant and animal health certification for trade was organized in coordination with the Directorate-General of Plant and Animal Health.

12. Also in El Salvador, a meeting of interest groups on the risks of *Fusarium* TR4, BBTV (Banana Bunchy Top Virus) and other pests of musaceae was held from 29 to 31 July 2009 for the OIRSA region, Latin America and the Caribbean. The meeting was sponsored by OIRSA, Bioversity International and MUSALAC. The objectives were as follows: (a) to inform interest groups about the rapid spread of *Fusarium* TR4 in the Pacific region of Asia and to alert OIRSA member countries to this threat to the region; (b) to discuss and encourage the intensification of phytosanitary measures at points of entry in order to prevent introduction of the pathogen in the OIRSA region; and (c) to discuss the *Fusarium* TR4 and BBTV pathogens and other regulated quarantine and non-quarantine pests with a view to establishing a regional phytosanitary programme to combat these banana and plantain pests. The meeting was attended by more than 60 participants, including growers of musaceae from the OIRSA region, plant health officials from OIRSA member countries, scientists and researchers specializing in pests of musaceae from various countries, and OIRSA officials posted in countries of the region.

13. In Belize, a training course on communication methods and legal drafting was organized for all quarantine staff.

14. With the support of the Ministries or Secretariats of Agriculture and Livestock of the OIRSA member countries, activities have begun to determine the prevalence of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis in Central America.

15. In the Dominican Republic, a working visit in support of the SEA was made to follow up on the Action Plan - Pesticide Residue Monitoring in Food of Plant Origin, of the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs (DG SANCO), 2008.

16. In Panama, a regional course on fruit fly taxonomy and ecology was jointly organized by the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA), the University of Panama and OIRSA.

17. Also in Panama, Azuero producers and experts received training in good agricultural practice for papaya growing.

18. In Costa Rica, OIRSA helped senior officials of the State Phytosanitary Service (SFE) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock prepare for the monitoring of pesticide residue in food of plant origin due to be conducted by the DG SANCO's Food and Veterinary Office.

19. In Nicaragua, a regional congress on traceability and good agricultural practice was organized in coordination with the Producers and Exporters Association of Nicaragua (APEN).

3. Support for the regional harmonization process

20. In El Salvador, a regional workshop reviewed draft international standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPM) submitted for consultation by the IPPC Secretariat. The workshop was held under the auspices of OIRSA, in its capacity as regional phytosanitary protection agency, and was attended by delegates from eight of the nine member countries. The participants agreed on and used templates to enter comments on the following draft ISPMs: (1) revision of ISPM 7: Phytosanitary export certification system; (2) revision of ISPM 12: Guidelines for phytosanitary certificates; (3) draft ISPM: Design and operation of post-entry quarantine stations; and (4) Glossary of phytosanitary terms (amendment to ISPM 5). The comments were then sent to the IPPC Secretariat.

4. Support for the development of risk analysis

21. In Panama, OIRSA helped the national authorities prepare risk analysis technical factsheets on the following quarantine pests: HLB and *Anastrepha grandis*.

5. Strengthening of national institutions in order to facilitate trade

22. In Honduras and the Dominican Republic, OIRSA provided continuing support for the national sanitary and phytosanitary committees

6. Strategic alliances for promoting health and trade

23. The presidency of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has approved the project entitled "Harmonized System of Bovine Traceability in Central America and the Dominican Republic". The project will be financed by the IDB, OIRSA and Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama. Its aim is to establish a harmonized regional traceability system to help improve animal health, food security and safety and competitiveness of the livestock sector in these countries.

24. The first meeting for the regional IAEA/OIRSA project 2009-2011 entitled "Establishing and Maintaining Fruit Fly Free and Low Prevalence Areas in Central America, Panama and Belize, Using the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) (ARCAL CVI)" (No. RLA/5/057) was held in Guatemala. The meeting, which was attended by the coordinators of fruit fly programmes in the region, reviewed the current status of Mediterranean fruit fly-free areas in each country and identified programme needs.

25. OIRSA will support the strategic plan for the detection, delimitation, treatment and quarantine of HLB and the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) in Belize, Mexico and the United States, in order to protect citrus-growing areas from damage from this pest and its vector. The plan was jointly developed and agreed by the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA), USDA/APHIS and SAGARPA, through the Directorate-General of Plant Health (DGSV), in conjunction with the citrus industry in the countries concerned.

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

26. Projects TCP/RLA/3206 and OSRO/RLA/901/USA, which are aimed at stepping up surveillance of influenza A subtype H1N1 virus in swine populations in Central America and neighbouring countries have been signed and activities launched. These projects will help understand the virus, its form mode of emergence and the risks of transmission and spread from swine to human populations.

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