

**ACTIONS ORIENTED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
AGREEMENT ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

January-September 2001

Communication from OIRSA

Introduction

OIRSA is an international organization devoted to provide support to the plant and animal health of its eight member countries.¹ One of its main objectives is to promote and give assistance to the eight countries for the implementation of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO. For this reason, OIRSA presents the following information about actions carried out during the first half of 2001.

Phytosanitary actions

1. OIRSA has actively supported execution of operational plans for the control of the pine beetle (*Dendroctonus* spp.) in Nicaragua and Honduras. OIRSA has also supported development of a profile and economic study for the "Regional Program for the Possible Eradication of the Medfly and Integrated Management of Other Fruit Flies in Central America, Belize and Panama". It continues to provide advice and follow-up on pink mealybug (*Maconellicoccus hirsutus*, Green) in Belize and neighboring countries.
2. OIRSA sponsors meetings for Registration Chiefs/Responsible Officials of Pesticide Programs to discuss the harmonized standards within the region. OIRSA sends a representative to the meetings of the Interim Committee on Phytosanitary Measures (ICPM) convened by the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention, as well as to the Coordinating Committee of the Project RLA/5/045-OIEA/OIRSA/Countries.

Sanitary actions

Prevention of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy and Foot and Mouth Disease

3. OIRSA has underway the "Regional Project for the Strengthening of Sanitary Surveillance Services for Prevention of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy" which is mainly focused on the following:

- Communication and sanitary education;

¹ Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

- Epidemiological surveillance and laboratory diagnosis;
- Technical review of the quarantine posts;
- Development of simulations.

4. The Chiefs of Animal Health from Mexico and Central American countries were convened to seek harmonization of criteria on foot-and-mouth disease and bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Other actions

5. Meetings of Ministers of Agriculture and Livestock from the region were held in Nicaragua and El Salvador, to deal with the avian influenza issue. A project was prepared for the control and eradication of avian diseases, as a joint effort between the public and private sectors, and OIRSA.

6. Through an agreement with FAO, the 1st Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Continental Plan for eradication of classical swine fever from the Americas was held in Costa Rica. In addition, arrangements were made with the Nicaraguan Government to continue the vaccination of pigs in Rivas and Rio San Juan, and a risk analysis was undertaken to detect the transmission level of the disease.

7. A seminar on Epidemiology and Risk Analysis was held in El Salvador, in cooperation with the USDA Center of Epidemiology in Animal Health, as well as the 4th Meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Risk Analysis of the OIE Office for the Americas.

8. Standards and procedures for zoosanitary aquaculture were harmonized.

9. As a joint effort with the University of Guatemala, the 80-hour academic course on plant and animal quarantine has been continued.

Food Safety

10. Following the earthquakes in El Salvador, OIRSA provided the national authorities with an action plan to prevent food-transmitted diseases.

11. Support was provided to member countries to organize their National Codex Committees and to enforce their standards.

12. The "Diagnosis of the Regional Status of Food Safety" and the "Manual for Control Systems, Quality Assurance, and Safety of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables" were completed.

13. Training has been provided on HACCP in El Salvador and Costa Rica, and a "Regional Workshop on Control Systems, Quality Assurance, and Safety of Fresh Vegetables" was held in Panama.

Ongoing Projects

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14. With the financial assistance of the Republic of China, a project is underway whose main objective is to strengthen phytosanitary surveillance in non-traditional export crops.

Establishment of Medfly-free areas

15. In Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras, serious actions are being undertaken to establish Medfly-free areas with international recognition. In the first two countries, FAO and OIRSA are conducting the projects. In Honduras and Nicaragua, the projects are under the management of OIRSA with financial assistance from USDA.

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