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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
WTO AGREEMENT ON THE APPLICATION OF SANITARY
AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES**

REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE ON SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES,
JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 2023

The following communication, received on 3 November 2023, is being circulated at the request of OIRSA.

**1 TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES RELATING
TO AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND TRADE**

- 1.1. In order to provide advice on the prevention, control and epidemiological surveillance of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), a training course on this disease was organized with the Belize Poultry Association.
- 1.2. A one-day training and refresher course on HPAI was carried out for the Official Veterinary Services of the Directorate of Animal Health and Quarantine Services of the Directorate General of Livestock of the Dominican Republic, with a view to supporting the rapid response to the possible introduction of the disease into the national territory.
- 1.3. A regional virtual dialogue, on animal health strategies to control and eradicate animal diseases, focusing on avian influenza, was organized in conjunction with the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) of the European Union.
- 1.4. OIRSA participated in the "Workshop on the management of high mortality in animals in avian influenza emergencies" organized by the Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PANAFTOSA) in Brazil.
- 1.5. OIRSA participated in the multistakeholder forum on HPAI prevention measures, and an awareness-raising meeting with the Dominican Poultry Farming Association (ADA, Inc.), in support of the formal sector, in order to promote an HPAI prevention strategy and to raise awareness among the Dominican Republic's poultry sector of the possible consequences of the introduction of HPAI.
- 1.6. OIRSA took part in the subregional meeting on the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR 2005), organized by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in San Salvador.
- 1.7. A meeting of the Regional Technical Committee on Poultry Health (CTRSA) was held in San Salvador, at which technical recommendations were established for the regional epidemiological surveillance of HPAI.
- 1.8. A One Health Regional Workshop was organized, entitled "Regional consultation for strengthening intersectoral work on the human-animal-environment interface of zoonotic influenza", in El Salvador in September 2023.

1.9. OIRSA was involved in the event "One Health in the Americas: The importance of inter-institutional collaboration in the hemisphere and its rural communities", organized by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Costa Rica.

1.10. OIRSA took part in the first virtual meeting to finalize the launch of the Quadripartite in the Americas, which seeks to formalize and strengthen cooperation under the umbrella of One Health in the region. September 2023.

1.11. OIRSA participated in the international technical seminar organized by the Standing Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP) in Bolivia, for the Committee's 20th anniversary.

1.12. OIRSA organized a virtual celebration of World Rabies Day in conjunction with Costa Rica's National Animal Health Service (SENASA).

1.13. In El Salvador, 17 partners of the International Quarantine Treatment Service (SITC) were accredited in accordance with the Australian methyl bromide fumigation standard. In addition, El Salvador delivered a course on the use of fumigant concentration monitoring equipment to SITC staff.

1.14. Guatemala and Honduras organized training for the staff of their Agricultural Protection Services on matters inherent to quarantine principles for inspectors responsible for implementing the relevant sanitary and phytosanitary measures at quarantine control points.

1.15. Training activities on sanitary and phytosanitary threats at the regional level were also organized, including an online training course on general information on and the management and control of the giant African snail in Honduras; a quarantine training course for the veterinary personnel of the Dominican Republic's quarantine team; and a training course on quarantine pests in stored agri-food products in Nicaragua.

1.16. Funding was provided for the participation of national food safety directors or their representatives in the Latin American Pesticide Residue Workshop, at which OIRSA held two sessions: (1) OIRSA training material on risk-based good agricultural practices; and (2) OIRSA training material on risk-based good agricultural practices.

1.17. OIRSA participated in the regional meeting on food safety innovations organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

1.18. International and regional bodies, including OIRSA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health (PANAFTOSA/VPH), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the coordinators of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) joined forces for the third consecutive year to celebrate World Food Safety Day 2023 with a webinar entitled "Food standards save lives". OIRSA presented its Trazar-Agro module on agri-food safety at this event, which was attended by some of the world's leading specialists. OIRSA participated in celebrations at the national level in El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and the Dominican Republic to commemorate 7 June as World Food Safety Day.

1.19. Twenty-five food safety officials from OIRSA member countries successfully completed the course on quality and food safety systems for experts, and a second group of 30 participants started the course.

1.20. OIRSA participated actively in the 8th Agri-Food Fair (*Agroalimentaria 2023*), which took place on 1-2 June in the Dominican Republic, and offered a session on new challenges in meeting international market requirements.

1.21. OIRSA took part in the European Union and Central America Forum on Innovation in the Agroindustry Sector.

1.22. Two beekeeping meetings were held in Panama: one addressed honey standards and controls in the member countries of the Central American Beekeeping Federation (FEDECABI), while the other

focused on the topic of bee honey adulteration and fraud. These meetings took place during the 18th Central American and Caribbean Congress on Apicultural Integration and Modernization.

2 SUPPORT FOR THE HARMONIZATION AND EQUIVALENCE PROCESS

2.1. The OIRSA Regional Commission for Veterinary Medicines and Animal Feed (CORMEVA) held a virtual meeting. A number of topics were discussed at the meeting, including the economic importance of domestic industries in the development of the Central American region, products with a fixed-dose combination of active ingredients, and residue depletion studies or withdrawal and elimination period verification studies.

2.2. OIRSA helped to organize meetings of the regular assembly of the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Network and of the research subgroup of Guatemala.

2.3. In Guatemala, a workshop on "Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS)/Food and Quantitative Analysis of Chemical Risks using Monte Carlo (@Risk) simulations" was delivered to food safety officials of the Vice-Ministry of Plant and Animal Health and Regulations of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (VISAR-MAGA). In addition, a training workshop was delivered to 20 food safety officials and dealt with obtaining samples for the detection of STEC in raw beef products, health inspection techniques for bovine animals, swine and poultry, evaluating an establishment's food safety system, and managing non-compliance.

2.4. In the Dominican Republic, two workshops were held for 25 agri-food safety officials: (1) a train-the-trainer course in risk-based good agricultural practices; and (2) a training workshop on the development of quantitative exposure assessment models for pesticides in food, and the use of the WHO GEMS/Food database was discussed.

2.5. In El Salvador, officials responsible for the safety of products of plant origin were trained in various areas, including: (1) sampling of agricultural products, with an update on sampling procedures; (2) categorization of establishments based on risk; and (3) the process of uploading data to the GEMS/Food database.

3 PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION ACTIVITIES (PROGRAMMES OR CAMPAIGNS)

3.1. Actions were carried out to execute extraordinary regional emergency funds to implement measures to prevent, control and eradicate low and high pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI and HPAI). These measures sought to: (1) strengthen the level 3 animal health laboratories of OIRSA member countries; (2) implement a regional communication campaign; and (3) prepare national plans and the respective budgets to deal with the emergency.

3.2. Nets and materials were acquired to strengthen the epidemiological surveillance of vampire bats, a vector of bovine paralytic rabies.

3.3. Technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador for the revision of its epidemiological surveillance plan for bee health.

3.4. Traps for the small hive beetle (*Aethina tumida*) were purchased to bolster the epidemiological surveillance of this Coleoptera in El Salvador.

3.5. OIRSA provided advice, technical assistance and financial support to the veterinary services of Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua in response to reported cases of New World screwworm in Panama and Costa Rica. The objective was to control its spread and prevent it from entering other member countries.

3.6. In Panama, OIRSA has supported efforts to control the movement of livestock, in response to the New World screwworm emergency.

3.7. In order to strengthen measures to prevent the entry of pests or diseases, six new detection dog dyads were trained for the OIRSA region. Three joined El Salvador's canine unit, and the other

three went to Guatemala. In addition, two officials completed their training as trainers, one for El Salvador and one for Guatemala.

3.8. Support was provided to the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum based in Trinidad and Tobago to carry out a *Fusarium oxysporum* TR4 emergency simulation exercise, with two OIRSA technicians facilitating the event, which was attended by representatives of the National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) from 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

4 STRENGTHENING NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO FACILITATE TRADE

4.1. The USDA-APHIS/OIRSA project, focused on the control and eradication of African swine fever (ASF) in the Dominican Republic, is underway and provides for the implementation of three action plans.

4.2. The project to implementing a regional programme for the detection, prevention and control of respiratory zoonotic diseases, with a special focus on avian influenza, in Central America and the Dominican Republic, is also underway.

4.3. A technical cooperation framework agreement has been formally concluded between the Standing Veterinary Committee of the Southern Cone (CVP) and OIRSA.

4.4. A partnership arrangement has been established between the National Institute for Agricultural and Food Research and Technology (INIA) of the Spanish National Research Council, M.P., and OIRSA.

4.5. Work is continuing on the customs union, for the deep integration of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, with the location of quarantine services and border treatment areas being coordinated.

4.6. The national food safety authorities of member countries were provided with access to the BCGlobal maximum pesticide residue level database.

4.7. OIRSA supported Costa Rica in the process of accrediting food safety-related laboratory tests. This included covering the costs associated with purchasing inert materials necessary for the testing and speciation of heavy metals, using inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry techniques (ICP/MS and LC-ICP/MS).

5 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND TRADE

5.1. Trade relations have been established to seek out and introduce products and technologies as alternatives to methyl bromide, such as the fumigant ethanedinitrile (EDN) and radiation as quarantine treatments.
