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Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: Spanish

DECLARATION OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE FREE STATUS

COMMUNICATION FROM COLOMBIA

The following communication, dated 16 March 2020, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Colombia.

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1. On this occasion, we wish to inform WTO Members that the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has restored Colombia's health status as a foot and mouth disease (FMD) free zone where vaccination is practised.
 2. As a result of epidemiological surveillance carried out in Colombia in 2018, three outbreaks of Type O FMD were confirmed. For the sake of transparency, the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) immediately notified the OIE, which withdrew its approval of the containment zone and suspended, as of 10 August 2018, Colombia's status as a country "with FMD free zones where vaccination is practised", as previously recognized by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates in Resolution No. 22 of May 2018.
 3. In light of the above, and with the aim of adopting the necessary sanitary measures for the control and eradication of FMD in order to recover the country's health status, ICA declared a nationwide health emergency by virtue of Resolution No. 00033682 of 4 October 2018.
 4. The strategy adopted for the control and eradication of the outbreaks was based on Article 8.8.7, paragraph 3.a, of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code, which calls for the stamping out of sick animals and their contacts, emergency vaccination and surveillance in accordance with Articles 8.8.40 and 8.8.42, in order to restore the status of "FMD free country where vaccination is practised" six months after the last animal is killed.
 5. Following the implementation of these measures, from 24 to 30 November 2019, Colombia received a visit from a committee of OIE experts, who evaluated the action plan implemented by ICA to eradicate the FMD outbreaks.
 6. As part of the evaluation process, the OIE conducted on-site visits in several departments, during which ICA presented the national FMD programme, the new strategy to protect the country from possible future outbreaks, and the results of the action taken in conjunction with other national authorities through an integrated inspection centre (CIIP) comprising ICA, the National Food and Drug Surveillance Institute (INVIMA), the Customs and Excise Police (POLFA) and the National Tax and Customs Directorate (DIAN), to curb agricultural smuggling.
 7. The OIE's Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (SCAD/OIE) later evaluated the data submitted by Colombia and concluded that the zone of Colombia satisfied the requirements under Article 8.8.7, paragraph 3.a, of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code for regaining FMD free status.
 8. Consequently, on 5 February 2020, the OIE restored Colombia's status as an **"FMD free zone where vaccination is practised"**, as previously recognized by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates in Resolution No. 22 of May 2017. This information may be verified at:

- <https://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/official-disease-status/fmd/suspensionreinstatement-of-status>.

9. Given Colombia's new health status granted by the OIE in its capacity as an SPS Agreement reference body, we wish to invite WTO Members to inform their health authorities so that the restrictions imposed by some countries may be lifted, thus facilitating ongoing processes to ensure compliance with sanitary requirements.

10. Further enquiries regarding the measures implemented by ICA for the declaration of FMD free status may be addressed to: asuntos.internacionales@ica.gov.co.
