

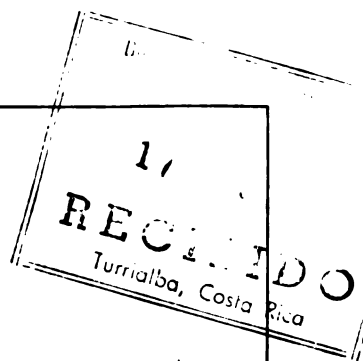
**TECHNICAL CONSORTIUM
AGRICULTURAL HEALTH**

**AGRICULTURAL HEALTH
ACTIONS IN THE AMERICAN
HEMISPHERE**



**ANNUAL REPORT
1998**

AGRICULTURAL HEALTH ACTIONS IN THE AMERICAN HEMISPHERE 1998 ANNUAL REPORT



INTRODUCTION

This document contains a summary of the main technical cooperation actions carried out in the field of agricultural health and food safety in 1998 by IICA's Regional Centers, Technical Cooperation Agencies (TCAs) and Directorate of Agricultural Health.

Much more work was carried out in this field by the Institute's agricultural health specialists and other personnel, and is duly documented in each executing unit.

This report provides only a representative sample of the wide range of direct and indirect support actions implemented. It is intended to demonstrate the Institute's potential in this field, and the capability that is at the service of the Member States.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH

The Agricultural Health Workshop "Vision of the Future" was held at the Hotel El Tirol in Heredia, Costa Rica, from January 26-30, 1998. It was attended by the agricultural health specialists of IICA's five Regional Centers.

The Institute's Strategic Plan for Agricultural Health was drawn up during this event, with the following being defined as the priority strategic areas:

- The modernization of national agricultural health and food safety systems, with the active participation of the private sector.



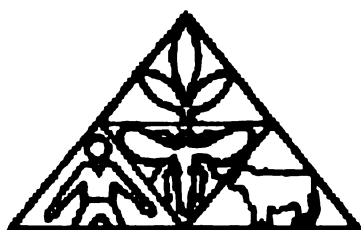
- The promotion of the practical application and harmonization of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in international trade.
- Support for the implementation of actions to provide forewarnings on emerging issues, surveillance activities and efforts to address agricultural health emergencies.
- Strengthening of the inter-American and regional approach through the establishment of the Inter-American Agricultural Health Network -AGRIHEALTH XXI- and support in implementing the corresponding integration and coordination mechanisms at the hemispheric and regional levels.



To support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Agricultural Health by IICA's Regional Centers and Technical Cooperation Agencies, the Directorate of Agricultural Health prepared and distributed a promotional leaflet and the "Manual for Orienting IICA's Technical Cooperation in the Area of Agricultural Health," which is being widely used by Institute personnel at all levels.



THE MODERNIZATION OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS



✓ A workshop was held at IICA Headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica, from November 17-20 to consider the elements that should be taken into account in organizing and structuring national agricultural health and food safety systems, in order to comply with the new requirements and conditions governing international agricultural trade.

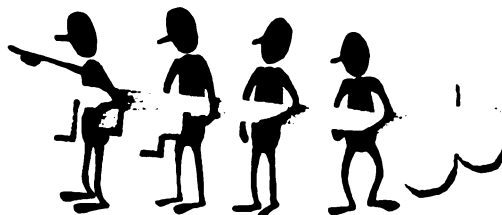
As a result of this workshop, which involved leading professionals with broad experience in this field, the document "Model for a Modern National Agricultural Health and Food Safety System" was drafted and published, and is now being distributed among the Institute's 34 Member States.

- ✓ IICA supported the efforts of Haiti and the Dominican Republic to implement programs for the eradication of classic swine fever, and also assisted the governments of those countries in preparing a project aimed at modernizing their national agricultural health systems. External resources are now being sought to implement this project.
- ✓ In order to strengthen the agricultural quarantine services of the Caribbean countries, IICA's Caribbean Regional Center prepared a project that was submitted to the European Union for funding. Direct cooperation was also provided to other Caribbean countries that are endeavoring to modernize their national systems and control the major animal and plant pests and diseases. Two of the most important of these efforts are the carambola fruit fly eradication program that is being executed through the TCA in Suriname, and the support for the implementation of the tropical bont tick (*Amblyomma variegatum*) program in several Caribbean countries.
- ✓ IICA continued to support the modernization of the national agricultural health systems of El Salvador and Nicaragua, and actions got under way to the same end in Costa Rica and Honduras.
- ✓ Through its TCA in Mexico, IICA also continued to support the efforts to strengthen the infrastructure and operations of the



National Agricultural Health Commission of Mexico, and provided support for the training of the professionals and technical personnel of other countries through this same institution.

- ✓ In the Andean Region, major progress was made in preparing and implementing the Andean Regional Cooperative Agricultural Health Program (PROFASA), promoted through the Andean Agricultural Health Forum (FASA), which has become an important liaison and discussion mechanism for agricultural health issues among officials of the Andean countries.



- ✓ IICA also continued to support the Government of Bolivia's efforts to implement the Decentralized Agricultural Health System (SIDESA) and, in different areas, to the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA), the Ecuadorian Agricultural Health Service (SEA), the National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA) of Peru, and the Autonomous Agricultural Health Service (SASA) of Venezuela.



- ✓ In the Southern Region, considerable progress was made in modernizing the national agricultural health systems of several countries. The National Agrifood Health and Quality Service (SENASA) was organized in Argentina, the new General Directorate of Agricultural Services (DGSA) established in Uruguay, and the Unified Agricultural Health System (SUSA) set up in Brazil, where there are also plans to establish the Executive Agency for the Defense of Agricultural Health.

- ✓ IICA organized the workshop "The Vision of Producers in the face of the Privatization of Veterinary Services and the Role of the State," which was held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on November 11, 1998, during the Sixteenth Pan American Congress of Veterinary Sciences. At this event, representatives of the livestock organizations of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Panama and Uruguay discussed in depth the increasingly important role being played by producers' associations in the animal health programs implemented by their respective governments.



TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM IN THE AREA OF FOOD SAFETY



The seminar "Food Safety in International Agricultural Trade" was held in Mexico City from September 29-30, 1998, and attended by over 300 people from 15 countries. The participants discussed the new health regulations of the major importers of meat products, fruits and vegetables, and the efforts of several Latin American and Caribbean countries to comply with them.

The following conclusions were reached at the seminar:

- Food safety actions should be the same for export products and those intended for domestic consumption. In this regard, the hygienic handling of economically important export products could also trigger effective national actions for products intended for domestic consumption.
- Responsibility for food safety should be viewed as running from the producer through to the end consumer. Each link in the chain has a very clear responsibility in the process.



- HACCP systems should be introduced gradually on farms. The first step should be the adoption of good agricultural practices and good manufacturing practices. When small farmers have worked together in this process, the results have been positive.
- The food safety inspection and certification services of the ministries of agriculture should evaluate their structures with a view to providing a more effective response to the new demands and better support for producers and the agribusiness community. It was recommended that IICA organize a discussion forum to discuss the reengineering processes that are required.
- Research on food safety should be redefined to focus on the priority areas resulting from the changes in international agricultural trade.
- The countries should adapt their legislation and regulations to meet the new food safety requirements, and in order to implement the corresponding national actions needed in this field.
- The countries should harmonize their health and safety inspection and certifications systems for agricultural products intended for human consumption, endeavoring to bring them into line with those of their major trading partners.
- ✓ The above was used as the basis for preparing the Project for Technical Cooperation on Food Safety in International Agricultural Trade that IICA will begin implementing in March 1999 throughout the hemisphere, targeted at fruits, vegetables and meat products in the primary production sector.
- ✓ In the Caribbean countries, implementation is under way of a regional strategy aimed at modernizing national food safety systems, with the participation of the USDA, USAID, CARICOM and IICA.





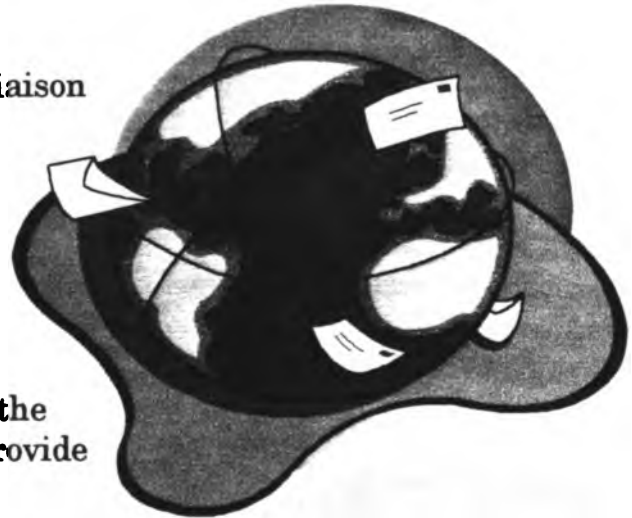
✓ In several Latin American countries, including Brazil and Mexico, IICA has provided technical cooperation to facilitate the training of national professionals and technical personnel in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

✓ In Brazil, business managers and technical staff were trained in food irradiation techniques.

INTER-AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH NETWORK - AGRICHEALTH XXI

In order to comply with Resolution No. 326 of the Ninth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture, held in Santiago, Chile, in October 1997, IICA began to design the Inter-American Agricultural Health Network – AGRICHEALTH XXI -, with a formal proposal being presented at the Eighteenth Regular Meeting of IICA's Executive Committee, held in San Jose, Costa Rica, in October 1998.

Intended to serve as a mechanism for liaison and the exchange of information among countries in the Americas in the area of agricultural health and food safety, the lines of action of the AGRICHEALTH XXI Network include:



- The creation of a discussion forum on the opportunities available and the threats posed in this area, so as to provide input for decision making in this field.
- The analysis and dissemination of successful cases and/or processes that could be used by other countries.
- To promote the interpretation, understanding and application of the new international regulatory framework in this field.

- To foster the adaptation and improvement of national food safety systems.
- To promote the analysis and dissemination of information on emerging pests and diseases and food safety situations that could affect one or more countries.
- ✓ The first Newsletter of the AGRHEALTH XXI Network has already been distributed among IICA's agricultural health specialists, as a means of beginning to fine-tune this mechanism.



THE MODERNIZATION OF SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY LEGISLATION

As a matter of priority, governments in the hemisphere have begun to adapt their national legislation governing animal health, plant protection and food safety, in order to bring it into line with the new requirements of international agricultural trade.



✓ In 1998, IICA supported the preparation and discussion of a number of initiatives being promoted by governments in the Americas, including the bill in Brazil for the creation of the Unified Agricultural Health System, the new Agricultural Health Regulations in Nicaragua, and the updating of several government animal health and plant protection standards in Mexico.

✓ In the Caribbean, with support from USAID, IICA developed an initiative for the modernization of the sanitary and phytosanitary legislation of the countries. Work is now under way to analyze the current situation and develop a model that could be used as a basis for further action by the countries concerned.



✓ The countries of the Southern Region have been involved in updating their plant protection regulations, based on the guidelines issued by COSAVE and those stemming from the resolutions adopted by MERCOSUR.

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

The cooperation action to deal with the emergency created by the pink mealybug (*Maconellicoccus hirsutus*) in Guyana was completed. This included the implementation of a biological control program, the modernization of the laboratory that conducts diagnoses of pests and diseases, the implementation of public information actions and the training of personnel. As a result of these efforts, this pest was brought under control in Guyana and a permanent Pink Mealybug Coordination Unit was set up, which will also be used to identify and control other exotic agricultural pests.

- ✓ Support was provided for the establishment of a biological control program for the citrus blackfly (*Aleurocanthus woglumi*) in Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis, where units were set up to continue to control this pest and training activities were organized for specialists from other countries.
- ✓ In Haiti, an emergency action was implemented to identify the presence of the coffee berry borer, and a new pest that attacks rice crops. In the same country, IICA supported the implementation of actions to prevent the introduction of the pink mealybug.
- ✓ Through IICA's agricultural health emergency fund, resources were allocated for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, to support the emergency sanitary and phytosanitary actions being implemented in those countries as result of the damage caused by Hurricane Mitch.



ACTION ON EMERGING ISSUES

A group of experts met at IICA Headquarters from September 10-11, 1998, to determine what actions the Institute should implement to identify, analyze and provide information to the sectors concerned on diseases, pests, pathogens, pollutants, etc., that could constitute a risk for agriculture, livestock or public health in a specific country or group of countries.

As a result of this meeting, the method for characterizing an emerging situation was defined, and for assigning priority to situations of this kind to guide the Institute's action. This information on the definition and prioritization of emerging situations was distributed among the personnel of the Institute working in this area.

As part of this process, the pink mealy bug (*Maconellicoccus hirsutus*), which is already present in several Caribbean countries, was used as a model, and a document was drawn up dealing with the potential of this pest to spread to other countries in the hemisphere. This document, available in Spanish and English, will be distributed in January 1999.

- ✓ The regulations governing the use of IICA's emergency fund were revised to include the use of resources to support the countries in providing forewarnings and preparing to deal with emerging agricultural health and food safety issues.



INTER-AMERICAN COORDINATING GROUPS ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND PLANT PROTECTION

IICA organized and coordinated the Fourteenth Meeting of the Inter-American Coordinating Group on Animal Health (GICSA), which was held in Winnipeg, Canada, on April 26, 1998, and attended by representatives of the FAO, OIE, PAHO, OIRSA and IICA.

The decisions taken by this group included the implementation of efforts to update the evaluation of the animal health laboratories of the western-hemisphere countries and standardize information on the presence and distribution of animal diseases dealt with by the different international organizations.

- ✓ IICA was also involved in organizing the Tenth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter-American Coordinating Group on Plant Protection (GICSV), which was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from March 23-25, 1998. This was attended by representatives of the Secretariat of the Andean Community, COSAVE, CPPC, NAPPO, OIRSA, CARICOM, IICA and the ministries of agriculture of Antigua, Barbados, Brazil, Guyana, Honduras, Paraguay, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and of the US Department of Agriculture.

At this meeting the participants decided to formally establish the GICSV under a Letter of Understanding signed by the regional organizations involved.

IICA also contributed to the organization of the Eleventh Meeting of the Executive Committee of the GICSV that was held in Rome, Italy, on November 2, 1998.

An agreement between IICA and the GICSV is now being processed, under which IICA will formally be assigned responsibility for the Technical Secretariat of the GICSV.



SUPPORT FOR THE FTAA AND THE WTO



Through its TCA in Mexico, the Institute concluded the support that was being provided to the Working Group on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which completed its work.

IICA will continue to support the Member States of the FTAA, as required, so as to facilitate the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures in international agricultural trade.



✓ Through its Regional Centers, Technical Cooperation Agencies and the Directorate of Agricultural Health at Headquarters, in 1998 IICA also organized and took part in a wide range of courses, seminars and workshops that were attended by representatives of the public and private sectors of the western hemisphere countries, in order to promote their understanding of, and compliance with, the Agreement

on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY ISSUES OF INTEREST TO COUNTRIES IN THE HEMISPHERE

Through its Caribbean Regional Center, during 1998 IICA continued to publish and distribute CARAPHIN News, which has proven to be very useful to both the Caribbean and other western-hemisphere countries.

✓ Through its Andean Regional Center, IICA also continued to operate the Andean Agricultural Health Information Network, with its weekly on-line bulletin "SANINET." The number of subscribers to, and consultations of, SANINET increased substantially in 1998.

