

Abstracts and Reports

I INTER-AMERICAN MEETING, AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, ON ANIMAL HEALTH

The I Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health was held at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, D.C., from 14 to 17 April 1980. Representatives of 31 Member or Participating Countries¹ and observers from Australia and eight international organizations² attended the conference.

Among the major topics discussed were the programs and budgets of the Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Zoonoses Centers, nonhuman primate breeding programs, training of veterinary personnel, a review of the animal health situation in the Americas, control of foot-and-mouth disease, rabies control and eradication, the production and control of biologicals for veterinary use, and research on tick control.

Dr. Germán Bula Hoyos, Minister of Agriculture of Colombia, was elected President of

the Meeting. Other officers were Dr. Gavin B. Kennard (Minister of Agriculture of Guyana), Vice-President; Dr. Rubén Fernández Gómez (Undersecretary for Livestock of Mexico), Vice-President; Dr. Juan Pablo Romero (Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief of Administration of the National Animal Service of Paraguay), Rapporteur; and Dr. Héctor R. Acuña (Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau), Secretary *ex officio*.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Acuña noted that the Meeting was a continuation of the Inter-American Meetings, at the Ministerial Level, on Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Zoonoses Control, the name of which had been changed at the last of those held in Curacao in 1979.

Dr. Acuña added that the Meeting would provide an opportunity to determine the policy and priorities of the Pan American Zoonoses and Foot-and-Mouth Disease Centers, whose principal purpose was to strengthen the infrastructure of national animal health and veterinary public health services in order to increase livestock production and reduce the incidence of animal diseases transmissible to man. He also noted that the XXVI Meeting of the PAHO Directing Council, held in 1979, had approved supplementary budgets to sustain the operating capacity of the Centers in 1980, and that an external evaluation committee which began its work early this year would soon present its recommendations on the Centers.

¹Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

²Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Inter-American Development Bank, Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Office of Epizootics, Organization of American States, Regional International Organization for Plant and Animal Health, and the Secretariat of the Treaty on Central American Economic Integration.

In addition, the PASB Director underscored the importance of the contribution made by the Inter-American Development Bank—as well as the roles played by the Canadian International Development Agency, the United Nations Development Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other international agencies—in strengthening animal health programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Reaffirming the need for both the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center and the Zoonoses Center to continue their activities (Resolutions I and II), the Meeting noted that the Centers' 1981 budgets were to depend on the reports of an external evaluation committee. Accordingly, the Meeting recommended that the PASB Director have documents prepared setting forth the Zoonoses Center's priorities, that the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center's priority objectives and operations be maintained, and that the Director request voluntary contributions for both Centers from the Member Governments, as well as from international, bilateral, and private institutions.

On the subject of primate breeding (Resolution III), the Meeting noted the growing importance of tropical American nonhuman primates in biomedical research, vaccine production, and the testing of therapeutic substances. In this regard it commended the Government of Peru for the support it had given to the establishment of a primate breeding center and other primatology programs, and recommended that the Governments of Brazil and Colombia continue developing their primate programs. It also urged that countries with natural nonhuman primate populations ensure the preservation and rational use of these animals, and that the PASB Director continue collaborating with those Hemisphere countries interested in conducting primate programs.

On the general subject of animal health (Resolution VII), it was requested that PAHO continue its ongoing study of the

animal health situation in the Americas and present a preliminary document based on this study to the II Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health. The document's purpose would be to outline policies and strategies and to serve as a guide in planning animal health activities for the next decade.

Regarding biologicals (Resolution X), it was observed that biological products of certified quality must be available in sufficient quantities in order that animal health programs for livestock development be properly executed. The Meeting therefore commended the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama for their work in the production and control of biologicals for veterinary use, requested that the PASB Director give strong support to a regional program (including Mexico, Central America, and Panama) for the production and control of such biologicals, and reiterated a request that the United Nations Development Program give this regional program financial support.

Two other resolutions (IV and V) concerned manpower. The Government of Guyana was congratulated for completion of the physical facilities of the Regional Educational Program for Training of Animal Health and Veterinary Public Health Assistants (REPAHA), and the Governments of the Caribbean area were asked to endorse the second phase of this project. The Meeting also asked the Governments of the Caribbean to support the establishment of the Regional School of Veterinary Medicine in Trinidad and Tobago and to keep striving to ensure adequate, stable, and satisfying staffing arrangements, as well as to provide facilities and working conditions that will promote the career development of veterinary personnel.

The Meeting also expressed its appreciation to Dr. Pedro N. Acha for his many years of dedicated service as an officer of the Pan American Health Organization (Resolution IX).

Additional resolutions dealt with control of foot-and-mouth disease, rabies, and tick-borne diseases. The Meeting endorsed the resolutions of the VII Regular Meeting of the South American Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and insisted on the advisability of having all technical and financial assistance rendered according to the regional concept established by the countries of the Americas for the control of the disease (Resolution VI). Concerning rabies, the Meeting asked that PAHO give priority attention to programs dealing with both urban and bovine paralytic rabies; it also recommended that the Pan American Zoonoses Center as-

sign priority to the rabies problem and expand its direct cooperation with those countries having rabies problems in the areas of diagnosis, production of biologicals, epidemiology, and control systems. Those countries with rabies problems were urged to implement national rabies control programs (Resolution VIII). As for tick control, the Meeting recommended that the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Sciences contribute to a program already in progress in Costa Rica for research on control of ticks and tick-borne diseases affecting livestock in Central America, Mexico, Panama, and other subtropical and tropical countries.

DIARRHEAL DISEASE CONTROL IN THE CARIBBEAN

Representatives of 15 Caribbean countries and territories³ met in Kingston, Jamaica, on 10-13 March 1980 to discuss recent breakthroughs in diarrheal disease control and establishment of national diarrheal disease control programs. The meeting, entitled Caribbean Seminar-Workshop on Diarrheal Disease Control, featured presentations by a number of experts in the field and workshop sessions designed to develop recommendations about national programs. The event was supported by a 1979 PAHO Directing Council resolution encouraging Member Countries to establish national diarrheal disease control programs within the context of their primary health care systems.

Dr. Dilip Mahalanabis, a World Health Organization consultant, outlined some of

the basic epidemiologic facts about diarrheal diseases, including the following:

- In 1975, an estimated 500 million diarrhea cases occurred among African, Asian, and Latin American children less than 5 years old, resulting in 5 million deaths.⁴
- A large multi-country study conducted in the early 1970s⁵ found that 30 to 50 per cent of the Latin American children surveyed were dying before age 5, that 58 per cent of these deaths were associated with infectious diseases, and that diarrhea (often associated with malnutrition) was the leading cause of death.
- Cholera poses an important potential threat. Since 1961 eighty countries have reported cholera; eight new countries did so in 1978 alone. Many countries with high diarrhea morbidity, poor water supply systems, and unsanitary conditions now harbor endemic cholera.
- Over a third of the children's hospital beds in many developing countries are usually filled by

³Anguilla, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.

⁴Rohde, J.E., *et al.* Therapy begins at home: management of acute diarrhea in the developing world. *Proc Int Cong of Ped (New Delhi, 1977)*: 809-819, 1977.

⁵World Health Organization, *The WHO Diarrhoeal Disease Control Programme*, Geneva, 20 April 1979.