



PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



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

Washington, D.C., 13-15 April 1999

Provisional Agenda Item 5

RIMSA11/4 (Eng.)
19 March 1999
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

**PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FOOD PROTECTION
AND ZOOSES (INPPAZ)**

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>1. Introduction</i>	<i>4</i>
1.1 Mandates and Programs	4
1.2 Organizational Structure	5
1.3 Resources	5
<i>2. PAHO Technical Cooperation</i>	<i>7</i>
2.1 Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Protection	7
2.2 Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 1997-1998.....	9
<i>3. Strategic Plan of Action</i>	<i>13</i>
3.1 Strategic Postulates	13
3.2 Mission of INPPAZ	14
3.3 Functions.....	15
3.4 Short- and Medium-term Goals	15
3.5 Long-term Objectives and Goals	18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents information on the background of the Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonoses, a specialized center of the Pan American Health Organization.

In compliance with the recommendation of the Governing Bodies of PAHO that the Institute concentrate its resources in the area of food protection, a strategic plan is presented that contains 12 postulates describing the current status of the food safety problem and six long-term objectives with their corresponding implementation strategies.

The document includes a report evaluating the activities carried out in 1997-1998. During that period cooperation was provided to all the countries to establish an Information System for the Management of Food Regulations; organize a Pan American network for food analysis laboratories; support the modernization of the food inspection and protection system by training personnel in the hazard analysis critical control point methodology (HACCP), good manufacturing practices (GMP), and standard operating procedures (SOP); organize the information system for the epidemiological surveillance of foodborne diseases (SIR-VETA), and organize health education programs on food protection and community participation.

1. Introduction

Since the creation of the Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonoses in 1991 by agreement of the Government of the Argentine Republic and the Pan American Health Organization, significant changes in food protection have taken place at the regional level, evaluations of technical cooperation have been conducted, and recommendations have been issued that make it necessary to review and analyze the mission, functions, lines of action, future programming, and resources of the Institute.

Specifically, the External Advisory Group on the Program on Veterinary Public Health, created to advise the Director of PAHO, recommended the specialization of INPPAZ as the Regional Reference Center on Food Protection, with greater concentration of its activities in the area of foodborne diseases.

The External Advisory Group submitted its report to the III Meeting of the International Coordination Council (III ICC) of INPPAZ, whose members accepted the recommendations and issued guidelines for their implementation that would not affect the technical cooperation in zoonosis control that PAHO is responsible for providing to the countries. The report was also submitted to the X Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health (X RIMSA), which adopted the recommendations through Resolution X.

The object of this document is to analyze the mission, functions, plan of action, and resources of the Institute in light of the changes in food safety that are occurring worldwide, changes that were considered during the 25th Pan American Sanitary Conference when it approved the Strategic and Programmatic Orientations for the PASB, 1999-2002; of the experience gained in the execution of the technical cooperation activities in food protection; and of the recommendations of the advisory bodies of the Institute. This information has been incorporated into a strategic plan that defines the short-, medium- and long-term goals. This document should serve as a guide for the activities of the Institute and for mobilizing the necessary resources to guarantee the continuity of technical cooperation activities in food protection.

1.1 Mandates and Programs

The basic purpose of the Institute is to reduce the risks to the human population from foodborne diseases and diseases whose transmission occurs between humans and animals. To fulfill this purpose the Institute follows the Strategic and Programmatic Orientations for the PASB, 1999-2001, and the recommendations of the Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health and its advisory bodies.

In keeping with the mandates and recommendations of the Governing Bodies of PAHO and the advisory bodies of the Institute, the technical cooperation of INPPAZ to the countries translates into technical and operational support for technical cooperation programs in food protection and in prevention and control of the zoonoses targeted for elimination: rabies, tuberculosis, brucellosis, and others.

In executing programs with the countries, the technical cooperation approaches of the Organization are followed—for example, the development of policies plans, and standards; training; the dissemination of information; research; and direct technical cooperation, utilizing the countries' infrastructure and consultants from INPPAZ and the PAHO Program on Veterinary Public Health (HCV).

1.2 Organizational Structure

INPPAZ is part of the PAHO network of specialized centers and institutes and is administratively under the Division of Disease Prevention and Control (HCP). An integral part of the Program on Veterinary Public Health (HCV), its organizational structure consists of the Office of the Director and three services: Program development; Standardization, norms, and reference; Training and information. (See enclosed organizational chart.) It also has the following support units: Administration, Systems and Engineering and three advisory bodies:

- *International Coordination Council (ICC)*: Political-institutional in nature and comprised of the ministers of health and agriculture of the countries of the Region; its function is to advise the Director of the Organization on the orientation of the priorities and strategies of the Institute, evaluation of activities, and compliance with the agreement between the Government of Argentina and the Organization. This Council has held meetings in 1993, 1994, and 1997.
- *Technical Scientific Committee (CCT)*: Advises the Director of the Organization on the analysis and scientific and technical evaluation of the INPPAZ program of work. It held meetings in 1994 and 1995.
- *Program Committee for Argentina (CPA)*: Made up of representatives from Argentina's Ministry of Health and Social Action, Secretariat of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food, and PAHO; it supports the programming, execution, and evaluation of INPPAZ technical cooperation and collaboration activities in Argentina. This Committee holds annual meetings.

1.3 Resources

1.3.1 Human Resources

There are 50 approved posts for staff: 7 international professionals, 10 national professionals, and 33 support staff. Under an agreement with the Government of Belgium, the World Health Organization (WHO) assigned an associate professional to the Institute.

1.3.2 *Physical Resources*

The Argentine Government provided the facilities for the Institute, which is located in Martínez, Buenos Aires Province; these facilities cover 11,274 square meters of land, including 6,348 square meters housing offices, laboratories, a library, auditoriums, and administration.

1.3.3 *Financial Resources*

Sources of budgetary financing: the INPPAZ budget has four sources of financing: the regular funds of the Organization, the specific contribution of the Government of Argentina to the Institute, extrabudgetary projects with the countries, and income from services.

Each year, an agreement is reached with the respective national authorities on the contribution of the Government of Argentina.

- (a) *Regular funds and the contribution of the Government of Argentina:* the budget for 1998-1999, approved by X RIMSA, was US\$ 7,775,700. Of this figure, \$3,465,700 correspond to regular PAHO funds and \$4,300,000 to the contribution of the Government of Argentina.
- (b) *Extrabudgetary projects:* a total of \$255,444 was collected for extrabudgetary projects with the countries, with the following breakdown:
- Government of Belgium (PAZ-FOS-011-FB): cooperation provided through one professional to support the analytical services for food protection.
 - Government of Colombia (PAZ-ZNS-024-PG): a contribution of \$38,607 to strengthen INPPAZ technical cooperation to Colombia's national programs for food protection, rabies elimination, tuberculosis control and eradication, etc.
 - Government of Paraguay (PAZ-ZNS-130-PG): a contribution of \$14,774 to strengthen INPPAZ technical cooperation to Paraguayan national programs for food protection, rabies elimination, tuberculosis control and eradication, etc.

- Agriculture and Livestock Service of Chile (SAG): a contribution of \$105,103 to organize a program for the control of chemical residues and miscellaneous food protection and zoonosis activities.
- (c) *Income from services:* the Institute's own funds (PAZ-FOS-025-PG) from supplying reference standards and other technical services to 21 countries of the Region. Payment for INPPAZ services up to 1997 amounted to \$102,701.

2. PAHO Technical Cooperation

2.1 Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Protection

Based on the mandate from the Inter-American Meeting, at the Ministerial Level, on Animal Health and the Directing Council of PAHO, held in 1985, and supported by recommendations from the Inter-American Conference on Food Protection, the Program on Veterinary Public Health reformulated its activities in food protection, launching the Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Protection in 1986.

The program objectives were:

- to achieve a supply of safe, healthy, nourishing, tasty, and economical food;
- to reduce human morbidity and mortality from foodborne diseases.

Execution of the Plan of Action of the Regional Program for Technical Cooperation in Food Protection is the responsibility of INPPAZ, in coordination with the Program on Veterinary Public Health and the PAHO/WHO Representative Offices in the countries. The basic approach to the Program is to advise the PAHO Member States on preventing the risks to the population of foodborne disease, taking all links of the food chain into account, from the source of production to the consumer.

Execution of the Plan of Action is based on five components, namely: organization of national food protection programs; strengthening of analytical capacity; upgrading of the inspection services; surveillance of foodborne diseases; and promotion of food protection through community participation.

A joint evaluation of the progress made by the programs and the achievement of the objectives and goals of the Plan of Action was conducted with the countries in 1990 and 1997. This served as the basis for the adjustments needed to execute subsequent

phases of the program. The conclusions and recommendations of the 1997 evaluation are summarized below:

- to provide continuity to the project to develop the Information System for the Management of Food Regulations;
- to cooperate with the countries to facilitate their greater participation in *Codex Alimentarius* activities;
- to facilitate participation in the subregional integration initiatives;
- to continue to promote the integrated approach in national programs;
- to provide reference services to the food analysis laboratories;
- to promote integration of the national laboratories into a regional network that will facilitate communication among them and the establishment of analytical quality assurance programs;
- to continue to train national laboratory workers in the techniques for isolating and identifying contaminants, especially emerging pathogens;
- to continue to train the human resources engaged in food inspection in the countries in approaches based on HACCP principles;
- to promote the use of HACCP-based methodologies in the links of the food production chain (from the source of production to the consumer) and in indigenous food production, street sales, institutional food preparation, and homes;
- to contribute to the consolidation of local surveillance structures to ensure the proper operation of surveillance systems for FBD;
- to analyze internally the strategies that should be developed to strengthen community participation in food protection;
- to strengthen its capacity for disseminating information in all components of the Technical Cooperation Program in Food Protection;
- to promote interprogram work with other PAHO units;

- to expand the Program's internal capacity for resource mobilization;
- to maintain a policy for the ongoing training of the Program's human resources that will ensure an optimal level of technical cooperation.

2.2 Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 1997-1998

Below is a summary of the technical cooperation activities in food protection and zoonosis control. Detailed information can be found in the document *Report on INPPAZ Activities, 1997-1998*.

2.2.1 Integrated Food Protection Programs

Concerning the organization of national food protection programs, cooperation was provided to all the countries of the Region for strengthening institutional capacity in food protection. Several countries, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay, advanced in the concept of integrated programs, based on intersectoral articulation and the organization of national food commissions. Development of the Information System for the Management of Food Regulations was completed and delivered to all the Latin American countries to assist them in updating and harmonizing their legislation on food quality and food safety. The Information System was developed in response to the demands of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the need to modernize food inspection and food protection methodologies, and the requirements of the subregional integration initiatives. Argentina has already fully incorporated the system, and the other countries are receiving information to get it up and running.

Support has been provided to the national *Codex Alimentarius* commissions, and the information and documents from the committee meetings have been disseminated; support has also been provided for the participation of country staff in these committees.

2.2.2 Strengthening Laboratory Capacity

Twenty-four countries came together to form the Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (RILAA) in a meeting held at PAHO Headquarters in Washington. The objectives of the Network are: to facilitate the harmonization of analytical methods and promote the concepts of equivalence, transparency, and information exchange. INPPAZ acts as Secretariat *ex officio* of the Network's Executive Committee, in collaboration with FAO. The plan of action that is being drawn up includes the preparation of a financing project that was submitted to the IDB, a survey to identify the laboratories participating in the Network, and efforts to promote the organization of national networks.

Training in the diagnosis and identification of the principal emerging food pathogens, such as: *E. coli O157:H7*; *Campylobacter jejuni*; *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Yersinia enterocolitica*, was provided to staff from all the Latin American countries.

A interlaboratory quality assurance test on chemical contaminants was conducted. After receiving detailed information on the characteristics of the test, 22 laboratories from 11 countries of the Region requested the test sample containing organochlorine pesticides. Of the total laboratories that participated, two did not report the results due to flaws in their instruments and two more due to a lack of standards. Among the 15 laboratories that reported results, three groups can be distinguished: the performance of five laboratories was excellent; four had problems that could be easily remedied (for example, calibrations and adequate standards), and six had serious problems that basically require training.

Chile received assistance in organizing its national program for the monitoring of chemical contaminants and food surveillance.

2.2.3 *Strengthening Inspection Services*

Cooperation was provided to the countries for the modernization of food inspection and food protection systems, based on voluntary or compulsory acceptance of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) methodology, good manufacturing practices (GMP), and standard operating procedures (SOP) as prevention methods that cover the entire food chain.

An abbreviated guide to HACCP was prepared, and standardized courses on this methodology and its prerequisites were organized for personnel from all the countries of Latin America and the English-speaking Caribbean. With regard to meat, poultry, and seafood, there was collaboration with the International HACCP Alliance of Texas A&M University and with the HACCP Alliance for Seafood.

In collaboration with the Center for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOPECSA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the II Pan American Conference on Inspection and Quality Control of Seafood was held to evaluate the use of HACCP in the fishing industry.

Taking into account the change of approach in food inspection and protection methods that came with the adoption of HACCP, a regional seminar-workshop was held

on the role of government agencies in the evaluation of HACCP. The WHO and FAO

consultation on the role of government agencies in the evaluation of HACCP, in which INPPAZ participated, served as a guide. This meeting was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 6 June 1998.

2.2.4 Surveillance of Foodborne Diseases (FBDs)

Cooperation was provided to the Latin American and Caribbean countries to reorient and strengthen their national surveillance systems for FBDs and their coordination with the regional system, which furnishes information on the number of people affected, the etiologic agents of the outbreaks, the food involved, and the places where these outbreaks occur.

Support was provided for meetings on reorganizing the national surveillance systems for FBDs in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

This information system, in which 19 countries participate, will make it possible to obtain data on outbreaks of FBDs and enable the countries to gear their programs to prevention and control from an epidemiological standpoint. During the period 1995-1998, information was received on 3,147 outbreaks, with 101,016 affected people and 190 deaths.

2.2.5 Promoting Food Protection through Community Participation

A database on educational campaigns targeted to food handlers, vendors, and consumers was developed to assist the countries in developing their own health education campaigns and securing active community participation

2.2.6 Technical Cooperation Programs for Zoonosis Control and Eradication

Rabies: INPPAZ continued to serve as the regional reference laboratory for rabies. During the period, 101 samples from two countries were processed for characterization of the rabies virus.

It also continued to serve as a reference for quality control of the rabies vaccine. During the period 21 lots of vaccine from 6 countries were processed. Reference reagents were provided to 15 countries of the Region.

INPPAZ coordinated the Epidemiological Surveillance System for Rabies in the Americas. Reports were received from all the countries, and 52 weekly reports recording the number of cases in humans, dogs, and other species were published annually. Also published were the Epidemiological Surveillance Bulletins for Rabies in the Americas for 1996 and 1997 (Volumes XXVIII and XXIX).

Tuberculosis: INPPAZ continued to serve as the reference laboratory for the diagnosis of bovine tuberculosis and quality control of tuberculin. During the period 230 samples from four countries were characterized.

Reference bovine and/or avian tuberculin P.P.D. was distributed to 12 countries, and quality control was conducted for the bovine tuberculin P.P.D. produced in two countries (Honduras and Paraguay).

In its capacity as the WHO/IUATLD World Reference Laboratory for tuberculosis, INPPAZ exercised quality control over cultures and tests of the antibiotic sensitivity of the tuberculous mycobacteria isolates included in the national resistance surveys of Chile and Venezuela. Studies of resistance to tuberculostatic drugs were also conducted on isolates received from Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Tuberculin was distributed to Peru and Nicaragua for the diagnosis of human tuberculosis.

Direct assistance was provided to Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, and Venezuela for the organization of control programs in livestock, with emphasis on the training of slaughterhouse workers in epidemiological surveillance.

The Guidelines for the preparation of projects to evaluate bovine tuberculosis were reviewed and updated.

Software was developed for the analysis of "in vivo" tests of P.P.D. potency; this software is available to the countries of the Region.

Brucellosis: Reference antigens were provided to Bolivia, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic for the diagnosis of bovine brucellosis.

3. Strategic Plan of Action

3.1 Strategic Postulates

Bearing in mind the recommendations of the advisory bodies to specialize INPPAZ in aspects of food protection and the information on the global and regional problem of foodborne diseases, the experience gained in the delivery of technical cooperation, its evaluation over the past five years, and the technical orientations issued at specialized meetings, the strategic plan described below has been formulated with the following strategic postulates:

- (a) Food safety is a key topic of great national, regional, and global import, due to its impact on public health and international trade.
- (b) Food safety problems have led to major advances in food inspection and protection methodologies, with the incorporation of preventive approaches based on the principle of risk analysis that encompass the entire food production chain.
- (c) The countries must modernize food protection programs to reduce the risks to the population and enable countries with a food surplus to meet the demands of the international market.
- (d) From the public health standpoint it will be necessary to pay greater attention to the medium-sized and small food industry, which generally produces a high volume of food for domestic consumption under inadequate sanitary conditions.
- (e) Private technical assistance mechanisms have been developed for the advanced industrial and export sector, and there are several international technical cooperation agencies, such as the International Organization of Epizootics (IOE), the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), that are collaborating in the modernization of regulations, inspection systems, quality control, etc.
- (f) There is widespread development of communications technology, which is facilitating training programs, education, and mass communication.
- (g) The available information indicates that FBDs are most frequently contracted in the home, which means that a sweeping public awareness and health education campaign is necessary.

- (h) All the countries of the Region have instituted a process of State reform, cutting back on state services and privatizing some of them.
- (i) As a result of the technical cooperation of PAHO and other international organizations, the countries already have the basic infrastructure for food protection programs, which can be utilized to improve food safety and to strengthen technical cooperation among countries.
- (j) PAHO, through INPPAZ and the Program on Veterinary Public Health, has played a very important role, providing technical cooperation to the countries in food protection. However, it has still not fully developed itself to meet the current and future technical assistance and cooperation needs of the countries indicated in the above-mentioned postulates, due to uncertainties about the availability of resources.
- (k) PAHO has an excellent infrastructure in the Region, made up of its Representative Offices, its technical programs, and specialized staff in the countries—infrastructure that, with adequate intra- and interprogram coordination, would make it possible to maximize technical cooperation in the countries.
- (l) There is an infrastructure of Collaborating Centers affiliated with WHO, PAHO, and international and national food protection agencies that could potentially be utilized through coordinated activities and partnerships to strengthen technical cooperation to and among the countries.

3.2 Mission of INPPAZ

Bearing in mind the strategic postulates and the recommendations of the External Advisory Group to the Director of PAHO on the Program on Veterinary Public Health, the mission, or purpose, of INPPAZ has been redefined as follows:

To provide the member countries of PAHO, as well as their integration initiatives, with technical cooperation for the solution of problems related to food safety and the prevention and control of foodborne diseases

3.3 Functions

As principal functions, technical cooperation will center on:

- promoting the updating and passage of legislation and standards on food safety;
- training human resources in the countries;
- providing international reference services for the identification of microbiological, chemical, and natural contaminants;
- collecting and disseminating epidemiological and technical information on food safety;
- coordinating applied research on food safety;
- direct technical assistance for the organization and/or strengthening of integrated food protection programs;
- promotion of technical cooperation among countries.

3.4 Short- and Medium-term Goals

For the short and medium term covered in the biennium 2000-2001, the goal is to provide technical cooperation to the countries, based on the five components of the Regional Program for Technical Cooperation, as programmed in PAHO's American Region Planning, Programming, Monitoring, and Evaluation System (AMPES), taking the analysis below into account for every line of action:

3.4.1 Cooperation with the countries in the organization of national and local food protection programs and in the establishment of coordination mechanisms and subregional and regional program evaluation

While all the countries of the Region engage in food protection activities, these are not always based on structured national control programs. Thus, integrated national food protection programs are being developed in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Technical cooperation will be geared to: promoting intersectoral coordination and the organization of integrated food protection programs through committees, commissions, and/or technical administrative structures in which the sectors responsible

for food safety are represented; updating and/or adopting legal and technical regulations consistent with the regulations of *Codex Alimentarius* and other international and regional organizations, and constructing databases on these legal and technical regulations; evaluating the infrastructure and human resources devoted to food protection; promoting cooperation among countries; coordinating and evaluating food protection programs through subregional and regional commissions; and strengthening the national *Codex* committees.

3.4.2 *Cooperation with the countries in reviewing and strengthening analytical systems for the detection and monitoring of microbiological and chemical contaminants*

Although the countries have laboratories and trained personnel, there is still a marked failure to adopt standard analytical procedures and reagents that will permit the application of *Codex* standards and those of other regulatory and normative bodies.

Technical cooperation will be geared to supporting the countries in: the organization of food protection laboratories for the identification of microbiological, chemical, and physical contaminants; the development of regional and international networks of food protection laboratories with quality assurance programs and laboratory accreditation processes; incorporation of the technical standards of *Codex* and other normative bodies; the adaptation and validation of new methods for diagnosis, surveillance, and auditing of food safety programs; incorporation of the risk analysis method; coordination and support for research on baselines for microbiological contaminants and chemicals; identification of emerging and reemerging diseases and their natural history; and interlaboratory testing for microbiological and chemical contaminants. In order to exercise these functions, the collaboration of centers of excellence in the countries and work with the PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centers must be promoted through networks or consortia. INPPAZ will serve as the reference center for the harmonization of methodologies, the provision of reagents, and the dissemination of technical and scientific information.

3.4.3 *Cooperation with the countries for the review and modernization of methodologies for inspection, quality control, and food safety*

It is universally accepted that food safety inspection methods should cover the entire chain of food production from production to consumption and should be preventive in nature. The majority of methods currently used by the countries are applied to the end products, which requires a high number of samples to obtain a statistically acceptable result.

Moreover, in the majority of the countries, inspection and control are applied only to the export market, while in the markets for domestic consumption they are either deficient or nonexistent. The priority in technical cooperation will be to support the countries in the development of food inspection and protection methodologies appropriate to the local conditions, and in mass training of inspectors, the development of information systems, and the licensing of food.

Technical cooperation will be aimed at promoting the use of modern inspection and control methods, such as HACCP, based on the above-mentioned premises; good manufacturing practices (GMP) will also be promoted, as will standardized food protection procedures as a requisite for the incorporation of HACCP. Emphasis will be placed on: the training of trainers for the public sector responsible for regulation and oversight, and for private industry, the informal sector, and cottage industry; support for the official monitoring agencies to adapt regulations and strengthen their capacity for auditing the self-monitoring plans of the food industry; and the promotion and application of inspection methodologies in pre- and post-harvest activities. A database will be developed on training programs and generic HACCP models to assist the countries in designing their own programs.

3.4.4 Cooperation with the countries for the organization of national information systems and epidemiological surveillance of foodborne diseases

Notwithstanding the importance that has always been attached to FBDs, there is no timely and adequate information in the Region that would make it possible to measure with any certainty their health and economic impact, to orient priorities in food protection, or to monitor prevention activities in public health programs. The system launched in 1995 with the coordination of INPPAZ is enabling the countries to obtain information on outbreaks, the agents and foods implicated, and the places where the outbreaks occur, but, frequently, this epidemiological information is not utilized to prevent similar outbreaks.

Technical cooperation is aimed at supporting the countries in: organizing and managing national information and epidemiological surveillance systems for FBDs and implementing them at the local level; coordinating the regional surveillance system for FBDs; coordinating investigations of outbreaks, socioeconomic studies, and risk assessments in connection with FBDs; and developing distance learning programs to train individuals in the epidemiological approach and epidemiological surveillance. Emphasis is being placed on assistance to the countries in compiling and making available the epidemiological and demographic information necessary for conducting the risk analyses required for local, regional, and international trade.

3.4.5 *Promotion of food protection through community participation*

Recognizing that community participation is basic to the prevention of food contamination, education should target everyone from housewives to the people in charge of food processing and food handling, including the formal and informal sectors and cottage industry. The educational programs must be coordinated with schools, consumer groups, and community organizations. The entire population must be knowledgeable about proper food handling and the available food preservation technologies.

Technical cooperation will be geared to supporting the countries in information dissemination and education campaigns on food protection; developing educational and informative materials; promoting integration of the education sector, consumers, and the mass media; and disseminating information on food safety. A database of informative materials will be developed that will be at the countries' disposal, and support will be provided for educational programs for the various sectors responsible for food safety.

There will also be support for community organization to improve food safety and food quality through groups involved in production, as well as consumer organizations and street vendor associations.

3.5 Long-term Objectives and Goals

The primary objective of the Strategic Plan is to define what INPPAZ must do again to fulfill the strategic postulates and be ready for the new millennium. To this end, the Institute will have the following objectives, goals, and strategies until the year 2004:

3.5.1 *INPPAZ will be recognized in the Region as the entity for promotion and technical cooperation and the principal source of information and training in food protection*

- To assist the countries in improving the surveillance systems for foodborne diseases, to coordinate the regional system, and to disseminate epidemiological information on FBDs.
- To develop databases on food protection with up-to-date scientific and technical information and to develop the virtual library through the INPPAZ home page on the Internet.
- To develop training programs and distance learning courses on HACCP, epidemiological surveillance of foodborne diseases, and proper food handling.

- To participate as the consultative agency at meetings on food safety.
- To launch a campaign to promote the services of INPPAZ with regard to food protection.

3.5.2 *INPPAZ will have enhanced its technical cooperation potential, through interprogram coordination and partnerships with other international, binational, and national technical cooperation organizations, acting as the regional reference center on food safety*

- To complete the database on food protection programs around the world and in the Region able to provide technical cooperation in food protection.
- To negotiate partnerships with other technical cooperation agencies. (AOAC, CDC, EU, FAO, FDA, IICA, ILSI, IOE, USDA).
- To promote intra- and interprogram coordination in PAHO.
- To identify national and regional entities that can carry out reference activities in food protection, and to promote the formation of consortia to provide technical cooperation.

3.5.3 *INPPAZ will have improved its capacity to cooperate with the countries in developing mass communication and health education programs to involve the community in food protection programs; these programs will be targeted mainly to food processors, food handlers, and consumers*

- To establish a permanent advisory group on communication and education in food protection.
- To identify entities and experts that specialize in communication and health education.
- To train staff in the Institute and the countries in the basic principles of mass communication and health education.
- To organize a mass communication and health education unit in the Institute.
- To develop a database on mass communication and health education programs for food protection programs.

- To cooperate in the development of demonstration areas in the countries for mass communication and health education campaigns.

3.5.4 *INPPAZ will have fully developed its infrastructure and human resources in order to offer technical cooperation to the countries in food protection*

- To add the needed staff to the INPPAZ roster.
- To provide continuing education and develop the human resources of the Institute.
- To participate in technical and scientific events.
- To review the agreement establishing INPPAZ.
- To coordinate with PANAFTOSA and the Program on Veterinary Public Health to develop the strategic plan on zoonosis.
- To coordinate research on food protection with centers of excellence and universities.

3.5.5 *INPPAZ will develop and execute binational technical cooperation plans consistent with the needs of the countries*

- To utilize the PAHO planning system (AMPES).
- To engage in ongoing consultations with the health and agriculture authorities responsible for food protection programs in the countries.
- To promote and create a regional commission on food protection to serve as an agency for evaluating national programs and for consultation by the Institute.
- To give priority in technical cooperation to the medium-sized and small food industry.

3.5.6 *The Institute will enjoy stable financing and be able to implement its programming on a continuing basis*

- To develop a financial plan that ensures timely contributions from the signatories of the agreement establishing the Institute.

- To promote agreements with the countries for extrabudgetary food protection projects that mobilize additional resources for the Institute.
- To develop and negotiate projects with financial organisms and the food industry that can finance training and research.