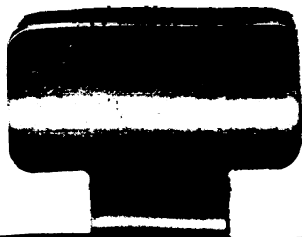


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STATUS REPORT ON PUBLIC INFORMATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH IN THE AMERICAS

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Centro Interamericano de
Documentación e
Información Agrícola

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IICA — CIDIA

**STATUS REPORT
ON PUBLIC INFORMATION
ON ANIMAL HEALTH
IN THE AMERICAS**



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**STATUS REPORT ON PUBLIC INFORMATION ON ANIMAL
HEALTH IN THE AMERICAS**

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I. SUMMARY

Livestock production, a fundamental element in the economy of nations, is of major importance in the Western Hemisphere, given the critical economic situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that is also facing enormous demand for food for its growing population.

Livestock productivity is being adversely affected by diseases and pests which represent a constant threat both internationally and domestically.

A critical element in the efforts of animal health programs is an involvement by producers and the public in carrying out whatever action may be necessary, which in turn depends upon effective communication between them and the health authorities.

The findings of the present survey unfortunately reflect a situation in which this type of communication is far from being optimum, and it is felt that unless steps are taken to improve the situation, the outlook for animal health programs is bound to be poor.

The present study describes the situation in the 16 of the 29 IICA member countries that provided the information requested. Of these 16, only 7 have a communications unit as such, while the remainder receive support —although not as much or as specific as is needed— from ministries or related institutions.

The authors of this study agreed on the conclusions summarized below:

1. The respective authorities recognize the importance of public information, but this recognition is not translated into effective action.
2. There is no properly organized or planned overview of public information in support of most programs.
3. Most of the countries neither have information units as such, nor any specialist to coordinate this function.
4. The necessary degree of communication with producers is lacking.
5. In many cases, the organizational structure hampers communications between the animal health directors and the unit chiefs.
6. The small number of public information personnel that do exist generally need further training.
7. Existing equipment, while valuable, is underutilized or incomplete.
8. Isolated attempts at improvement that have been made by the governments and international agencies have not resulted in concrete changes, because of:
 - absence of an overall communications program
 - failure to identify specific needs
 - inappropriate selection and follow-up as regards training
 - lack of coordination and failure to make good use of external support.

The recommendations suggested to the national authorities, IICA and other international agencies, are that specific, long-term action be planned along a multi-faceted, coordinated approach.

The specific recommendations were divided as follows:

1. Recommendations to IICA

- 1.1 To make the authorities aware of the importance of public information.
- 1.2 To consider including public information in all its projects.
- 1.3 To provide coordination and support for the countries.
- 1.4 To set up an audiovisual resource bank.
- 1.5 To produce audiovisual materials on priority problems.
- 1.6 To publish a bulletin reporting on animal health program development.
- 1.7 To promote a hemisphere-wide meeting of animal health communicators.

2. Recommendations to the countries

- 2.1 To attach greater importance to public information in support of their programs.
- 2.2 To look at public information needs during the program planning stage.
- 2.3 To set up a specific public information area in countries where it does not exist.
- 2.4 To facilitate direct communication between communicators and producers.
- 2.5 To strengthen relations with producers' organizations.
- 2.6 To select and provide adequate training for public information personnel.
- 2.7 To avoid a constant shifting of responsibilities for public information.
- 2.8 To locate the public information unit in the advisory area.

- 2.9 To draw up an overall public information plan as soon as possible.
 - 2.10 To include in the plan a survey of equipment needed over the long term.
 - 2.11 To include in the plan a survey of training needs.
 - 2.12 To avoid isolated efforts and to undertake coordinated action.
- Final recommendation: To follow-up on all the above.

II. BACKGROUND

For some years now, the animal health agencies in IICA member countries have included some elements of public information in their substantive programs. However, during the first meeting of the Inter-American Commission on Animal Health (IICA-COINSA), held in Mexico in 1983, the member states acknowledged that in most of the countries, public information was generally unsatisfactory in the program execution, and that immediate steps ought to be taken to make appropriate use of modern public information techniques.

In their recommendation II (see Appendix I), the representatives at the First Meeting of COINSA agreed that IICA would be responsible for conducting a hemisphere-wide status report to determine what resources were available in each country for public information on animal health matters, and for reviewing the procedures and activities currently being carried out. The findings would subsequently be distributed, along with proposals that would help provide guidelines for these activities in the countries.

III. INTRODUCTION

In the international context of animal health, a determining factor in the success of animal disease prevention and control programs is recognized as being community cooperation and participation.

Since the animal health programs in each country are in constant interaction with their communities, understanding and a generally favorable public opinion are important. Specific groups, such as the broad range of animal owners, professional veterinarians, national, state and local authorities, industrialists, teaching institutions, consumers, community groups, private volunteer organization and many more, must also be involved.

This cooperation is based on a conviction on the part of these groups that is achieved through effective communications.

The countries' experiences in attempting to ensure that their animal health programs are applied as, and when they are necessary have created an awareness that research, legislation and technical and logistical implementation, to name a few, are insufficient: because in the end, everything depends on whether the livestock owners and other people involved do or do not carry out the actions expected of them.

Furthermore, the fact that the representatives at the First Meeting of COINSA decided to undertake major action to improve information in the animal health programs leads to us to believe that this support area will shortly be formalized and made as efficient as possible in all the countries of the hemisphere.

The overall objective of the present status report was to identify the extend to which public information, in its various forms, plays a role in the animal health programs in the IICA member countries, and to determine their organizational level, areas of responsibility, operations and resources. This information is intended to lead to proposals to improve all of these areas.

IV. METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out Recommendation II of COINSA I, the IICA Animal Health Program appointed an official to be responsible for the status report. The official was responsible for designing the information-gathering methodology, and for the analysis and final proposals.

The Information Division of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture

(APHIS/USDA) provided support in the planning and evaluation of the study. A public information specialist from that agency met with the official responsible for the study on March 26 through 30, 1984, in Washington, D.C., and on November 26 through 30, 1984, in Mexico City. The design of the study and the survey were produced as a result of the first meeting.

The survey design called for four phases:

1. Hemisphere-wide survey

The questionnaire, in English and Spanish, (see Appendix 2) was distributed in May 1984, to all the member states, through the Regional Specialists of the IICA Animal Health Program.

2. Direct observations in the countries

The person responsible for the study visited eight representative countries between July 29 and August 24, 1984, and interviewed the Animal Health Directors and the information chiefs, in order to gain a direct appreciation of their systems and facilities.

3. Compilation and analysis of the information

The questionnaires were collected by the IICA veterinarians and were subsequently sent to the study director. The IICA specialists themselves assisted the survey-takers and answered questions they may have had.

4. Conclusions, recommendations and final report

This phase was carefully analyzed by the authors during their second meeting, after which they met in Mexico City, to discuss the final report with the Director of the IICA Animal Health Program.

The central part of the present study was an attempt to have the countries clearly understand the concepts inherent in the survey, and it is therefore important that these be described:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In light of the background, it is important to stress that the concept "public information" as stated in Resolution II of COINSA

should be taken to mean a comprehensive process of communications, including the transmission and reception of information and feedback.

Public Information covers three broad areas of activity:

1. Journalism and public relations
2. Technical communications
3. Communications for training purposes

We are not suggesting here that these areas should be considered separately; quite to the contrary, they are being defined so as to include all of them in the study, since it is necessary that they work in concert.

1. Journalism and public relations

This area covers communications needed for good internal and external relations of the institution, which thereby seeks to have its audiences be well disposed toward, and to understand and cooperate in its policies, decisions and actions. The institutions thereby seeks to foster a positive image of credibility, efficiency and trust in the institution.

As a result, its messages will contain the views, policies, objectives and achievements of the institution that are conveyed to the public by the mass media, or to opinion leaders and groups by direct or interpersonal means.

Also in this area are internal communications with the staff, drawing them into an identification with the institution, and motivating them to an understanding of the impact of their work.

2. Technical communications

This area covers all processes necessary to communicate guidance and information that is purely technical on practical disease prevention or control measures that livestock owners should adopt to protect their herds and improve the production and productivity of their livestock holdings. It also covers information to the general public who might be affected by animal regulations and whose cooperation is critical to the prevention of disease spread (e.g.

travelers, restaurant owners who may not be allowed to move certain animal products).

Excluded from this area are activities whose messages have any political content or that convey merely an image of the institution or of its staff. Also excluded are formal education activities.

This form of communication is generally considered for technical education, health and safety education, community development, extension courses and so forth.

3. Communications for training

Communications activities in this area are a means for the teaching of information to give technical and management training to the staff of the institution itself, in an effort to help improve performance.

V. RESULTS

INFORMATION AVAILABLE

The present study describes the situation in 16 of the 29 IICA member states. Table 1 shows the 14 countries that returned the survey questionnaire, along with two more where information was obtained directly during the observation visit by the person responsible for the study.

Of the 13 countries that gave no response, we know only that officials in some of them (Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru) have received training in mass communications techniques in recent years. In general, it is assumed (and in some cases was confirmed) that those countries that did not send in any information considered the questionnaire to be too long for the present status of their communication activities.

The study was expanded by information contained in reports prepared by communications consultants who in previous years had done region-wide research on action in support of specific animal health programs.

The findings of the survey are summarized below. Please note that the broad range of variables in the countries' responses makes it difficult to tabulate the presentation in most of the cases.

1. PUBLIC INFORMATION UNITS IN THE COUNTRIES

Table 2 describes the Administrative Units involved in public information activities in animal health as described in responses from the 16 countries that provided information. In 7 countries (Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Panama, the Dominican Republic, United States and Uruguay), there is a communications unit within the organizational structure of the animal health program itself; in two countries (Guatemala and Venezuela), the information unit serves all the live-stock programs, including the animal health programs; in the remaining 7 countries, there is no specific information area (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Guyana and Suriname).

In countries that do not have an information unit as such, public information activities, or at least some form of communications, are carried out by a ministerial-level department or a related department, which tends to be a highly technical unit (Brazil, Canada, Colombia). In some countries, animal health education activities are functions that are assigned to the field veterinarians themselves (Argentina, Guyana and Suriname), but in most cases, they have no formal training for this job.

Table 1. List of IICA Member States, indicating those that responded to this study.

Country	Information obtained by:
1. Argentina	Visit only
2. Barbados	---
3. Bolivia	---
4. Brazil*	Questionnaire and visit
5. Canada	Questionnaire
6. Colombia	Questionnaire and visit
7. Costa Rica	Questionnaire and visit
8. Chile	Questionnaire and visit
9. Dominica	---
10. Ecuador	---
11. El Salvador	Questionnaire
12. United States	Questionnaire and visit
13. Grenada	---
14. Guatemala	Questionnaire
15. Guyana	Questionnaire
16. Haiti	---
17. Honduras	---
18. Jamaica	---
19. Mexico	Questionnaire and visit
20. Nicaragua	---
21. Panama	Questionnaire and visit
22. Paraguay	---
23. Peru	---
24. Dominican Republic	Visit Only
25. Saint Lucia	---
26. Suriname	Questionnaire
27. Trinidad and Tobago	---
28. Uruguay	Questionnaire and visit
29. Venezuela	Questionnaire

* Brazil includes information on three states: Minas Gerais, Parana and Santa Catarina.

Table 2. Units responsible for public information activities for the animal health programs in those countries responding to the survey.

Country	Public information unit serving the animal health services	Year created	Area of responsibility	Alternate of support unit within ministry itself	Area of support	Observations
Argentina	The specific area does not exist			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Press and Ministry publications - National Livestock Technology Institute 	<p>A</p> <p>B</p>	There is interest in setting up a specific area shortly. Technical training begun/requesting advisory services on setting up the information unit
Brazil ¹	No national central level information unit			Brazilian corporation for technical assistance and rural extension (EMBRATER) (related) Central and State	B	Creation of the specific area is subject to authorization by Ministerial level. Work of a collegiate body of specialists from entire country seeking to meet this need

FIELDS - A - Journalism and public relations
 B - Technical communications
 C - Communications for training

NOTES: 1/ Brazil - Animal Health Communications are well organized in a number of states, particularly in Minas Gerais, Parana and Santa Catarina, which were visited for the purposes of this survey.

Country	Public information unit serving the animal health services	Year created	Area of responsibility	Alternate of support unit within ministry itself	Area of support	Observations
Canada	The specific area does not exist			Information Branch	A B	Survey reveals efficient coordination with the corresponding area of the Ministry
Colombia	The specific area does not exist			Information division of the Colombian Livestock Institute (ICA)	A B C	An Animal Health Education Unit is planned to coordinate activities with the information division, which is using systematized procedures that are very professional
Costa Rica	Health Education and Public Information Unit	1978	B C	Agricultural extension bureau, publications department, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	B	A loan contract is underway with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for support to the unit

FIELDS - A - Journalism and public relations
 B - Technical communications
 C - Communications for training

Country	Public information unit serving the animal health services	Year created	Area of responsibility	Alternate of support unit within ministry itself	Area of support	Observations
Chile	Health Education Unit	1978	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Information Unit - Public relations office (executive director agricultural livestock service) 	A	Efficient model of independent structure, with a single person (specialist) coordinating activities centrally with field veterinarians themselves, who have had specific training in the area serving as operational personnel
El Salvador	No specific unit reported to be in existence			Information Unit of the Center	A B	Insufficient information
United States of America	Information Division (For Animal and Plant Health)	1977	A	(Occasionally) Governmental and Public Affairs, USDA		Highly professional development, is the only example of an independent unit that works in the entire range of information

FIELDS - A - Journalism and public relations
 B - Technical communications
 C - Communications for training

Country	Public information unit serving the animal health services	Year created	Area of responsibility	Alternate of support unit within ministry itself	Area of support	Observations
Guatemala ¹	The specific area does not exist			Livestock information and publications department	A B C	Specific unit is planned in shortrun
Guyana	The specific area does not exist			Information unit of the division of extension and education	A B	Requesting support to set up an information system on animal health and production
Mexico	Technical modernization department	1972	B C	Information and public relations bureau (SARH)	A B	Constantly involving, information experts brought in 1979 and currently receiving Ministerial-level support, covering the 3 areas described. (Name, of necessity, administrative)

FIELDS - A - Journalism and public relations
 B - Technical communications
 C - Communications for training

NOTES - 1/ Guatemala - Livestock programs, including animal health programs, are served by mass communications areas.

Country	Public information unit serving the animal health services	Year created	Area of responsibility	Alternate of support unit within ministry itself	Area of support	Observations
Panama	Health Education Section	1977	A B	Nat. Info. and Public Relations Bureau Nat. Agricultural Extension Service	A B	After reorganization, level went from unit to section. Stress is being laid on health education work
Dominican Republic	Health Education Unit	1978	B C	Public relations department	A	Operations have backing as component of an IDB animal health project. Has been directed since inception by a health education specialist
Suriname	The specific area does not exist			Public relations and information	A B	Veterinarian from the service conduct health Ed. activities as an intrinsic part of their work

FIELDS - A - Journalism and public relations
 B - Technical communications
 C - Communications for training

Country	Public information unit serving the animal health services	Year created	Area of responsibility	Alternate of support unit within ministry itself	Area of support	Observations
Uruguay	Health Education and publication	1979	B C	Public relations, press and propaganda office	A	Department originated as a service for the technical staff to update documents, but has been expanding its areas of responsibility
Venezuela ¹	The specific area does not exist	1976		Information bureau of the agricultural and livestock sector and livestock training and publications Division	A B C	Division serves several livestock areas and its objectives and functions are described as producing information materials

FIELDS — A — Journalism and public relations
 B — Technical communications
 C — Communications for training

NOTES — 1/ Venezuela — Public information areas serve livestock programs, including the Animal Health Programs.

In fact, all the animal health programs have had, or have at their disposal the best possible agent of health education – their field veterinarians. The variants lie in their level of specific training, whether or not they have the backing of a systematic program, and the extent of their interaction with other forms of public information when these are conducted in parallel.

Table 2 indicates the year in which the animal health information units were set up, and makes some brief observations on their development and current status.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

The organizational level of these 7 units varies, ranging from a division to a section, and although comparisons are relative because of the different terms used for administrative structures in the various countries, there is in fact a notable difference in rank between them.

As far as the effectiveness of the information work is concerned, more important is the unit's position in the organization chart, i.e., whether it is in direct contact with the top management of the animal health program or not. According to the organization charts received, this structural line of relations is currently as indicated in Table No. 3.

Table 3. Lines of relations between Director General of animal health and information chief.

Type	Country
Direct	Costa Rica
	Chile
	United States
	Uruguay
Indirect	Mexico
	Panama
	Dominican Republic

Some units are located in a substantive area of the organization, although from the operational point of view, it would be best for them to be attached to the advisory area, as required by their status as units providing overall support.

3. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The areas of responsibility currently covered by the units, whether existing in their own right or as support units, are described in Table No. 2. It will be noted that a large majority of the units in Latin America are geared to technical communications and communications as a teaching or human resources training aid. Journalism and public relations activities are generally dealt with by ministerial-level entities.

4. OBJECTIVE

As a result of the situation described in point 3, the overall and specific objectives of the units are geared to the respective areas. However, it was found that some countries merely have as their final goal the production of information materials, while less frequently, they produce graphics or printed matter. This is surprising in light of the illiteracy levels in rural areas of Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. FUNCTIONS

In the responses from some countries, it became clear that their objectives and functions were somewhat *ad hoc*, although it is unknown if they actually consulted their official operations manual, or whether indeed such a manual does or does not exist.

In other cases, both the objectives and the functions are formally stated and are adequate: their goals are to seek the understanding and cooperation of the public involved, and to have the public take specific action, and the different phases of the information process, from research up through evaluation and follow-up, are described. Unfortunately, of these few examples, a still smaller number actually put them into practice.

6. REGULATIONS

There are also great contrasts in this area: on the one hand, some countries appear to have great freedom to operate without detailed guidelines from the ministry, although it must be said that some of those surveyed were unaware of whether there were any

external or higher-level rules to be followed. At the other extreme, there are cases in which ministry-level rule-making is complex or attempts to impose absolute control, obstructing inhibiting activities and the production of communications materials.

In most of the countries, there are regulations on areas of responsibility for information, but they are generally confined to an official, ministry level. It is common in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for press releases and the mass media to be channeled only through the ministry's information unit.

Fortunately, there are few restrictions on use of the mass media when the content is technical and oriented toward producers.

7. ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES

Since it is so important that public information be thought of as a systematized process, we give below the findings of each index considered under this point of the survey.

7.1 Regular Activities

7.1.1 Detection of needs

This is most commonly done at the cabinet level in the central offices, in meetings with the animal health directors, including the head of information (in some countries, the state or regional officers in charge also attend), at which meetings an annual program and its goals are discussed. The basic assumption is therefore that those involved determine where and in what areas information activities need to be conducted.

7.1.2 Programming

Some countries define their priority programs, whether they are new programs or continuing programs, at the annual meeting mentioned above, but there is little discussion of the information component. It is usually assumed that all need support, but guidelines are not generally given; more seriously, the costing instruments and

budgetary provisions are therefore overlooked. Generally speaking, there is an overall information budget, which is estimated subjectively to be used "for whatever it may be needed."

It should be noted that in a number of countries the veterinarians responsible for substantive programs still determine how information media will be prepared and even design them, relegating the information unit to a post office or workshop role.

7.1.3 Research

It may be said that no country in the hemisphere conducts prior research in all areas of public information, arguing that it is costly and that time is too short.

Some countries report that they do research into health education, in order to produce an effective survey of specific problems (Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico), defining and describing the audience, the patterns of perception, the influence of the mass media, and so forth. It should be pointed out that they are not always specific to animal health programs (Brazil, Colombia), even though their adaptation and utilization has been extremely valuable. In other cases, the effort has been sporadic (Mexico).

7.1.4 Management

The management and delegation of responsibility is generally good, as far as the subordinates working in the central unit are concerned. The same general statement cannot be said of the staff working in the field, particularly when the head of information does not have line authority over those who are actually doing the work.

7.1.5 Execution

A large number of countries begin and end their information activities at this point, without research, without evaluation, etc.

The public information units that do not have a program operate on a crisis basis, with all ensuing difficulties involved.

The type of activities done by the public information units themselves varies widely among the countries, depending upon their areas of competence and their resources. In other countries, everything is done outside the animal health services.

The information Division of APHIS (USA) is the only independent unit that does journalism work directly; the remaining units prepare the information, which is then channeled to the ministry agency.

In the area of technical communications, the production of sophisticated mass media events and audiovisuals comes down to the preparation of scripts; the production of interpersonal communications and smaller audiovisual items varies among the countries, although most of them do graphic design, photographic materials and exhibits.

Small publications are produced by the units themselves in Costa Rica, the United States and Mexico. More elaborate publications and printed matter are done by the ministry or through private concerns, except in Mexico, which has its own print shop.

Some information units (Chile, Panama and the United States) do their own video taping, not for over-the-air transmission, but as a means of interpersonal support.

Direct or interpersonal communications with the producers is generally done by the health veterinarians of the service.

7.1.6 Supervision

The degree of supervision of the activities is the same as that mentioned in point 7.1.4.

7.1.7 Evaluation

In cases in which no research activities are carried on, or in which concise surveys, objectives and goals do not exist, it is not possible to measure impact. Countries such as Brazil, Chile, Canada, Colombia, Mexico and the United States do evaluate their information programs. The ICA of Colombia reports that it does a formal evaluation of its health education programs. Canada, Chile and the United States report that they evaluate their programs, but do not employ formal systems for statistical measurement of the impact.

Most of the countries have not looked at how important it is to find out whether their communications work has achieved the expected response in the audience, and to what extent.

7.1.8 Feedback/Follow up

As a result of the previous point, none of the countries that do no evaluation of their programs has been able to set up ways of confirming their strategies or of indicating any aspects that need to be modified during the followup.

7.2 Special activities

All the countries responded to the survey on this point, saying that in the event of an animal health emergency, the communications unit or the ministerial information unit puts all its resources into providing the necessary support.

However, only a small number of countries of the hemisphere have made provision for communications in their emergency documents and manuals, some of which merely list them without further description, or look at them in a very partial way (health education, public information, and so forth).

The information division of APHIS (USA) is the only unit that is able to employ its own information officer, who is fully informed, is in direct contact with the emergency director on a daily basis, and has the confidence to deal with an emergency.

7.3 Coordination

In most of the countries, constant or close internal relations between the information units and the other areas of the institutions do not exist.

Relations with the ministries are generally geared to the corresponding area of information and contact is usually even more distant.

The units' external relations vary widely, but they did not specify whether these relations had helped them achieve their aims. It appears that little advantage has been taken of most external resources.

Similarly, few countries included the list of producers' associations that was requested: this gives an indication that relations with the livestock producers are, with a few exceptions, sporadic.

7.4 Availability, Coverage of, and Access to the Use of the Mass Media

Some countries gave no information on this; in such cases, it was considered that there is no information about the existence of official broadcast time.

In most of the responding countries of Latin America there is a possibility of free radio time, either as official broadcast time, "courtesy" time, or both. This was not so common in the case of television and the press.

Paid access was reported to be available to any of these media; access was also given by generating information in the form of news stories.

However, most of the countries have not been very active in the use of the mass media for their public information programs.

8. RESOURCES

A summary is given below of the human resources, equipment, facilities and financial resources reported by the seven countries that have an information unit within their animal health organizations.

8.1 Human Resources

According to the survey, of a grand total of 67 people at all levels working in the seven animal health information units (note that the U.S. personnel also deal with the area of plant health); 28 of them are professionals (8 are veterinarians), 20 are specialized technicians in different areas of communications production, 12 are graphics production assistants, and there are 7 secretaries.

The Information Division of APHIS (USA) is headed by a specialized information professional; the Chilean Health Education Unit is headed by a woman with a degree in biology and a specialization in health education; the other five units (Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay) are headed by veterinarians, of whom only the Unit Chief in the Dominican Republic has a specialization in health education.

The need for training personnel from the units in Latin America, not only at the level of information chiefs and planners, but of the entire staff in general, is self-evident.

Table No. 4 gives a summarized breakdown of the personnel working in the 7 information units.

8.2 Equipment

The survey revealed wide discrepancies in the type and amount of equipment assigned to the seven units. This information is given in Table No. 5.

Table 4. Personnel working in the public information units in the animal health services.

COUNTRY	PERSONNEL	DESCRIPTION
Costa Rica	1 Unit Chief	Veterinarian
	2 Specialized Technicians	1 Audiovisual/Drawing Team Equipment
	1 Secretary	
Chile	1 Unit Chief	Specialist in Health Education
United States*	1 Division Director	Specialist in Information
	16 Information Specialists	Information Specialists and Writers
	5 Specialized Technicians	2 Graphic Design/2 Photographers and 1 Video/Broadcaster
	4 Secretaries	
Mexico	1 Department Chief	Veterinarian
	4 Professionals	1 Veterinarian/2 Graphics/1 Social Psychologist
	10 Specialized Technicians	4 Graphic Designers/3 Printers/ 2 Photographers/1 Typesetter
	12 Production Assistants	2 Drafters/9 Printers/1 Photographer
	2 Secretaries	

Panama	1 Section Chief	Veterinarian
	1 Specialized Technician	Audiovisual Team
Dominican Republic	1 Unit Chief	Veterinarian, Specializing in Health Education
Uruguay	1 Department Chief	Veterinarian
	1 Administrator	

* The U.S. personnel also deal with the area of Plant Health.

If should be noted that some countries have acquired very specialized pieces of equipment; however, in many cases, these are underutilized because of a lack of materials for production and a notable lack of maintenance. The most salient fact is that equipment has been purchased in an unplanned, sporadic way.

8.3 Facilities

In general, the units in the countries of Latin America have minimum facilities, usually office space only. Only Mexico has its own complete graphics production workshop; Costa Rica has the same facility on a lesser scale, but even these facilities need to be overhauled to make them more suitable for the work.

The units in Costa Rica, Mexico and Uruguay have an auditorium in their central offices for conferences and for showing audiovisual materials. The United States has an audiovisual studio. Mexico and Uruguay have a reference library for their experts.

8.4 Financial Resources

According to the findings of the survey, one of the most critical problems in this area of support is the lack of funds and at times lack of specific budgets for information in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The omission of information components from project planning and budget programming was obvious in many cases. It has been a common practice in the countries for money to be taken from the information budgets whenever budget cuts are in view or when there are emergencies to be dealt with.

This situation is aggravated by the fact that such external support as the information units might obtain—structures, resources and information materials developed by other state and educational institutions, or by private enterprise itself, if not actually in the form of financing— is not properly utilized.

9. LIMITING FACTORS

The most common limiting factors as shown by the survey can be grouped under the following four headings:

- a. Awareness and conviction on the part of senior officials
 - b. Organizational structure
 - c. Financing and budget
 - d. Training
-
- a. The fact that high-level officials are not convinced of the need for, and importance of public information greatly affects the presentation of other areas of the problem, because the efforts that go into solving them are not sufficient.
 - b. The position of the existing units in their organizations hampers the possibility of direct and constant relations with senior officials: the person responsible for the unit is often not in direct communication with top management.
 - c. While the information units ought to seek additional external support, they should not become wholly dependent on it.
 - d. Those responsible for information are notably lacking in the specialized training that would enable them to plan what is needed in their area of responsibility, and the absence of training for subordinate personnel is quite obvious.

10. PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

The countries' responses on this were taken as the basis for the recommendations presented in Chapter VII of this study.

Table 5. Existing equipment and facilities in public information units of animal health services.

Country	Type of Equipment	A	B	Facilities
Costa Rica	— Graphic design			— Auditorium
	— Small press			— Darkroom
	— Audiovisual*	X	X	
	— Video	X	X	— Storage for supplies
	— 16 mm Movie projector		X	— Offices
Chile	— Audiovisual*		X	— Office
	— Video	X	X	— Storage
United States	— Graphic design			— Video studio
	— Graphic reproduction			— Photography laboratory
	— Photography			— Auditorium
	— Audiovisual*	X	X	— Storage
	— Video	X	X	— Offices
	— 16 mm Movie projector	X	X	
	— Computer		X	
Mexico	— Graphic design			— Auditorium (2)
	— Photography			— Printing plant
	— Graphic exhibition			— Offices
	— Off-set and photomechanical			— Photography laboratory
	— Electronic typography			
	— Audiovisual*	X	X	— Library
	— 16 mm movie projector		X	— Storage

Panama	- Photography			- Office
	- Audiovisual*		X	
	- Video	X	X	
	- 16 mm movie projector		X	
Dominican Republic	- Photography			- Offices
	- Audiovisual*	X	X	- Storage for equipment
	- Video		X	
	- 16 mm movie projector		X	
Uruguay	- Small press			- Auditorium
	- Photography			- Library
	- Audiovisual		X	- Office
	- 16 mm movie projector		X	

A - Production

B - Projection or exhibit

* - Tape/slide

VI. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The range and level of development of information and communications services supporting animal health programs vary enormously from country to country throughout the hemisphere. In some cases, information is an integral part of the animal health organizational structure, while in others, information is an area shared by an entire ministry of agriculture.

A basic difficulty in any attempt to compare the countries' different approaches is the definition of "communications" or "information". Some of the more common interpretations are:

1. Internal communications between the central-office personnel and the field staff.
2. Public relations and image-making.
3. Education and training of veterinarians and technical personnel.
4. Public information, promotion of programs and community education.

Internal communications are basically an administrative matter, and public relations often depend up on political considerations. Thus, although both areas are critical to operations of the animal health programs, they are areas that are very country-specific.

Technical training on materials preparation and supporting teaching materials, and public information on technical matters over the mass media or although direct personal contact can be approached more globally, and we shall therefore concentrate on these areas in making our recommendations and drawing the conclusions of this study.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Throughout the Americas, most of the government animal health offices acknowledge the importance of information in the success of their programs, but this has not been translated into sufficient backing, as noted in the findings of this study.

2. In general terms, what is lacking is an organized, planned overview of the areas of responsibility and functions that a public information program ought to undertake in support of the institution.

This is reflected principally in the fact that, with a few exceptions, no information program planning or evaluation is done. Most of the animal health projects and programs do not include the information component in the initial planning stage and, of course, this results in budget resources not being included either. Without any definition of program priorities and without any finances to back them up, the information units generally work in isolation and on a crisis basis. Naturally, this prevents them from having the desired impact.

3. In most of the countries, the government animal health organizations do not have an information unit, and do not even have an individual responsible for organizing and planning this work. In such cases, the work is done by an information department at the ministry level, or by a decentralized agency; on occasion, there is little coordination. Frequently, therefore, their activities and materials are not adequately focused on the technical and strategic objectives of the animal health programs.

Depending on the nature of the outside agency that does the work, it may take a partial or extreme approach, gearing itself, for example, to the institutional image-making, or to rural extension work.

In most cases, the animal health authorities are aware that the livestock producer receives a variety of messages and information from different sources, such as universities, quasi-governmental enterprises, private volunteer organizations, social institutes, and even from private enterprise as part of their marketing techniques. However, the necessary coordination has not been established, and advantage has not been taken of the full support that these entities could provide.

4. In some countries, the most glaring omission is the lack of direct communications with the livestock producers, either at the educational level, or in terms of associations. In the first case, complete information programs and media are designed from of the central offices, without taking into account the fundamental rule

that audience needs and characteristics must be considered. In the second case, the lack of a close relationship with representatives of organized producers has an enormous negative effect on support for animal health programs.

5. In certain countries, the close and constant relationship that ought to exist between the person responsible for information and the Director General of Animal Health is hampered by the former's position in the institutional hierarchy, with the result that all his proposals must be made through third parties or through intermediaries. Cooperation with other areas of the institution is also far from being optimal.

6. Whenever an information unit does exist within the animal health structure, it normally consists of a very small group of people, most of whom have only minimal training for their jobs. Even the better trained information chiefs need further training in program planning, analysis and evaluation, and in the identification of appropriate techniques and methodologies, to enable them to make better use of their resources. In most of the countries, in addition, there is too frequent turnover of personnel who have been trained.

This turnover has affected the expectations about what specific efforts may achieve: for example, the Pan American Health Organization, (PAHO), whose animal health training program (PROASA), financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), has done major work over the last two years by providing national and regional courses on animal health public information.

7. It is surprising to find that some countries have a large amount of equipment for various areas of information, including sophisticated, very expensive components. Unfortunately, this equipment is frequently underutilized or not used at all, mainly because of the lack of production materials and the absence of funds for repairs and maintenance.

8. The isolated attempts made by the institutions and international agencies to improve information for animal health has not often produced any concrete advances, for the following main reasons:

- a) Absence of an overall information program drawn up by the country itself, pointing out its priorities for animal

health actions on which communications efforts would be concentrated.

- b) Failure to identify specific needs for the selection and training of personnel in the information area.
- c) Inappropriate selection of personnel for information training and/or lack of follow-up and motivation for staff who are receiving specialized training.
- d) Failure to identify appropriate information equipment and materials needs in accordance with the specific circumstances of each country.
- e) Failure to take advantage of external support (from in-country private and public groups as well as international organizations) and failure to achieve greater coordination both within and outside the country.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to make a real contribution to a decisive improvement in animal health communication in this hemisphere, it is recommended that IICA and other international agencies undertake specific action for long-term change by using a multi-faceted approach. It is difficult for the authors of this study to pinpoint any miracle cures in the short-term that would really make a profound change in the current systems. These recommendations cover two broad areas:

- Develop IICA into a promoter of animal health public information in the Americas.
- Orient the countries towards a greater understanding of the importance of supporting communications and developing more consistent links between animal health directors and public information chiefs.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IICA

- 1.1 Make the animal health directors in the countries systematically and constantly aware of the importance of public information in animal health programs.

- 1.2 **Make certain that all projects undertaken by IICA consider an information component in the planning stage to ensure the success of their objectives, by gaining the understanding and cooperation of those involved in each program. By setting a good example, IICA could help countries remember to consider public information in all their programs.**

- 1.3 **Undertake a program to coordinate assistance to the countries in the area of animal health public information; such a program would operate solely to support the countries in developing a plan by defining their long-term information objectives and to help them find their own internal and external solutions and alternatives. Of course, this point requires a full separate proposal.**

- 1.4 **Set up an audiovisual resource bank at the headquarters of the IICA Animal Health Program or Public Information Program. Since the countries of this hemisphere share many animal health problems (e.g., ticks, brucellosis, foot-and-mouth disease, etc.), and the overall actions and procedures they use are similar (e.g., inspection diagnosis, quarantine, cleaning and disinfection, etc.), most of the audiovisual materials produced by one country could also be used or adapted in other countries. After copying existing materials in countries of the hemisphere, IICA could make them available on loan or at cost to other countries that have the same needs but that might not have sufficient resources to produce an original for themselves.**

In this way, the local budget could be concentrated on the distribution and presentation of the information, instead of spending it on a costly production.

- 1.5 **Produce audiovisual materials on priority animal health matters. Such priority topics could be agreed upon during the annual meetings of animal health directors of the hemisphere. In this way, every year or every six months, IICA could produce a new audiovisual on a specific animal health problem or on some field technique (for example, IICA might well have produced some type of informational material on African swine fever when it became a**

priority problem for the hemisphere at the end of the 70's, and such support was not available).

- 1.6 Publish a monthly bulletin of the IICA Animal Health Program. In conversations with the information chiefs of the countries, it became clear that many of the staff and technical personnel were not aware of important events in the animal health community. An international bulletin on this subject could be modest in format, but could provide a lot of information, at minimum cost.

Each country would be encouraged to provide short news items in cable format, on technical animal health matters, including some newsworthy advances in educational campaigns, research studies on different audiences, media strategies, evaluation of the impact, etc.

This type of bulletin would serve various purposes:

- a. It would show the member states that IICA considers public information to be an integral part of animal health programs.
- b. It would enable the animal health directors and professional staff to bring themselves up to date on the status of animal health matters in the countries and to learn of experiences, strategies and actions in other countries.
- c. It would encourage communications and close relations between animal health directors and information chiefs, at least once a month.

When the animal health director and the information chief discuss the possibility of sending IICA some information on one of their programs, they will be able to talk about, and thus review their own communications work.

- 1.7 Promote a hemisphere-wide meeting of those responsible for animal health public information. In their responses to the questionnaires, a number of the countries said they felt the need for their information chiefs to exchange ideas and

experiences directly with their counterparts in the rest of the hemisphere. By learning of the problems encountered and solutions found by other information specialists, each one will be able to give a new impetus and enthusiasm to his own programs.

Although it seems improbable that financing can be found for regular meetings of these public information heads, it would be highly productive for IICA for sponsor an introductory meeting at the hemisphere level. The purposes of such a meeting might include:

- a. An opportunity for them to meet each other personally, and thereby be able to maintain correspondence and share ideas later on.
- b. Presentation of the audiovisual resources bank and available materials. As an alternative, the participants could bring their contributions with them, thereby initiating the IICA bank.
- c. To share and discuss ideas on public information techniques that have been effective in other animal health programs (Such as the training of extension veterinarians in each country).
- d. To provide lectures by specialists of note on useful and needed topics for all participants, such as the use of mass media, evaluation of public information programs, identification and use of other sources of support and resources, etc.
- e. A working session in which each participant would draw up a preliminary draft of his long-term national program, with direct advice from specialist consultants invited by IICA for that purpose. He would thus return to his country with something productive to present to the animal health directors for discussion, adaptation, and formal adoption.
- f. To present the new IICA animal health bulletin.

This meeting should be planned in great detail. After the initial meeting, the participants may continue to keep in touch and exchange ideas through the new bulletin and through personal contact.

2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO IICA MEMBER COUNTRIES

- 2.1 To attach greater importance to public information activities as support for their substantive programs, which should contemplate an information component to ensure that animal owners and the public involved gain an understanding and are prepared to cooperate.
- 2.2 Whenever initial discussions on agreements and technical cooperation projects get underway with other countries and with international agencies, provision should be made for the needs of a public information program from the beginning of the project planning and budgeting stage.
- 2.3 In those countries that do not have this type of support, to set up an office responsible for the public information program within the animal health organizational structure itself. Depending on the needs of each country, this office could start up with a specialist trained to organize, plan and coordinate a public information program and to serve as a liaison with the ministry-level information department, whom he should keep abreast of projects and actions of interest to the public, in order to gain cooperation in producing information to motivate and educate the general public.
- 2.4 It is essential public information projects bear in mind direct contact with the producers or population with whom any animal health action or program is intended to be carried out. Communicators who are planning and evaluating promotional or educational projects need to have every facility for communicating directly with those who receive their messages.
- 2.5 The animal health directors need to work in closer relation with the national, regional and local livestock organizations. If organized producers understand the need for the

animal health programs and actions, they will be the best support and the main advocates of adopting the technology and of the follow-up and execution of the government measures that need to be applied.

- 2.6 To select people with the vocation, characteristics and training needed for the job. The type of decisions previously taken in a number of countries, that were based on a feeling that a non-specialized veterinarian could do the job, because it was "easy", should be avoided. Whether a public information professional or a veterinary medicine professional, this person must have broad knowledge of both areas, as well as of the development of his country's animal health programs.
- 2.7 To attempt to avoid constant changes in those responsible for public information, in order to take advantage of the knowledge and experience that they acquire on the job.
- 2.8 It is suggested that the person responsible for information be included in the animal health director's support group, or else that he be in a position in the organization that will put him in direct, constant touch with top management. This, in itself, will mean that the information area will not be attached to a single substantive area, since it will have to deal with all the senior management staff.
- 2.9 To draw up, with the greatest possible interest, a long-term public information action plan for the country, including a determination of needs for each program undertaken by the animal health bureau, particularly for priority programs. It would also identify actual training needs, equipment purchasing, materials and the corresponding budget.
- 2.10 The findings of the survey indicated that some countries needed more equipment. With the audiovisual resources bank of IICA, the type of playback equipment that will be needed could be prioritized, based on the audiovisual materials available. Thus, each country can draw up a plan (with assistance from IICA, if required), breaking down their individual priorities for equipment and materials. This work could be done jointly by the animal health

director and the person responsible for public information so that future program needs could also be considered. Subsequently, both would have the same information and could fight for the same things whenever there was a possibility of additional financing over time, whether internally or externally.

- 2.11 As regards the need for the education and training of informational personnel, as stated earlier, job profiles of the various positions must be identified. When training needs are carefully determined, priorities can then be defined for the level of the person responsible and/or information planner, for extension experts or field educators/promoters, and for production personnel.

Personnel training should be approached in the same way as was recommended for the area of equipment (with IICA assistance, if required), i.e., it should be a long-term plan. The countries would therefore be ready to take advantage of any financing that might appear, and this would help to reduce inconsistent or non-specific assistance. The training systems and possibilities are many, and IICA could also advise the countries on this phase.

It is undeniable that the countries and the international technical assistance agencies ought to consider feasible ways of providing formal training, short courses, practical and field training, consultant advice, exchange of experiences and information, etc., all of which requires a high level of coordination in order to avoid duplication of effort.

Whatever procedure may be selected, an immediate multiplier effect ought to be sought in each country, i.e., each person receiving training ought to transmit it to other technical people in his country.

There are good possibilities for training within the country in most of the member states. If considered necessary, some countries of the Americas —those who have been working in animal health public information for more time— might be suitable for providing practical and field training at the regional level.

As a result of the present study, we may suggest Colombia (Colombian Agricultural Institute); Brazil (particularly ACARPA in Parana), and the United States of America (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) for this purpose, given their existing methodology and infrastructure. The Chilean and Mexican animal health services are also conducting public information programs that could be of great value for observation visits.

Naturally, any formal agreement for such training should be considered carefully by the countries themselves, but IICA could examine the possibilities of coordinating some type of longer term cooperative agreement with the countries mentioned.

- 2.12 Finally, the most important recommendation of all, both for IICA and for the animal health authorities and even for other international organizations, is that in order to be effective in an area as yet so ill-defined, isolated attempts to advance public information will not bring us any radical changes, and it is therefore essential that efforts be carried out under a broad and effective coordination.

Equally, regardless of what recommendations or how many recommendations may be made, if they are not followed up closely, reality will not be brought home to the countries and there will be frustrations. Only with follow-up can we conceive of a solid advance in improving public information as support to the objectives of animal health.

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Appendix 1

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON ANIMAL HEALTH-COINSA

RECOMMENDATION II

PUBLIC INFORMATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON ANIMAL HEALTH OF IICA;

Considering the need of a solid support of the community in the agreement and execution of animal health programs,

That, to this effect, the appropriate use of modern public information techniques is essential, and that this element is usually not satisfactory in the veterinary practice of most of the countries,

RECOMMENDS:

1. That IICA undertake a study of the situation of public information on animal health in the Americas, submitting proposals that may serve as guidelines for the appropriate activities of the countries.

Appendix 2

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE

BUREAU OF ANIMAL HEALTH

SURVEY FOR A STATUS REPORT ON PUBLIC INFORMATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH IN THE AMERICAS 1984

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SURVEY FOR A STATUS REPORT ON PUBLIC INFORMATION ON ANIMAL HEALTH IN THE AMERICAS – 1984

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. ORIGINS/HISTORICAL OUTLINE

- 1.1 NAME** Indicate whether the animal health services have a specific communications area, and give its present name.
- 1.2 HISTORICAL OUTLINE** Briefly explain:
- 1.2.1** How long has the department or unit been in existence?
- 1.2.2** Broad outline of how it has developed.

2. STRUCTURAL LEVEL

- 2.1 POSITION IN THE HIERARCHY** Indicate its position in the structure of the animal health services, rank of the person in charge, lines of command (attach organization chart, if possible).
- 2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE** Organizational structure of the communications department or unit, including all staff (attach organization chart, if possible).

Describe present structure down to the operational level in the field. If field work is done by another administrative unit, explain present relationship.

If the functions of mass communications, technical communications and human resources training are performed by different areas, describe the structure of each and the relationships between them.

If one or more of these functions is performed for the animal health services by another unit of the Ministry, give details.

3. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 Indicate the areas for which the department or unit is responsible, taking into consideration what was said in the "Conceptual Framework" section of this document.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 Describe the overall objective of the department or unit responsible for animal health communications.

4.2 Describe the specific objectives, if any.

5. FUNCTIONS

5.1 List the specific functions for which the communications department or unit is officially responsible.

6. RULE-MAKING

6.1 Indicate the person who sets the rules governing communications activities, both at the Ministry level and within the department (for example, indicate whether the Ministry has a department, committee or coordinator to regulate and set standards or guidelines for editorial policy, printing and format standards, editorial opinion, regulation of the use of the mass media, etc.).

6.2 Describe briefly the procedure for the communication unit's participation in those regulatory committees or bodies.

7. ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES

Describe the work of each area of the internal structure of the department or unit, and the methods normally used to perform those functions, particularly the relationship with the technical animal health areas. Describe from the beginning to the end of the process, or how it operates through to follow-up.

We find it necessary to make a distinction between normal activities, which can be planned and are conducted on a continuing basis (regular activities), and those that respond to an emergency, or that are done on an occasional basis (special activities).

7.1 Indicate whether the following activities are performed, when, how and who decides on them:

7.1.1 Detection/identification of needs

7.1.2 Planning

Indicate whether the following are done, how and by whom:

7.1.3 RESEARCH Diagnosis of problems educational profiles, identification and description of audiences and opinion leaders, communications media, etc.).

7.1.4 OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR Indicate how authority is delegated.

7.1.5 EXECUTION Describe the various stages of each process, such as: design, production, distribution (with internal resources, external resources, private resources, total or partial, etc.).

7.1.6 SUPERVISION Supervision by stages.

7.1.7 EVALUATION Measurement of impact, assessment.

7.1.8 FEED-BACK/FOLLOW-UP

7.2 SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

7.2.1 ANIMAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES

Actions taken by the department when there is an outbreak of a disease among animals.

7.2.2 Other chance occurrences or unprogrammed activities.**7.3 COORDINATION****7.3.1 Internal relations****7.3.2 Ministry relations****7.3.3 External relations** (Include here a list or account of nation-wide and/or specialized livestock producers associations).**7.4 AVAILABILITY, COVERAGE AND ACCESS TO THE USE OF MASS MEDIA****7.4.1 RADIO** Access to official, public service (courtesy) or paid broadcast time.**7.4.2 TELEVISION** Access to official, public service (courtesy) or paid broadcast time.**7.4.3 PRESS** Availability of public service (courtesy) or paid space in newspaper.**7.4.4 OTHER** Specify.**8. RESOURCES**

Describe the elements available to the communications department or unit, according to the data requested in the forms corresponding to:

- HUMAN RESOURCES
- EQUIPMENT
- INSTALLATIONS
- FUNDS

Each form should be filled out as many times as may be necessary to describe all existing resources for the areas described below:

PRESS	News
PUBLICATIONS	Books, manuals, pamphlets, journals, etc.
PRINTED MATTER	Posters, folders, flyers.
AUDIO	Radio, sound, sound-stages for audio-visual presentations.
PHOTOGRAPHS	For newspapers, slides, printing process, etc.
CINEMA	Types of formats used.
T.V., VIDEO	Closed circuit, over-the-air broadcast.
AUDIO-VISUAL (Mixed-media)	Synchronized packages – sound/slides.
GRAPHICS AND EXHIBITS	Exhibit modules, graphic design, etc.
TALKS AND LECTURES	
OTHER	

8.1 HUMAN RESOURCES Answer on form A

- 8.2 EQUIPMENT Answer on form B
- 8.3 INSTALLATIONS Answer on form C.
- 8.4 FUNDS Give a general explanation of whether there is a specific budget for communications, and what it covers.

9. LIMITATIONS

Describe the limitations currently considered important in conducting and/or improving animal health communications.

10. PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

10.1 Describe the short, medium and long-term plans under consideration by the directors of animal health for your communications department or unit.

10.2 Give specific proposals, described in broad but accurate terms, to IICA concerning communications in the animal health field.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Any additional information which has not been covered in the questionnaire.



FECHA DE DEVOLUCION

IICA
SAPC-10

Autor

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Fecha Devolución

Nombre del solicitante



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