

THE CARIBBEAN ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INFORMATION NETWORK  
(CARAPHIN): ANIMAL HEALTH

WALTNER-TOEWS, D.<sup>1</sup>, BERNARDO, T.M.<sup>2</sup>, STEMSHORN, B.W.<sup>3</sup>

CARAPHIN is a project of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and fourteen Caribbean countries. It is funded in part by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), with the assistance of Agriculture Canada. The University of Guelph is providing technical advice on appropriate epidemiological skills and strategies for implementation of the network.

In addition to providing technical expertise, animal health personnel from CARAPHIN countries have been called upon to exercise political, ecological and economic judgement in providing advice to policy makers. Given that most meat and milk produced in the Caribbean are destined for local consumption, and that the region is far from self sufficient in this regard, they identified the lack of knowledge about modifiable constraints to production as being a problem of prime importance. Specific topics identified as priorities for animal health were: factors limiting milk production; factors limiting production of meat from small stock; brucellosis, leptospirosis, and tuberculosis; and slaughterhouse surveillance.

CARAPHIN has strengthened the region's human resource base for disease and pest management by training a core of government agricultural health personnel in selected aspects of epidemiology, record keeping, economic decision analysis, and the use of microcomputers; as well, globally applicable disease-mapping and disease-information databases have been developed.

As one step toward addressing factors limiting production of milk and meat the 1990 regional course concentrated on record keeping for small producers. Using their computer and epidemiologic skills, participants were asked to prepare a project to increase the supply of animal protein in their country, including what records should be kept, and what information was provided through analysis of the records. The proposals ranged from goat production in Antigua and Barbuda, to rabbit production in both Barbados and Suriname, to water buffalo production in Trinidad and Tobago.

The creation of this network of professionals linked by common problems, goals and understanding of epidemiologic principles may serve as a model for other parts of the developing world.

<sup>1</sup> Ontario Veterinary College, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1, <sup>2</sup> IICA Office in Trinidad & Tobago, Box 1318, Port of Spain, Trinidad, <sup>3</sup> Agriculture Canada, Animal Disease Research Institute, Box 11300, Stn. H, Nepean, Ontario, Canada, K2H 8P9