

## EDITORIAL

As our readers must have noticed, AGRI has a new cover design. The background on the cover depicts animal scenes reminiscent of the prehistoric drawings found in caves in Southern France and Spain indicating the very ancient and intimate relationship between man and animals. AGRI No. 20 marks a new phase where it is planned to have identical editions both in hard-copy and electronic format through the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) available on the Internet since April 1996

(URL: <<http://www.fao.org/dad-is/>>) developed and maintained by the FAO as the virtual structure for the Initiatives for Domestic Animal Diversity (iDAD). This serves to involve all stakeholders with implementing the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR). iDAD is lead, co-ordinated, facilitated and reported on globally by FAO at the request of its Member Nations

Implementation is progressing towards the completion of the formation of the global structure and institutionalisation. National Focal Points (NFPs) are the basic structure for the country-based global structure. NFPs have been completed for Europe, twelve (12) have been formed as a first phase in Asia and five (5) in the Americas and the Caribbean. Africa and the Near East are underway. Mid-term evaluation of the first regional project for the Programme: 'Conservation and Use of Animal Genetic Resources in Asia and the Pacific', started in 1993, stated that the Project has resulted in a large number of positive effects at all levels from the individual farm, through district level to provincial, national and regional levels but an important finding is that more funding is required particularly at the country level. This finding is expected to be universal among developing countries in other regions of the World. In the Americas, a Pan-American *ad hoc* consultative group

(COREGAN) was established to enhance the formation of the national and regional structures, identify regional projects for the management of AnGR and approach potential donors to secure funds for country and regional activities. COREGAN proposed eleven (11) countries as a first stage of involvement. Many of these countries have designated their respective NFPs. Two subregional workshops are planned for Sub-Saharan Africa in 1997. One in the context of a UNDP financed Preparatory Assistance Project which will eventually lead to a project on the 'Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources for the Twelve SADC Countries'. The further development of the programme for other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa is planned for 1997.

Toward the institutionalisation of the Global Strategy for AnGR, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has now a broader mandate to include animal genetic resources and preparations are underway for establishing the Animal Genetic Resources Intergovernmental Technical Working Group, an important mechanism to reach consensus among nations on issues related to AnGR.

Since the early inception of the AnGR activity, communication has been the heart of it. While DAD-IS is essentially a communication element, a comprehensive communication strategy for iDAD is being developed at the Secretariat at FAO Headquarters. This strategy will include, *inter alia*, multi-lingual on-line information, a standalone CD-ROM-based mode for low-cost, quick access, a project management module, databases, periodicals and other publications to enhance the exchange of information among countries and between FAO and countries.

The Editors