NEWS AND NOTES

TRAINING COURSE ON *IN VITRO* FERTILIZATION IN CATTLE.

A training course has been organized from 5 to 16 November 1990 in Brasilia by CENARGEN/ EMBRAPA with financial support from FAO. This course was attended by participants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Uruguay. Lectures and practical demonstrations were given by Prof. Fulka and Dr. Fulka Jr from Czechoslovakia and by Dr. De Bem from Brazil.

Participants were taught on preparation and handling of media, recovery of oocytes from ovaries recovered from slaughterhouses, in *vitro* maturation of oocytes, in *vitro* fertilization and in *vitro* culture to the stage of morula or blastocyst. Freezing of oocytes and embryos were also demonstrated, as well as recovery of embryos in the cow and in the mare.

During this two week course participants have had the opportunity to practice by themselves several times on a real scale all the steps of these procedures.

WORKSHOP ON BUFFALO OPEN NUCLEUS BREEDING SYSTEMS.

A workshop on Open Nucleus Breeding Systems applied to Buffaloes was held in Shumen, Bulgaria, from 18 to 23 November 1990. Participants from 10 countries (Bulgaria, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) took part, each presenting information as a country report. Lectures were presented by D.E. Steane, FAO and B. Mc Guirk of Genus Moet, Great Britain. The problems and advantages of both Open Nucleus Breeding Systems and of Multiple Ovulation and Embryo Transfer (MOET) were fully discussed. Several important aspects were recommended for future action in the development of buffalo breeds worldwide. The proceedings have been published and are available on request from AGA Division, FAO, Rome.

WORKSHOP ON BIOTECHNOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN BUFFALOES.

A workshop has been organized by the Buffalo Research Institute of Shumen (Bulgaria) with financial support from FAO, from 13 to 19 May 1991, in Varna (Bulgaria), simultaneously with the Third World Buffalo Congress.

Participants from Brazil, Bulgaria, China, India, Italy, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam were invited to this workshop which was also opened to all the participants to the world congress.

During a first session, participants presented the status of research and development activities in their respective countries in the field of reproduction. Emphasis was given not only to biotechnologies but also to basic knowledge of reproductive phenomena (Puberty, Postpartum, Oestrous cycle, Fertility...) as well as to relation with environment, such as feeding, management, light or temperature. The role of AI and some possible strategies for the improvement of its use and efficiency were discussed.

During a second session, an attempt was made to classify the main research subjects for the 2 or 3 next years in the participating countries. Intercountry projects have been suggested aiming at using reproductive biotechnologies for increasing the efficiency of genetic improvement of Buffaloes.

STRENGTHENING OF REGIONAL ANIMAL GENE BANKS

The first training course on the organization and implementation of a regional gene bank was held at the Centro Nacional de Recursos Geneticos (CENARGEN) of the Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria (EMBRAPA) in Brasilia, Brazil, from 20 to 31 May 1991. Twenty four participants from 12 countries - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Cuba,

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Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela - attended the course. Each country was represented by two participants, a specialist in animal genetic and a specialist in reproduction, particularly Artificial Insemination and Embryo Transfer.

Lectures and practical demonstrations were given by two lecturers from Argentina, two lecturers from Brazil, and a lecturer from the FAO Global Data Bank in Hannover. Lectures on genetics addressed the criteria for selection of breeds for preservation (identification of breeds in danger, estimation of level of risk, characterization of breeds and of distances between breeds), kind (semen, embryos, oocytes, DNA) and size of samples (number stored, parental origins), as well as legal and institutional aspects and in situ preseration. Lectures on reproduction addressed the selection and preparation of donors (males and females), the production and storage of samples, the revival and use and the health regulations. Lectures on data handling addressed the collection, storage and use of records characterizing the samples and the production and adaptation of the required software.

A second course was held on the same principles for Asia, from 25 November to 6 December 1991 in Nanjing (China) in cooperation with the Animal Science Department of the Nanjing Agricultural University This course involved participants (one geneticist and one reproduction specialist as for the first course) from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, D.P R.Korea, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Union of Myanmar and Vietnam. Lectures were given by the regional coordinator of the Latinamerican Genebank, two international consultants, two lecturers from China and one from India.

4TH WORLD CONGRESS ON GENETICS APPLIED TO LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

The conference was held in Edinburgh in July 1990 and attended by 717 delegated from 54 countries.

There were three Plenary Lectures: Quantitative Approaches to Animal Improvement by E.P Cunningham; Humanity and Livestock: A Saga of Symbiosis and Synergism by R.L. Willham; Genomic Imprinting: Epigenetic Control of Gene Expression by M.A. Surani and N.D. Allen.

There were ten main sessions covering the genetics of reproduction, selection theory and experiments, genetics of adaptation to extreme environments, genetics of growth and one each on the breeding of pigs, sheep, beef cattle and dairy cattle.

There were 19 workshops which dealt with subjects as diverse as breeding value prediction with the animal model, genetic nomenclature of cattle, avian biotechnology and conservation of animal genetic resources.

There were 13 sessions set aside specifically for contributed papers: each sessions dealt with a specific topic aligned to a topic dealt with in either a main session or a workshop.

An innovative idea (at least for WCGALP) was the way in which the poster sessions were organized. There were two sessions both arranged in the evening (20.00-22.00). Each session dealt with a specified list of subjects. The area used was large and bar facilities were available in an adjacent room. The sessions were well attended,socially enjoyable and, according to those presenting posters, provided excellent discussions. It seems that this formula provided the forum which posters should enjoy but, in many meetings, fail to receive.

OPEN NUCLEUS BREEDING SYSTEMS

An FAO conference on Open Nucleus Breeding Systems was held at Bialobrzegi, Poland on June 11-19,1989. A series of papers were presented by scientists from developing and developed countries having developed the use of ONBS. Most papers dealt with aspects of Multiple Ovulation and Embryo Transfer (MOET) and several described newly developed programmes and activities.

Papers reviewing the potential for MOET schemes in terms of genetic progress were also presented, in addition to several papers describing the dairy improvement programme for the authors countries. The conference essentially considered dairy cattle improvement, with only one paper emphasising breeding for dual purpose animals and one on buffalo breeding. The proceeding are published in the Animal Science Paper and Report series of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Genetics and Animal Breeding and form a most useful collection of information on the subject. Copies are available from AGA Division, FAO, Rome.

WORLD MEETING ON DOMESTIC ANIMAL BREEDS AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE AMERICAS

This meeting is organized by the Departamento de Genetica, Facultad de Veterinaria, Avenida Medina Azahara, 9 E -14005 Cordoba, SPAIN. It will be held on the 21- 23 September 1992, following the 43rd Annual Meeting of EAAP

This congress aims to define criteria on the influence of the discovery of the Americas on the present world animal breed panorama. The persistence of the original types, their development in the new world, the return of modified old genotypes, and the catalogue of “new” and “old” breeds will be discussed.

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