

Integrated Control of Fascioliasis in Latin America: Results of an International Atomic Energy Agency Project

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Resumen

Even though Fascioliasis has been known for centuries, it is now emerging in many parts of the world. Human cases are rising, two decades ago the estimates were of a few thousand, current estimates reach many millions. The human endemic areas are highest in Latin American countries and animal fascioliasis greatly affects livestock all through the region, often of poor subsistence farmers, thus decreasing even more their meager earnings and contributing to the cycle of disease and poverty. The enormous geographical diversity of the regions affected by fascioliasis in Latin America ranges from the cold, snow covered Patagonia to the simmering tropics of Central America. The epidemiological complexity of the problem is evident.

To address this situation, with the support of an IAEA Technical Co-operation Project (RLA 5049): Integrated

Control of Fascioliasis in Latin America (in Support of National Programmes), and guidance from IAEA staff and international fascioliasis experts, specialists from Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela came together to develop control strategies

incorporating the latest knowledge, tailored and adapted to, their particular national requirements. The objectives of the project: to improve the diagnostic capabilities and harmonize procedures with the aim of obtaining the much basic epidemiological information which will enable to formulate control strategies according to the different situations. Emphasis was made in training in molecular techniques to aid in elucidating the complex epidemiological situations. As a result, scientists were trained, available information was reviewed and updated, fascioliasis diagnostic techniques, both in animals and humans, were harmonized, serological and coprological surveys were and are being implemented, new vectors have been described and molecular techniques were applied to comprehend the complex epidemiology. The road that leads to control of fascioliasis in Latin America is very long, major steps are being taken.

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