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## Foreword

Increasing demand for food of animal origin has favoured the intensification of animal production and the emergence of an industrial private sector in many developing countries and countries with economies in transition. These countries overtook developed countries in total production of meat and eggs in 2007, while the gap in milk production is rapidly narrowing. The Region of Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC), led by Brazil, has the second greatest growth in meat production, after East and Southeast Asia. The forces driving this so-called livestock revolution are not only shifting the location of consumption and production, they are also affecting the way in which livestock products are produced and marketed. Past food and health scares such as those caused by bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), avian influenza and several chemical contaminations (dioxin, melamine, etc.) have increased concerns about veterinary public health, food safety and the need to trace animals and animal products. Since the beginning of the 1990s, animal identification, recording and traceability (AIRT), have been used to protect human and animal health. However, AIRT systems also serve multiple other purposes in a country's livestock sector. They are necessary for improving farm management, deterring theft, managing agri-financial instruments and implementing livestock policies (e.g. subsidies). They are a key component of breed improvement programmes, an area to which they owe their genesis.

AIRT are addressed by various international agreements and standards, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and on Technical Barriers to Trade, the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code and the Codex Alimentarius under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

FAO, through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), has supported several countries in the development of AIRT legislation and systems that are compliant with the above international standards, and continues to do so. Taking into account the multipurpose nature of AIRT, FAO's capacity-building activities rely on an integrated approach that involves all relevant partners and stakeholders. The International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) and FAO have organized several workshops on the development of AIRT in developing countries, which have taken place in India (1997), Poland (1998), Slovenia (2000), Switzerland (2002), Tunisia (2004) and Finland (2006). The Santiago workshop continues this tradition and seeks to expand support for the development of AIRT in this very important livestock region.

The regional workshop entitled "Animal identification and recording systems for traceability and livestock development in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean" was jointly organized by ICAR, the Pan-American Dairy Federation (FEPALE) and FAO, and took place from 5 to 7 December 2011, at the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. It was attended by more than 120 representatives of international organizations, public and private sector, from 27 countries. Six companies from Europe and Latin America exhibited their AIRT devices and supported the event. This is a good example of the public-private partnership promoted by FAO.

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The workshop provided a comprehensive assessment of the status and trends of AIRT in the region, with countries being at different levels of implementation. Several Latin American countries have initiated the development of national AIRT systems. This has largely been motivated by export opportunities, and is therefore most advanced in the commercial sector and for cattle.

The workshop also outlined the close link between identification and traceability for zoosanitary purposes and numerous additional benefits, such as performance recording for breeding and better herd management, that directly benefit small-scale farming. Awareness about these benefits needs to be raised and the capacity of national competent authorities strengthened to fully exploit these opportunities.

AIRT address both public and private goods, leading to different roles for the state and the private sector. The public-goods aspects, especially public health, food safety and food security, require governments to develop systems, infrastructure, regulation and controls. The private goods, expressed in improved market access, genetic stock and farm management, accrue to many actors along the value chain. These actors are therefore requested to contribute to the costs incurred. The distribution of costs and benefits needs to be assessed before implementing AIRT systems, as they differ between countries and value chains.

Throughout the seminar, there was an excellent level of debate and discussion from the floor, which resulted in an agreed set of conclusions and recommendations to be followed by ICAR and FAO.

Papers given at the workshop, together with the discussion papers and the conclusions and recommendations, are published in the present volume of the ICAR Technical Series, in both English and Spanish. They will hopefully serve as a reference regarding AIRT in Latin America and elsewhere.

I would like to thank the ICAR Secretariat for co-organizing the workshop and the preparation of this publication, the RLC staff, and particularly Tito Diaz and Daniel Urra, who ensured that the workshop ran smoothly, and all the participants, whose contributions made the workshop such a success.

Thank you.

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