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OIE Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare.

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Since the beginning of 90s, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "Giuseppe Caporale" (IZSA&M) has been supporting scientific and managerial improvement of Veterinary Services in developing countries – with specific attention to East European, Latino-American, Mediterranean, and central and south African countries – carrying out programs and involving its own human, technical and financial resources.

International Cooperation was originally developed under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), that recognised IZSA&M as collaborating centre and subsequently upon request of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), which asked IZSA&M to care scientific and managerial training of developing countries. Research projects, training activities, technical consultancy and support including laboratory, classroom and field activities have been carried out thanks to the collaboration of the best internal resources.

Financed projects (about 20 in the last five years) are just a sector of IZSA&M activities in the field of international cooperation: about 10% of personnel missions, in fact, are abroad. These travels are increasing continuously and in 2004 they were 21,3% more than 2003.

In the last five years specialists in the fields of animal health and welfare, food safety, information and communication technologies, information system management, travelled in many countries supporting organisational, scientific and technical development of official veterinary services, laboratories and industries. Traceability, animal database, technical and managerial training, implementation and management of surveillance systems on animal diseases – such as bluetongue, zoonoses – epidemic emergency management: these are some of the subjects of

international projects. Major funds come from European Union, Italian Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Research, and Foreign Affairs. Other financial support is obtained through Abruzzo Region (Interreg and Docup funds).

In 2004, moreover, IZSA&M obtained funds to build an international training centre for veterinary education and information on animal health and welfare and food safety. This Centre aims at supporting the OIE Collaborating Centre on veterinary training, epidemiology, food safety and animal welfare of IZSA&M. The centre works to improve the educational and informative offer, for East European Countries. It is based on the opportunity of enhancing the development of norms and technical/scientific skills on OIE international standards. It represents an important tool to implement cooperation in the Adriatic border zone, with specific attention to the learning needs of the Countries of the Eastern Adriatic shore willing to have access to the European Union market.

The Centre will provide basic training, continuing education and knowledge management programs also using eLearning technology for veterinary service and veterinary laboratory officers as well as for veterinarians responsible for the food chain safety control. Training priorities will be sanitary legislation, technology and best practices to be applied to inspection, surveillance, risk assessment and management as well as laboratory quality management and techniques.

Training shall provide:

- knowledge and skills to assure the control of food safety chain, according to the most advanced level of technology and
- to assure the management of control system of "equivalent" quality and safety, within the global animal and animal product market.