

# NEWS

SUMMER 2017



**STAR-IDAZ**  
International Research  
Consortium on Animal Health

## Editorial – Chair of the IRC

Welcome to the first newsletter of the STAR-IDAZ International Research Consortium on Animal Health. The purpose of the IRC Newsletters is to inform our partners and the wider animal health research stakeholder community of developments in animal disease research and its coordination at international level.

The STAR-IDAZ network was launched in 2011 as an EU-funded project with the aim of improving coordination of research activities on the major infectious diseases of livestock and zoonoses so as to hasten the delivery of improved control methods and since 2015 moves forward as a self-sustaining network with partners in over 40 countries. A number of the partners then formed an International Research Consortium, with a higher level of commitment to collaborate, which was launched by Commissioner Hogan in Brussels on the 27th January 2016. These

**Alex Morrow**

partners have agreed to coordinate their research programmes to address identified research needs, share results and together deliver new and improved animal health strategies for at least 30 priority diseases, infections or issues, including candidate vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and other animal health products, procedures and/or key scientific information and tools to support risk analysis and disease control. The network is supported, since October 2016, by an EU-funded Secretariat. A Scientific Committee of 16 experts has been appointed with Wim Van der Poel as Chairperson and Stephan Zientara and Don Knowles as his deputies.

The number of organisations that have signed the letter of intent to participate in the IRC is constantly increasing and currently includes 17 partners from 14 countries, plus one international research organisation, one charity and three partners from industry with a combined 5-year research budget of more than US\$ 2.5 billion. This figure illustrates the scale of what we are working with and the potential to make serious progress in our ability to control animal disease through coordination of disease research - we can't all do everything.

## IRC Annual Meeting 2017

The annual IRC Executive Committee meeting, held at ILRI in Nairobi in late January, brought together colleagues from around the world to network and discuss their research programmes. The week combined meetings of the IRC Executive Committee and Scientific Committee, and the Africa and Middle East Regional Network of STAR-IDAZ. The main objectives of the meeting were to update members on the current status of the Networks, introduce the IRC Secretariat (SIRCAH), review progress of research project data collection, and to agree next steps in setting up working groups. The delegates were well looked after by their hosts, ILRI, and enjoyed the excellent facilities, and a chance to see the laboratories and hear about the range of research activities there. Following the meetings the delegates were taken on a trip to ILRI's Kapiti Ranch to see the field studies carried out there, where the livestock are raised in close proximity to a wide range of wildlife species.

## IRC Annual Meeting 2018

Next year's meeting will be at INIA (Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agronómicas) Madrid, Spain on the week of the 12th March 2018.





## DR. FRANCISCO SUÁREZ GÜEMES – IRC Chair from 2018

Dr. Francisco Suárez Güemes was elected to be the chair of the IRC from January 2018. A graduate in Veterinary Medicine from the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), he obtained an MSc in microbiology at UNAM and his PhD from Colorado State University. He has served in a number of roles at UNAM including Director of the Masters and PhD Programs in Animal Health and Production, Associate Dean of Planning, Associate Dean of Research, Innovation and Technological Development, and in 2016 he became Dean of the Veterinary College, a position that he currently holds. During his time as director of the graduate school, CONACYT [Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (the National Council of Science and Technology)] granted the program National and International recognition.

During his 38 years as an academic at UNAM, he has been assistant professor, lecturer, and since 1986 Professor in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. He was professor and founder of the doctoral program in the Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon. He has been a member of the Bioethics Commission of the General Directorate of Zoos of Mexico City 2001 - 2003 and in 2009.

He is co-editor of General Bacteriology: Chemistry Principles, a book that has served as a text for several generations of UNAM and other Colleges of Veterinary Medicine, and the Manual of bacteriology and mycology, as well as writing 20 chapters in books on microbiology. In research, he has had national and international funding for more than 38 projects, giving opportunities to 58 undergraduate, masters and doctoral students. He has published 78 journal articles and has presented at numerous conferences at national and international levels, and has had numerous distinctions and academic awards. He has been on the Editorial Board of Animal Health Research Reviews from 1999 to date.

His contribution to brucellosis research was recognized in his appointment, in 2005, as President of the “International Conference in Brucellosis Research”. In 2008, he was appointed Executive Secretary of the Scientific Committee of the Pan American Congress of Veterinary Sciences, and has also been on the Scientific Committee of the National Meeting of Animal Research for more than 10 years. In the National Technical Advisory Council of Animal Health (CONASA), he has been coordinator of several member committees of the Board of Directors (2001-2003), Vice-President of the Council (2009-2010) and President of the Council (2011-2015). In 2012 he became Scientific Adviser to the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks (COFEPRIS). He joined the Mexican Veterinary Academy in 1991, became Vice President from 1999 to 2001, and President from 2001-2003.

### IRC Executive Committee Meeting, Nairobi 31 January–1 February, 2017

This was the second meeting of the Executive Committee and the members were welcomed by the Chair, Alex Morrow (AM), the first being held in Buenos Aires, April 2016. In the update of the status of STAR-IDAZ Global Network, the meeting heard that 31 organizations had signed the MoU with 21 having signed the Letter of Intent and joined the IRC. A new chair of the STAR-IDAZ IRC was elected to follow AM whose two-year term comes to an end in January 2018. Dr Francisco Suárez Güemes, based at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, was elected and will begin his term as Chair from next January. This fits in with STAR-IDAZ constitution which requires the position of Chair to be rotated around the regions.

Topics under discussion included the identification of priority diseases, and how new priorities can be included. Lumpy skin disease, which is spreading through the middle-east and eastern-Europe, was suggested for inclusion in the list of priority diseases. It was also recommended that priority should be given for diseases, where the study of them pushes forward the understanding of immunology.

The meeting also discussed a possible ERA-Net Co-Fund on Veterinary Vaccinology, which the EC may include in its 2019 Work Programme if there is an adequate level of support from EU Member States. The focus of the call would be to support multidisciplinary research to develop novel tools and generic technology to produce new and improved vaccines for the livestock sector. The rest of the meeting focused on the work of the Working Groups. SIRCAH had identified lists of key researchers as a reference for potential working group membership. SIRCAH will provide support for the working groups to conduct gap analyses and compile research roadmaps. There were updates on the existing FMD (GFRA), African Swine Fever (GARA), and the Veterinary Vaccinology networks. The IRC aims to establish working groups for 30 priority disease/issues.

## IRC Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee's role is to consider the scientific merit of proposals of the Executive Committee (EC); act as a scientific coordinating body; propose research priorities, policies, and guidelines for the EC; identify the need for new Working Groups (WG), define their mission, support them in gap analysis and research prioritization, report on their progress to the EC and exchange of protocols and best practice for the IRC to reach its scientific goals. The full mandate and information about the Scientific Committee can be found on the [STAR-IDAZ-IRC web-site](#).

The STAR-IDAZ IRC Scientific Committee gathered for their first meeting on 30th January 2017 at ILRI in Nairobi. Members of the Committee, representatives of ILRI, and the IRC secretariat were welcomed by the IRC Chair, Alex Morrow, and ILRI's Assistant Director General, Biosciences, Dieter Schillinger.

In this first meeting, the committee covered data-sharing and intellectual property, the involvement of industry at an early stage of research to increase the likelihood that new products are taken to market, and the importance of engaging with small and medium-sized enterprises for diseases that the larger corporation might consider uneconomic for them.

The second meeting of the Scientific Committee was held in Copenhagen at the Phoenix Hotel on 15th-16th June 2017. The main business of the meeting, which was chaired by Wim Van der Poel was to agree the terms of reference of the Working Groups, and progressing their work on key diseases and issues in animal health. Six topics, bovine tuberculosis,

porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, brucellosis, African swine fever, helminths and veterinary vaccinology, had already been identified as priorities for immediate consideration. Three new areas, vector-borne diseases, foot and mouth disease, and coronaviruses were added to this list. The mission of the Working Groups is to identify the critical gaps in knowledge so that the research effort can be focused on them and help speed up the delivery of improved control methods. They will conduct gap analyses and develop research roadmaps with support and guidance from SIRCAH and the Scientific Committee.

Members of the Scientific Committee are: Don Knowles (Animal Disease Research Unit, ARS-USDA-PWA, USA); Dieter Schillinger (ILRI); Gary Entrican (Moredun Research Institute); Martin Beer (Friedrich Loeffler Institut, Germany); Edwin Claerebout (Ghent University, Belgium); Wim van der Poel (Wageningen University, Netherlands); Denis Kolbasov (Russian Academy for Agricultural Sciences); Stéphan Zientara (Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail, ANSES); Bruno Goddeeris (Ghent University, Belgium); Clara María Marín Alcalá (Centro de Investigación y Tecnología Animal (CITA), Spain); Gustavo Zielinski (Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, Argentina); Glen Gifford (Canadian Centre for Veterinary Biologics, CFIA, on secondment to OIE); Jeremy Salt (GALVmed); Anette Bøtner, (DTU National Veterinary Institute, Denmark); Irit Davidson (Kimron Veterinary Institute, Israel); Sergio Rosati (University of Turin, Italy).

Members of both Executive Committee and Scientific Committee at Kapiti Ranch



## Africa & Middle East Regional Network Meeting, Nairobi 1/2/17

This, the second meeting of the Africa and Middle East Regional Network brought in representatives from Iran, Israel, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Algeria, as well as from FAO, OIE, AFDB, ILRI, GALVmed, and B&M Gates Foundation, and SIRCAH. The previous meeting had been held in Addis Ababa in 2014. This meeting was possible through the support of GALVmed. The meeting reviewed the animal disease situations in the countries represented, and within the regions.

The discussion was around research needs specific to Africa and the Middle East, and potential areas for cooperation. In particular on CBPP, PPR, Rift Valley fever, Newcastle disease, tick-borne diseases, MERS, vector-borne diseases and emerging issues including anthrax, and avian influenza in Uganda and Nigeria.

### SIRCAH

SIRCAH, funded by the European Commission through H2020, is run by a partnership including Defra (UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), CAB International, BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council), and IFAH Europe (International Federation of Animal Health). It provides organisational and communication support to the IRC, facilitates research gap analysis including the provision of literature reviews for working groups, maps funding activities against identified research needs, and helps mobilise resources to address them. The Secretariat also plays an important role in advocacy for the consortium and bringing in new members.

### Events

STAR-IDAZ Regional Network for Africa and the Middle East, Abuja, Nigeria, 12-14 September 2017

2018 March 12-15, IRC Annual Meeting, INIA (Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agronómicas) Madrid, Spain

## IRC Members

Partners who have joined, to date, the IRC include:

1. Danish National Veterinary Institute (DTU Vet), Denmark
2. National Institute of Agricultural Research (INRA), France
3. French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES), France
4. Ministry of Health, Italy
5. Ministry of Economic Affairs (MinEZ), The Netherlands
6. National Institute for Agriculture and Food Research and Technology (INIA), Spain
7. Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), UK
8. Biotechnology and Biological Science Research Council (BBSRC), UK
9. Regional Consortium; Universiteit Gent (Ghent University), Université de Liège, the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment (Unit Contractual Research) and CODA-CERVA (Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre)
10. Kimron Veterinary Institute, Israel
11. International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Kenya
12. Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency (TVLA), Tanzania
13. National Institute of Animal Health, National Agriculture and Food Research Organisation (NIAH), Japan
14. Agriculture Research Services, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA ARS), USA
15. National Institute of Agriculture Technology (INTA), Argentina
16. Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCYT), Argentina
17. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Canada
18. Zoetis
19. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)
20. HealthforAnimals (Global Animal Medicines Association)
21. European Manufacturers of Veterinary Diagnostics (EMVD)
22. European Commission

### Further Information

For further information about the IRC please visit [www.star-idaz.net](http://www.star-idaz.net). Research funding organisations and programme owners interested in joining the IRC or researchers interested in joining the working groups should contact the STAR-IDAZ IRC Project Office: Alex Morrow or Luke Dalton (Defra): [Alex.Morrow@Defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Alex.Morrow@Defra.gsi.gov.uk) | [Luke.Dalton@Defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Luke.Dalton@Defra.gsi.gov.uk).

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