AFRICAN MOSAIC DISEASE AND ITS CONTROL

CONCLUSIONS

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We have reached the end of the International Seminar on:

AFRICAN CASSAVA MOSAIC AND ITS CONTROL

and, as Seminar Coordinator, it is my duty and my pleasure to weigh up our discussions and draw the conclusions of the Seminar.

The first objective of any Seminar is the dissemination of information; we may safely say that, in this case, the objective has been easily attained. Participation was considrable and the only regret is that there was not more time to exhaust all topics of discussion. People from three different domains were brought together: scientists, national representatives from 21 African countries and representatives of international organizations. As such, one might have expected a certain lack of inter-communication, but in the event this was not the case and I think everyone was satisfied with the exchange of ideas and concepts that occurred during the week of the Seminar.

The Seminar had three main aims:

The first was to describe the situation of ACMV within the African continent: and we were once more made aware, if it were still necessary, of the considerable importance of ACMV, amidst all the other diseases that affect cassava and which justify the development of large scale control methods. This assessment also showed that, within certain African countries, research and extension programmes were in progress and needed only to be encouraged. Research in 21 African countries showed that resistant varieties, originating from IITA, had been sent to many countries, but had not been widely distributed in most of these.

The second aim was to present an assessment of the state of our scientific knowledge of ACMV, and we were able to bring together all the acientists, except for one, either previously or currently

working in this field, from both Africa and Europe. In this way, it was possible to compare and contrast results obtained in regions as different as East and West Africa. It also underlined where information was still lacking: in certain geographical areas such as Central Africa and in certain scientific disciplines like the genetic variability of cassavas and in the cellular mechanisms of disease resistance. This survey had above all the effect of bringing new concepts into the study of the development of this disease and into the biological mechanisms of cassava resistance.

The third aim of the seminar was to identify methods of disease control relevant to Africa and one can say that a large measure of consensus was achieved throughout discussions. This consensus stresses:

THE COMPLEMENTARY AND SIMULTANEOUS USE OF RESISTANT VARIETIES AND SANITATION TECHNIQUES,

taking into account variation in local conditions. The realization of control programmes against this disease will require the support of international funding.

During the seminar, numerous participants stressed the necessity for international cooperation and coordination between states within Africa, to more effectively control ACMD. The national representatives were very pleased at the coming together of the European and Franco-African teams, so that their research and development programmes could be coordinated. As the ACMD does not respect national boundaries, a joint effort is required to control the disease.

All discussions highlighted the lack of development facilities in all the African countries concerned, and also the lack of training of the average small farmer. Sanitation techniques are extremely simple: however, they need to be explained and shown to local people. Similarly, resistant varieties exist, but the small farmer is reluctant to use then, since are understood neither their advantages nor their limitations. They need to be informed. Cassava, as everyone knows, is propagated by cuttings, which means that, compared with plants propagated by seed, distribution is relatively difficult. As a result, countries and extension workers meed to take this into account and devise the means necessary to ensure the successful propagation and distribution of cassava.

What will be the consequences of the Seminar? These can be divided into three parts: Cooperation, publications and action.

With regard to cooperation, the contacts made between the scientists present were very important, helping to overcome language barriers or differences between research institutes. Equally, reinforcement of the liaison between African countries, in the form of their national representatives, many of whom will remain in mutual contact, can only help ease the problem.

As far as publications are concerned, a whole series ranging from the practical the scientific, may be cited:

- technical information sheets in several vernacular languages, for use in explaining sanitation techniques and describing the new varieties to the small farmer.

- the seminar proceedings in French and English, to be distributed as quickly as possible to all participants.

- A synopsis of the seminar will be distributed in French and English, in a run of over 1000.

- the publication in the FAO bulletin of a synthesis of the work of the seminar and situation in Africa regarding ACMD.

- several articles on extension topics in various journals, widely available in Africa and the third world.

- the production of a scientific text on ACMD in French and English, aimed at scientists, universities and development agencies.

- broadcasting on Radio France International in French and English, on 19 African radio stations, and programmes on Ivorian Radio and Television.

Concerning research programmes, a number of propositions were made, and included:

- Evaluation of the variability of the resistance of local clones.

- Multilocal trials under field conditions of the improved varieties.

- Epidemiological studies in Central Africa,

- Studies of the variability of the different strains of the virus.

- Establishment of biotechnology programmes on cassava.

Regarding action programmes, nothing is yet decided, but now the international organizations, through their representatives, know what the position and views of the scientists and extension workers are, and the national representatives know that these organizations are ready to begin research and development programmes. As a result, everything is now ready so that the months and years to come will see the development of such programmes.

I hope therefore that this work and these good resolutions will bear fruit and I will make a date with you at the next International Seminar of ACMD, which doubtless, will have as its title:

THE CONTROL OF ACMD IN AFRICA

Fauquet Claude. (1987)

African mosaic disease and its control : conclusions

In : African cassava mosaic disease and its control. Wageningen : CTA, 261-263. International Seminar on African Cassava Mosaic Disease and its Control

Yamoussoukro (CIV), 1987/05/04-08