



IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency

Atoms for Peace

September 2008

Controlling fascioliasis in Latin America

The challenge...

Fascioliasis is a parasitic disease affecting both animals and humans. The real impact it has on human health has only recently been addressed. Estimates are that some 17 million people are affected worldwide.

Fascioliasis is highly prevalent in Latin America. Far from being controlled, recent observations indicate that it is expanding steadily. Epidemiological studies are urgently needed in order to support the development of appropriate control strategies.



The project...

Under the project, serological and coprological diagnostic techniques have been standardized in order to reach a consensus on the protocols. These are then used in other countries in the region. Epidemiological surveys are carried out in each country, using harmonized multitests in selected zones.

Nuclear techniques are used to characterize genetically *Fasciola* and the different snails that act as intermediate hosts for this parasite.

A bibliographical review was used to gather all the available data on livestock species and breeds that are affected, and on the prevalence of the disease, endemic areas and recorded human cases.

The impact...

Strategies for control will be designed according to the epidemiological characteristics of the disease in each country, which can then be applied to other countries with similar fascioliasis characteristics.

The project is expected to benefit the inhabitants of endemic areas. Direct benefits will be reflected in improved public health as a result of the control strategies against fascioliasis (particularly in Bolivia and Peru, with the highest hyperendemicities in the world, especially in children). Indirect benefits will include increased profitability and sustainability of the cattle, sheep and goat populations in countries where such livestock forms the backbone of the economy.

