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IATRC

INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL TRADE RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Celebrating the First Thirty Years

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INTRODUCTION

At the December 2010 annual general meeting of the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium (IATRC), the traditional Theme Day was organized as a celebration of the 30 year anniversary of that institution and was titled *Trade in Agriculture: So Much Done, So Much More to Do*. In the aftermath of that meeting a proposal was made that the 30 year history of the IATRC should be written while those who had lived through the full period were still available to provide the necessary institutional memory. The Executive Committee agreed and allocated $2000 to the project as a token of their serious support, while Alex McCalla, Ed Rossmiller and Laura Bipes agreed to see it to fruition. It soon became clear that in the tight fiscal environment of the time, further funding would not be forthcoming. Thus the team decided that if they did most of the work themselves they would be able to publish the results of their efforts as an e-book on the internet, but would not have the resources to produce any paper copies.

They also determined that in addition to the three major papers (unfortunately, the fourth major presentation by Valeria Csukasi, *Future Challenges in Agricultural Trade Negotiations*, is not available to us for inclusion in this manuscript) and the panel presentations at the 30th anniversary theme day, several other documents were available that detailed much of the rationale for the creation of the IATRC, its evolution and its output over the period.

The first of these documents is IATRC Objectives, Organization, Operations and Origins, the so called 'Blue Book', the latest edition of which is Edition VI dated April 2010. The Blue Book is a rolling record of the decisions taken at the meetings of the membership and the Executive Committee and a listing of the various outputs of the Consortium since its beginning. Since the Blue Book is revised and updated periodically and is publically available on the IATRC website

(http://iatrc.org/about/bluebook/BlueBook2010.pdf) it will only be referenced here as needed rather than being reproduced in its entirety.

The second of the documents is *An Analytical History of the IATRC* by Tim Josling, Alex McCalla and T. Kelley White, as requested by the Executive Committee and published in October 1997. It is reproduced here in its entirety.

Another pair of documents that add to the historical picture are the report dated December 2004 to the Executive Committee and the membership as requested by the IATRC Chair, Tim Josling, by the Futures Steering Group consisting of Mike Gifford, Joe Glauber, Stefan Tangermann, Linda Young and Alex McCalla, Chair, and the January 2011 Status Report on IATRC: Progress on Recommendations of the Futures Steering Group by the 2010 Executive Committee. These two documents are also reproduced in their entirety.

PART II

IATRC Through the Years: History from the Archives

CHAPTER 9

Status Report on IATRC: Progress on Recommendations of the 2010 Futures Steering Group

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INTRODUCTION

The authors listed above were asked by the Chair of the IATRC to be a Futures Steering Group to offer the Executive Committee and the Membership "…suggestions on the future role of the Consortium." The group should "…comment in particular on four aspects of the work of the IATRC as it prepares for the next stage of its development." These are:

- What should be the scope (subject matter), geographical focus and membership goals of the Consortium that will enable it to remain useful, relevant and productive?
- Are the objectives currently identified for the Consortium appropriate, and how do these objectives relate to other institutions that serve the profession?
- Does the current range of activities and publications of the Consortium provide an appropriate vehicle for the attainment of the objectives and allow for adequate outreach to policy-makers and the public?
- How might the institutional base of support for and participation in the Consortium need to change to reflect any new directions that the Consortium might take?"

We were asked to present our thoughts at the IATRC Annual Meeting December 5-7, 2004.

This document presents our thoughts to you in four parts: 1.) The process followed; 2.) Findings in terms of strengths and shortcomings of the IATRC; 3.) Our recommendations regarding future objectives, focus, scope and membership goals; and 4.) Our recommendations regarding IATRC activities, organization and operating procedures.

THE PROCESS FOLLOWED

We received our charge from the IATRC Executive Committee in Philadelphia in June. We used that occasion for our first meeting. We decided we should seek input broadly by asking members four simple questions through an email survey. These questions were: 1.) What has been your involvement with IATRC? 2.) How satisfied have you been? 3.) What recommendations do you have for minor or significant changes? and, 4.) How have you used the work of the IATRC? We decided to seek input from current members as well as participants in the Capri meeting who were not members. From members we had 27 responses (out of about 190 possible). From the Capri non-member participants we had 22 responses. We also interviewed as many members individually as possible. In addition we interviewed policy makers in Brussels, Geneva, Washington and Ottawa. Based on these inputs, and our own analysis, we drafted an issues and options paper which we shared with the membership in October, also through an email survey. We had 22 responses to this second questionnaire, the results of which are reflected in our recommendations. One of our members spent two days reviewing archives including past minutes, annual meeting and symposium programs, previous planning efforts, e.g. the first blue book produced in 1985, and budgets. We also reviewed the utilization of IATRC publications through AgEcon Search. We met by conference call once per month (average cost, less than 30$ per hour). In sum we believe we have tried to get as much input as possible before reaching the conclusions that follow.

FINDINGS: STRENGTHS AND SHORTFALLS

Overall the IATRC is judged to be a valuable organization, and there is strong support for its continuation. It is valued as a unique institution where people with like interests from diverse organizations are able to interact professionally. Its publications, particularly Commissioned papers, are valued by policy makers and academics but it was noted forcefully that one has not been published since 2001.

Nevertheless, as with all organizations, there are concerns about recent signs of waning interest. Concerns start with declining member participation. Figure 1 charts membership from the original 13 in 1980 to about 190 in 2004 and compares it to attendance at annual meetings. Growth in attendance kept pace (and sometimes exceeded) growth in membership until the late 1980's, when membership grew more rapidly than attendance. After 1998 attendance dropped substantially so that in 2003, annual meeting attendance was 54 compared to the peaks of 133 in 1994 and 130 in 1998. Figure 2 plots attendance at Annual Symposia. Except for peaks of nearly 140 in 1988 and 1998, attendance was fairly stable between 80 and 100 from 1987 through 1999. Starting in 2000 attendance has declined so that, with exception of Capri (206) in 2003, attendance has been in the low 60's for 2001-2004.

Reasons for the declines are probably the cumulative effects of several factors – failure to maintain interest after the Seattle failure and before Doha, concerns that the IATRC was too narrowly focused on WTO, expressions from several members that there was no new blood (same old guys talk all the time), the Symposia and Theme Days were no longer addressing cutting edge issues, tighter travel budgets and no doubt 9/11. Further, there were major concerns expressed about the institutional structure of IATRC, including issues of representation and decision making.

FIGURE 1. MEMBERSHIP MEETING ATTENDANCE/TOTAL IATRC MEMBERSHIP, 1980-2003

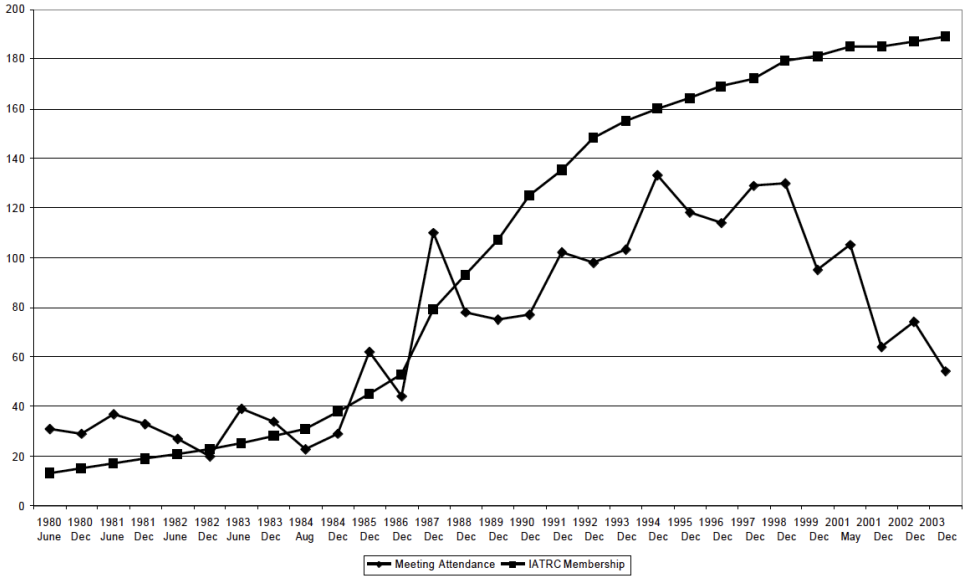
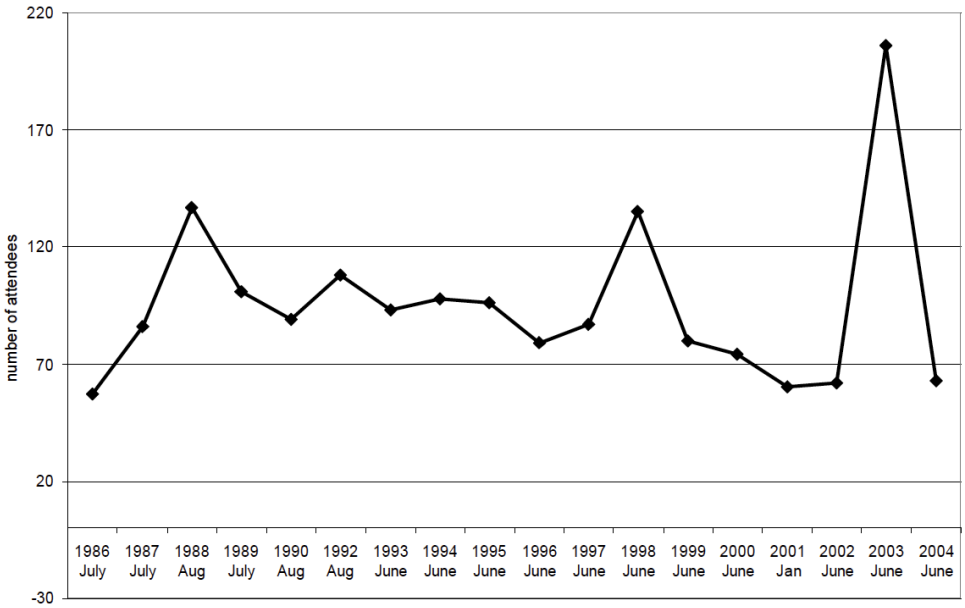


FIGURE 2. ATTENDANCE AT ANNUAL SYMPOSIA, 1986-2004



Products of the IATRC are also less visible. Through 1997, The IATRC published 11 books, mostly proceedings of Symposia (we note that the Proceedings of the Capri meeting have just been published identifying IATRC as a sponsor). 18 Commissioned Papers were published through 2001(none since) and 19 others papers or collections of papers were published through 2002. Bottom line –for over the last two years the IATRC has not been visible. There is also the Working Paper series which since initiated in 1985, has included 112 papers, available electronically since 2001. In

the 1980's they averaged 6 per year, in the 1990's they averaged 7 per year but in the 2000's the average has fallen to 2 per year, except for 2003, when there were 10.

However an analysis of "downloads" of IATRC publications suggests substantial and continued use. We sought analysis of utilization 1998 to 2003 with interesting results, presented in Table 1. One IATRC publication had over 3,300 downloads in 5 years (a lot, says the keeper of the University of Minnesota, AgEcon. Search), one Commissioned paper had 2,600 downloads, another 1,400 and the remainder (13-17) averaged over 700. Three working papers had over 2,000 downloads, eight more than 1000, seven more than 500, out of a total of 34 working papers during the period. The total number of downloads of 74 IATRC publications over the period was 41,432. The numbers indicate that utilization is sustained with the number of downloads at 6,170 (1989/90), 13,438 (2000), 7,595 (2001), 7,639 (2002), and 6,590 (2003). Our results were collected in September 2004. All 74 papers had been downloaded in 2004, and 73 had been downloaded in August or September. Bottom line- it is clear that many people are accessing IATRC publications when they are available. Therefore the decline in publications is particularly obvious to our customers. One final comment is needed on products. Our interviews in Washington clearly identified IATRC Commissioned Papers Nos. 1 -18 as containing valuable independent analysis which is respected.

TABLE 1. IATRC PAPER DOWNLOADS

Papers	Downloads
Total papers listed	74
Total number of papers downloaded in August and September, 2004	73
Maximum download individual paper	> 3,300
Commissioned papers	
Maximum download	> 2,600
Second highest downloads	> 1,400
Papers 13–17 (Ag in the WTO series)	> 700
Working papers	
3 papers	> 2,000
8 papers	> 1,000
7 papers	> 500
Downloads by year	
1998–1999	6,170
2000	13,438
2001	7,595
2002	7,639
2003	6,590
Total	**41,432**

We also looked at budgets since 1988/89. Income from regular sponsors –ERS and FAS was $37,500 through 1990. There after Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada became an institutional supporter and regular income has stabilized at

slightly under $53,000 per year. Regular income is shown in Figure 3. Expenditures are shown in Figures 4 & 5. Travel grants to members were discontinued in 1992/93. Theme Day expenses have grown a low of $5,000 to recent average costs of about $10,000. Expenditures on Commissioned Papers have been sporadic but trending downward. Printing costs were steadily escalating until the Working Papers went electronic in 2001. Costs of the Executive Committee have increased modestly from less than $8,000 per year to around $11,000. The most notable increase in costs has been in administrative costs which have increased four fold. Clearly, with a consistent nominal budget and increased administrative costs, expenditures on programs, Commissioned Papers, symposia and theme day programs have decreased. There is in our judgment little to quibble with in the expenditure pattern. The Executive Committee has managed to keep the program going with income, static in nominal terms while expenses such as administration, travel and printing costs were being driven up by inflation. Nevertheless it seems clear that to sustain, in real terms, a full program, increased income will be necessary. Thus bringing European institutional support as is recommended later is therefore absolutely imperative.

FIGURE 3. IATRC INCOME BY FUNDING AGENCIES

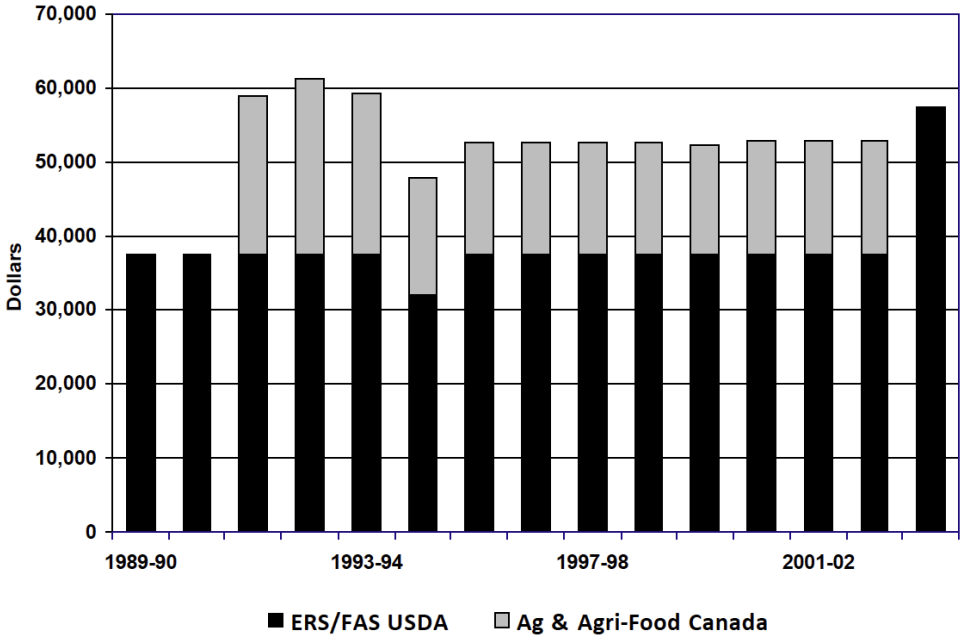


FIGURE 4. IATRC EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY

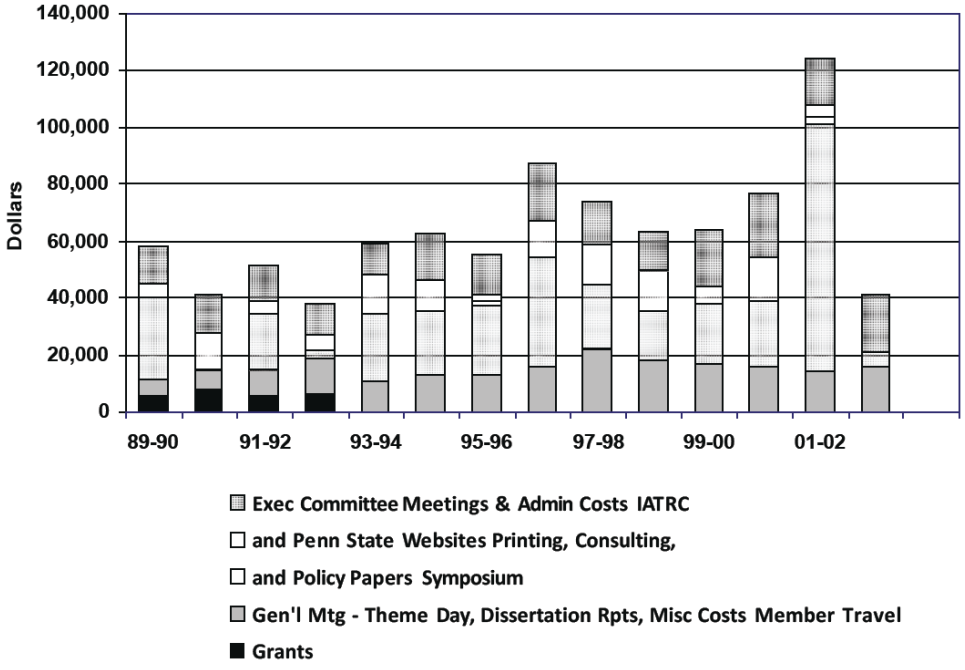
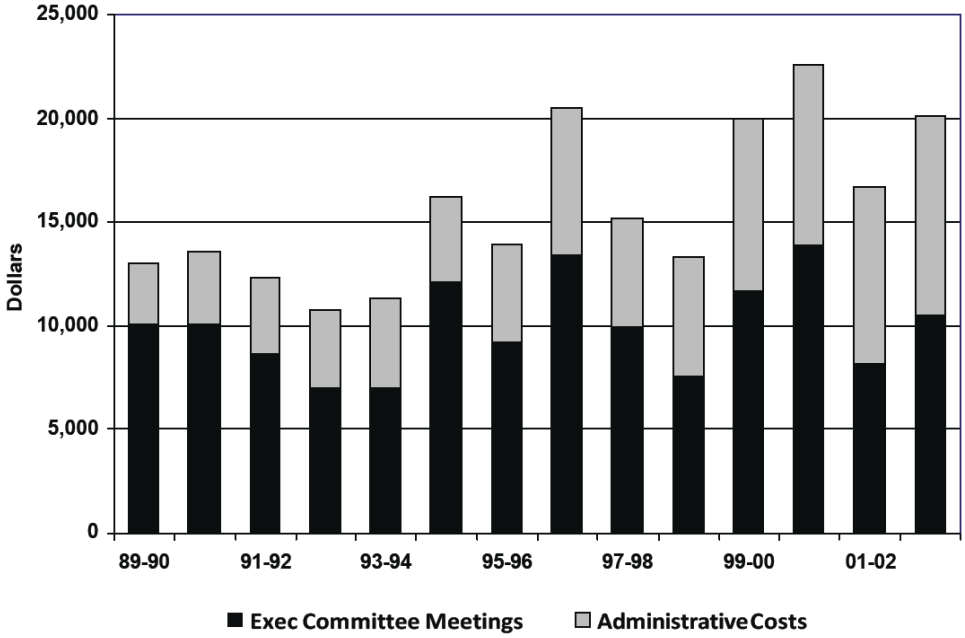


FIGURE 5. IATRC EXPENDITURES ON ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS



Now some comments on the organization and management of the IATRC. In our interviews, and in questionnaire responses, there is a growing apparent restiveness about how things are operating. There is an expressed concern that members have fewer opportunities for input. Historically, a rolling 5 year plan was proposed by the Executive Commit-

tee and discussed at the Annual Meeting. Starting in the late 1990's and carrying through to the present, there is a feeling that there is less opportunity for input and that in recent meetings future program plans were either "a seemingly random collection of 14 or 17 topics thrown out but not discussed" or "in at least one recent meeting no discussion of future programs at all". The failure to have sustained a program of Commissioned Papers is viewed in part a problem of members not being able to propose ideas and there being no encouragement for group efforts as there had been in the past. Some members are concerned about the way the Executive Committee is chosen. Some members are doubly enfranchised while others are disenfranchised entirely. Members from Sponsoring Institutions have no input into who sits on the Committee. To many this is seen as less than democratic participation. The conditions of membership are seen as out moded and needing revision.

But these are all issues that can be fixed, and if they were, it would make many members happier with an organization they greatly appreciate. This is clear from the responses to our options questionnaire. On the big issues most people want to make a good model work better, not radically change it. There is comfort in a largely North Atlantic/OECD membership but discomfort with an agenda limited to Developed Country issues. There is little call for expanding membership as an end in itself. However efforts to broaden European, Latin American, Asian and Australian/New Zealand membership would be welcomed. All believe that IATRC should be attractive and welcoming to new younger members and should in particular move to increase the diversity of membership. Most members do not want to affiliate with any professional organization but would welcome joint meetings periodically with international organizations. Finally, there is little sentiment for remaking the IATRC into a global capacity building organization with a focus on expanding substantially into developing countries. On the other hand, participation by individual Developing country agricultural trade policy analysts would be welcome.

Thus in the recommendations that follow we make proposals to make an appreciated organization more effective. We don't propose radical changes. As the saying goes, "if it ain't broke don't fix it, just remodel it to make it better."

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FUTURE OBJECTIVES, FOCUS, SCOPE AND MEMBERSHIP GOALS OF THE IATRC

Objectives and Focus

At a fundamental level, the objectives of the IATRC can be outward and/or inward oriented. An outward orientation might include objectives such as advocacy for trade liberalization, capacity building for researchers and negotiators from developing countries, or consultancy activities for all sorts of entities beyond the Consortium's funding organizations. An inward orientation would focus on interaction between, and capacity building for, the IATRC membership and services the Consortium can provide to its funding organizations.

It is recommended that the IATRC continues to focus primarily on its membership and its funding organizations. From questionnaire responses its appears that the membership greatly values the role the IATRC plays as a platform for exchange among members, and in terms of building their own capacity in trade matters. The Consortium should, therefore, continue to see itself, and to behave, very much as a member-driven organization based on active participation by and contributions from its members. In order to provide the capacity-building service effectively, it is also recommended that the IATRC continues to provide ample opportunity for exchange of research results and ideas between its members, and revives the tradition of inviting leading researchers from areas such as general economics and law to the Theme Days of the annual meetings, to bring the IATRC membership up to date on cutting edge research in these fields. It is also recommended that the funding organizations play a more active role in communicating to the IATRC

membership their information needs, and make actual use of the opportunity to request consultancy services from IATRC members.

In addition to this primary focus on its membership and funding organizations, the IATRC should also continue to engage in activities that have a certain well defined degree of outreach orientation, in particular the annual Symposium and the Commissioned Paper series.

Attempts at engaging in major outreach activities, such as capacity building for researchers and negotiators from developing countries, would go beyond the organizational and financial capacity of the IATRC.

In other words, it is recommended that the IATRC continues to pursue its objectives as laid down in the 'Blue Book', i.e.

- "promote and stimulate improvement in the quality and relevance of international agricultural trade research and policy analysis;
- encourage in collaborative research among members of the Consortium;
- facilitate interaction among researchers and analysts in several countries, in universities and in government engaged in and/or interested in trade research; and
- improve the general understanding of international trade and trade policy issues among the public."

The primary audience for the work of the Consortium is trade policy researchers and analysts, and the users of trade research.

Scope and Subject Matter

In terms of subject matter, it is recommended that the IATRC continues to focus on analytical and policy-related issues in the area of international agricultural trade. As far as policy issues are concerned, the focus should be on unilateral, regional, multilateral and global trade matters, including activities of private agents. WTO issues remain of interest, but should not be given excessive weight. Regarding analytical issues, all research approaches that can help to better understand such policy issues should be embraced, with an emphasis on cutting-edge methodological developments. Given the growing importance of developing countries in global matters, the IATRC should not limit its focus to issues directly relevant in industrialized countries, but should pay sufficient attention to issues concerning to trade with developing countries.

Membership Goals

Regarding the future membership goals of the IATRC, various options have been considered. One of them is to align the IATRC closely with, or even make it part of, one of the existing professional associations, such as the AAEA or the IAAE. This option is not recommended because it would mean that the IATRC loses its unique character and no longer exploits its comparative advantage in bringing together researchers and representatives of government agencies to discuss agricultural trade issues. However, it is recommended that the IATRC organizes joint meetings with the IAAE when they meet every third year.

Another option considered was to engage in a major effort to expand membership of the IATRC significantly for it to become a much larger organization with global membership, including in particular a much larger number of members from developing countries. This option is not recommended as questionnaire responses from the current mem-

bership appear to indicate that there is a preference for maintaining the IATRC as a group with manageable size in which members can continue to be in close contact with each other. This is not to say, however, that the IATRC should not welcome those candidates for membership from developing countries who show a strong interest in, and commitment to, contributing to its activities. The IATRC would, though, remain one group and would not establish regional associations.

The recommended option, then, is to fundamentally maintain the current character of the membership, but to make a serious effort to include more members from Europe, Latin America and Oceania, along with securing institutional financial support from Europe and Oceania. Efforts should also be made to attract more young members to the IATRC, for example through Consortium activities related to up-to-date methodological developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING IATRC ACTIVITIES, ORGANIZATION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Activities

MEETINGS AND LINKAGES

We recommend keeping the distinction between the Annual Members meeting and the Annual Public Symposium. The Symposium should be the main vehicle for IATRC interaction with policy makers, non members and other professional disciplines whereas the annual meetings should focus more on the interests of members. To the maximum extent feasible, Symposium meetings should be held in conjunction with other relevant international meetings. In particular, every effort should be made to schedule symposium meetings back to back with the tri-annual meetings of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) in order to help attract a wider international membership. Other possible scheduling relationships could include the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC), as well as regional agricultural economic professional associations.

The IATRC should remain an independent organization, even though from time to time it may work closely with other organizations having an interest in international agricultural trade research, policy and analysis.

COMMISSIONED PAPERS AND WORKING PAPERS

Together with its meetings, the Commissioned Papers and the Working Papers are the visible products which establish the value of the IATRC to researchers and policy makers.

Commissioned Papers should, in general, be prepared on a collaborative rather than a single author basis. A collaborative approach will encourage greater interaction and involvement of the membership. Authors should receive travel expenses for one meeting. Electronic and telephonic communication should be used to the maximum extent.

Commissioned Paper topics should normally originate from the Program Committee(recommended below) and be agreed upon in open discussions at the Annual Meeting, although this should not prevent the Executive Committee from initiating projects on an exceptional basis.

Organization

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

We recommend eliminating the requirement for a letter of support from the member's institution and the provision that states that membership will lapse if two consecutive general meetings are missed.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

We recommend that the IATRC establish a Program Committee consisting of three or four members elected at the annual meeting. All members would be eligible to seek election. The term of office could be for three years and incumbents would not be eligible for re-election. This Committee would be responsible for recommending a three year rolling program of work for the IATRC including proposing meeting topics for Theme Days and Public Symposia and topics for Commissioned Papers. The proposals would be for discussion and decision at Annual Meetings. The Committee would elect its own Chair. Members would be elected to staggered terms to maintain continuity.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee should be restructured as follows: a Chairman elected at large for a maximum single term of three years; the four members of the Program Committee: and a representative from each of the funding organizations (currently ERS, FAS and AAFC, but it is recommended that the European Commission become a member as well). The funding organizations would be responsible for designating their representative and term limits for their tenure should be established.

Term limits for members of the Executive Committee are regarded as essential in order to encourage renewal and diversity.

Operating Procedures

EXPENSES

Elected members of the Executive Committee would have their travel expenses to the annual meeting paid. Only the Chairman would also have travel expenses paid to Symposium meetings. Funding organizations would be expected to pay travel expenses for their representatives. Telephonic meetings of the Executive Committee should be encouraged.

ELECTIONS

All members should be eligible to vote for all elected positions. Nominations should be developed prior to the Annual Meeting so that members unable to attend could vote in absentia.

While we were not asked to propose changes in organization we felt that there was sufficient concern expressed by members about these issues that we have included them in our recommendations for your consideration.

STATUS REPORT ON IATRC

PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FUTURES STEERING GROUP

I. INTRODUCTION

Tim Josling, Chair of the International Agricultural Trade Consortium (IATRC), convened a Futures Steering Group (FSG) in 2004 to provide "suggestions on the future role of the Consortium . . . ", in response to a request from the Consortium's core funding agencies. The FSG – Mike Gifford, Joe Glauber, Stefan Tangermann, Linda Young and Alex McCalla (Chair) – systematically solicited input from IATRC members as well as policymakers, and summarized its findings and recommendations in a report submitted to the Executive Committee in December of that year (the "McCalla report").

This report, prepared by the 2010 Executive Committee of the IATRC, reviews progress made toward achieving the objectives outlined in the FSG's report since it was submitted six years ago. It draws on information from the IATRC website, the most recent edition of the Blue Book,[1] and internal records in reviewing accomplishments related to seven key aspects of the Consortium that were highlighted in the McCalla Report:

- membership and participation;
- scope, focus and activities;
- publications;
- funding;
- expenditures;
- operational procedures;
- governance.

II. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

The McCalla Report recommended actions to reverse declining meeting attendance. The Report also notes that while "[t] there is little call for expanding membership as an end in itself" (p.7), there should be "a serious effort to include more members from Europe, Latin America and Oceania" (p. 9).

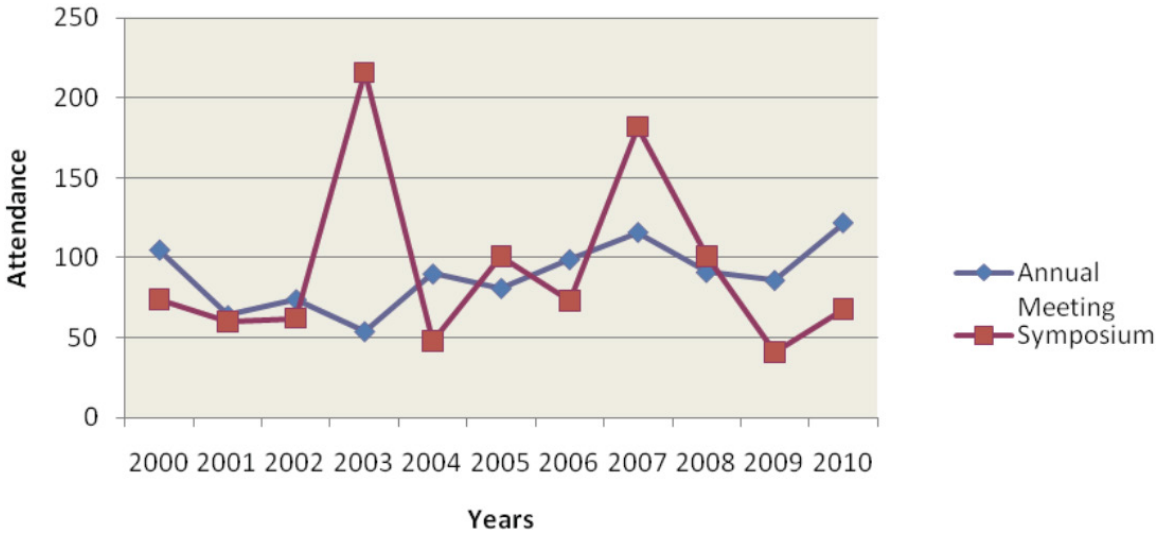
Over the period 2006-2010, attendance at the IATRC's annual General Meeting and annual Public Symposium averaged 99 and 94 registered attendees respectively, compared to average attendance of 77 and 61 for the 2001-2004 period (excluding the Public Symposium in Capri in 2003). As shown in Figure 1, attendance at the annual General Meeting *has steadily recovered* since the low point in 2003. Over the same period, there has been no discernable trend in attendance at the annual Public Symposia, with substantial variation from meeting to meeting. There was above average attendance at the Seville (2005), Beijing (2007), and Seoul (2008) symposia.

Increasing attendance can be attributed in part to a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (described below) which has funded the participation of 12 professionals from developing countries and their mentors in the

1 The most recent edition of the so-called Blue Book, which outlines the objectives, organization, operations and origins of the Consortium, was published in April, 2010.

activities of the Consortium since 2006. Additionally, the success of the newly instituted Program Sub-Committee in reviving the tradition of inviting leading researchers from general economics and law to the Theme Days, as recommended in the McCalla Report, is also thought to be an important factor in the sizable increase in the number attending the General Meetings. Attendance at Public Symposia, which are nearly always organized with one or more co-sponsors, is influenced by factors outside the direct control of IATRC. Generally, larger budgets support a longer program, and consequently involve a larger number of participants.

FIGURE 1. MEETING ATTENDANCE 2000–2010



In terms of membership, *32 new members have joined* since 2004 as of June 2010. Figure 2A shows an increasing percentage of members from Europe in recent years, although most newcomers are from North America, as in the past. The number of new members coming from Asia, Latin America and Oceania remains small. Total membership in December 2010 stands at 217, although this number is expected to decline when the rule adopted in 2005 requiring attendance for at least one meeting over a six-year period to remain in good standing begins to take effect in 2011 (see point VIIIi below). This rule, endorsed by Members at the 2005 Business Meeting, is intended to ensure that the Consortium remains a "group with manageable size in which members can continue to be in close contact with each other" (McCalla Report, p.9)

FIGURE 2. COMPOSITION OF MEMBERS IN 2003

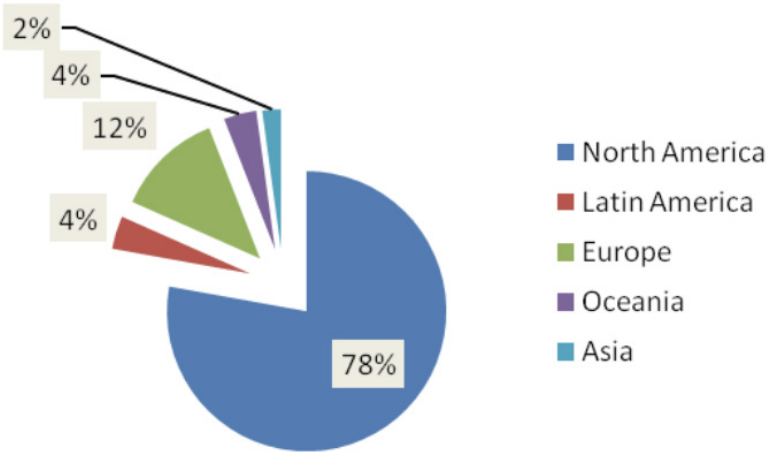
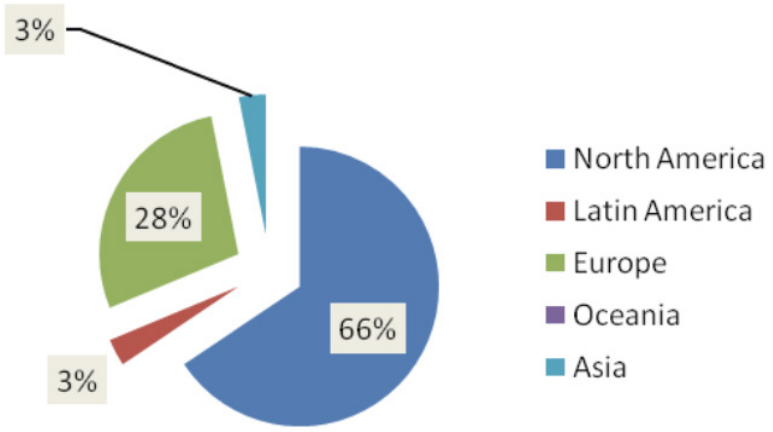


FIGURE 2A. COMPOSITION OF NEW MEMBERS JOINING BETWEEN 2004 AND 2010



III. SCOPE, FOCUS, AND ACTIVITIES

The McCalla Report made the following recommendations: ***Scope****—IATRC should continue to focus on interaction between, and capacity building for, the IATRC membership and services the Consortium can provide to its funding organizations (p. 8);* ***Focus****—IATRC should continue to be a member-driven organization that provides ample opportunity for exchange of research results and ideas between its members, and revive the tradition of inviting leading researchers from areas such as general economics and law to the Theme Days to keep members up to date on cutting edge research (p. 8);* ***Activities****—The distinction between the Annual Members Meeting and Annual Public Symposium (an outreach activity, along with Commissioned Papers) should be kept, and efforts should be made to schedule the latter back-to-back with the tri-annual meetings of the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) (p. 10).*

The Executive Committee *concurred with the McCalla Report's overarching vision* for the Consortium. The Appendix to this report presents the full chronological list of Annual Theme Days, Annual Public Symposia, and other activities over the 2005-2010 period that were undertaken in pursuit of this vision. In general:

i) The Program Committee proposed diverse and policy relevant topics for **Theme Days**, with input and in-kind organizational support from IATRC members. Organizing committees recruited outstanding scholars from the areas of general economics and law e.g., Andrew Bernard (Dartmouth), George Borjas (Harvard), Brent Sohngen (Ohio State), Robert Howse (New York U.), and Natalie Chen (Warwick) as Theme Day speakers.

ii) **Public symposia** have addressed a wide range of topics of importance to the international trade system, including WTO jurisprudence; China's emerging role in international markets; the effects of internal and international movements of rural labor on trade and trade policy; private and public standards; and food price inflation and trade. Support for the symposia has been widespread. Co-sponsoring institutions have included 11 universities and government agencies in 5 host countries, as well as 8 North American foundations, universities, and research centers. [The IATRC website features the complete list of co-sponsors for each symposium.] The symposia have also yielded a journal special issue (Bonn, 2006), an e-proceedings (Beijing, 2007), and an edited book (Seoul, 2008).

iii) **Other Activities** have been notable for the extensive involvement of IATRC members in organization and participation, and the broader visibility these activities have provided IATRC in other professional settings. Two activities were organized in conjunction with meetings of IAAE, as the McCalla Report recommended. Also, the increasing involvement of IATRC in track sessions at the AAEA meetings has been given strong encouragement from officers of that association who are also members of IATRC. The Consortium also organized one successful outreach activity, a policy roundtable attended by 50 trade diplomats, at its Annual Meeting in Washington DC in 2008. In 2011, an IATRC pre-conference workshop is being organized as part of the EAAE Congress in Zurich.

iv) In view of the fact that the McCalla Report noted that a major outreach activity would go beyond the organizational and financial capacity of the IATRC, the Executive Committee decided to submit a proposal to the **Hewlett Foundation** to support the participation of a select group of 12 developing country researchers in the activities of the Consortium. This met with success. The 3-year, $650,000 grant supported the first capacity building initiative ever undertaken by IATRC. The grant covered the costs of a separate program administrator so that IATRC's administrative director did not have to manage this initiative.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

The McCalla Report noted that there had been a decline in the number of IATRC publications in the period leading up to 2004, and that despite IATRC Commissioned Papers being valued by policy makers and academics "one has not been published since 2001" (p.2). The Report also noted that "an analysis of 'downloads' of IATRC publications suggests substantial and continued use." (p. 4)

Table 1 provides a complete summary of all IATRC publications over the past decade. Since the McCalla Report, the Consortium has published 5 Trade Issues Papers (replacing the Commissioned Paper series), 3 books, and 2 proceedings. In addition to disseminating IATRC research through new publications, considerable effort was devoted to overhauling the website so that the entire 30 year archive of Consortium publications could be posted online, along with papers from recent General Meetings and Symposia. These efforts yielded dramatic results – the number of average monthly downloads of IATRC publications has increased by more than 85 percent since on-line availability began in 1999, with the most substantial rate of increase occurring over the last two years when the archive was posted online.

The number of Working Papers continues to dwindle, falling by 50 percent from the 1999-2003 to 2004-08 period. There have been just 2 Working Papers since 2009.

TABLE 1. PUBLICATION SUMMARY 1999–OCT 2010

	1999–2003	2004–2008	2009–Oct 2010	Total
Books Published from Proceedings	2	2	1	5
Other Publications				
Commissioned Papers	6	—	—	6
Proceedings Issues	2	1	1	4
Policy Briefs	—	—	5	5
Trade Issues Papers	—	5	—	5
Working Papers	25	12	2	39
Number of Downloads				
Commissioned Papers			1,668	
Proceedings Issues			13,673	
Policy Briefs			151	
Trade Issues Papers			613	
Working Papers			12,231	
Total Downloads	41,432	46,144	28,336	
Average Downloads per Month	691	769	1288	

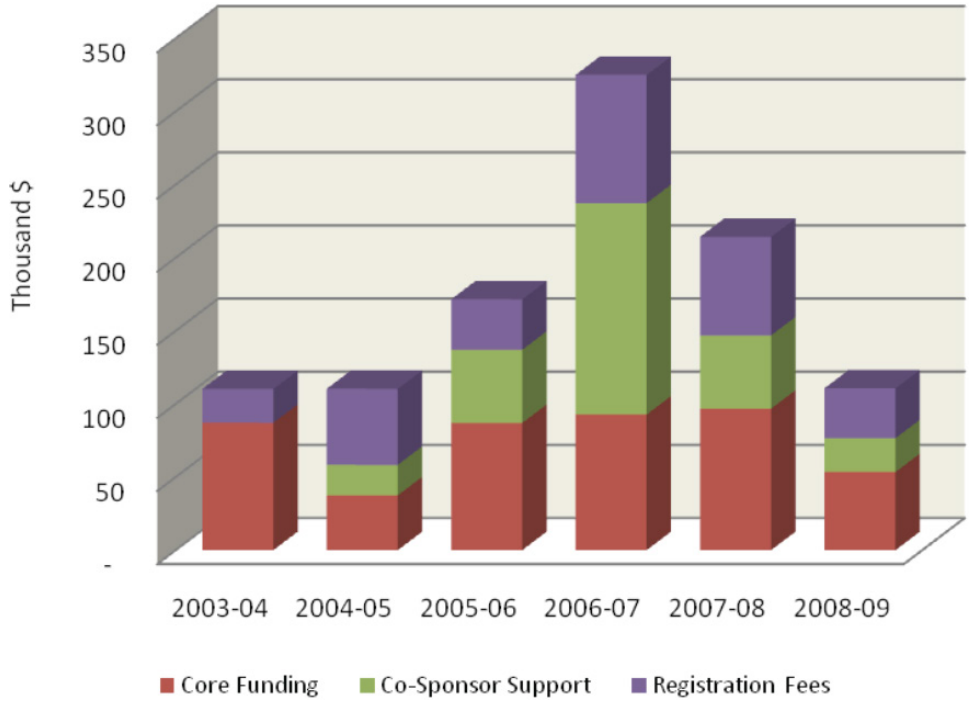
V. FUNDING

The McCalla Report strongly recommended securing institutional support from Europe and Oceania to bridge gaps between increasing expenditures (which the FSG "found little to quibble with," p. 5), and core funding which had remained constant in nominal terms in the years preceding the report.

Figure 3 shows the sources of funding support for IATRC for the fiscal years 2003-04 through 2008-09 (October 1 – September 30). Specifically, since fiscal year 2005-06, while total support has averaged $186,000 per fiscal year, it is clear that funding support from Co-Sponsors for the Annual Public Symposia has varied significantly, with a significant spike in fiscal year 2006-07, the period covering the Annual Public Symposium in Beijing.

i) **Core funding**: Since 2005-06, funding from the core funding institutions has averaged just over $57,000 per fiscal year (USDA/Economic Research Service, USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)). However, over this period, while USDA funding has remained constant at $37,500 per fiscal year, there has been variation in the level of funding from AAFC. Importantly, in the fiscal year 2008-09, core funding stood at $53,420 – the amount at which regular income had stabilized in fiscal year 2002-03 and noted in the McCalla Report (p. 5).

FIGURE 3. SOURCES OF SUPPORT 2003–04 THROUGH 2008–09



ii) **European funding**: IATRC and its core funding institutions followed up on the recommendation to solicit support from Europe. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food wrote to the European Commissioner for Agriculture, while the Executive Committee contacted IATRC members in seven European countries to explore whether national governments would be interested in providing sustained financial support for the Consortium. These efforts were unsuccessful, but the European Commission re-iterated its support for providing financing for individual conferences and workshops, as it had in the past.

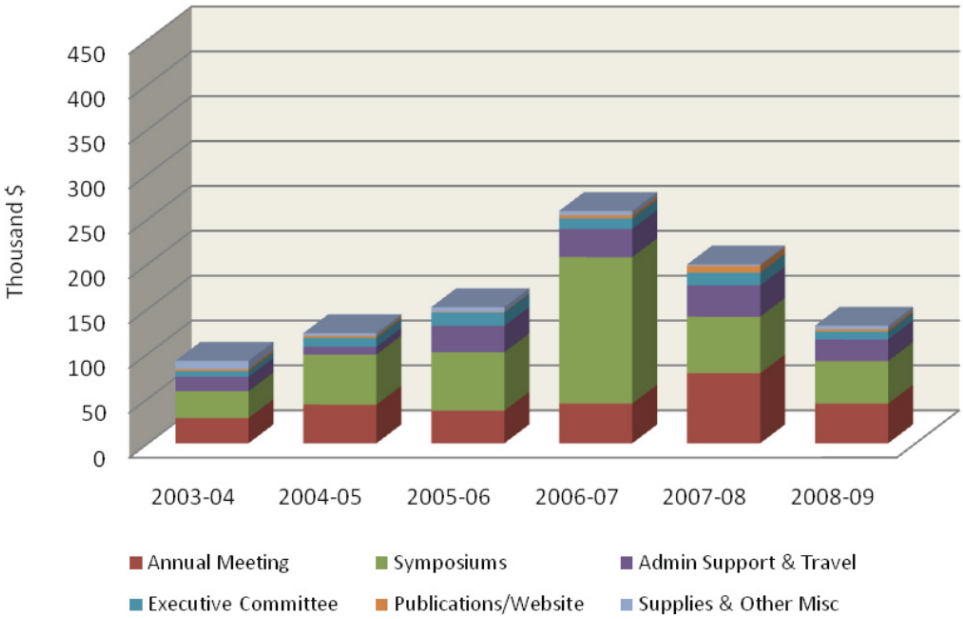
iii) **Funding for Annual Public Symposia**: The Executive Committee has been very successful in securing ad hoc support for Annual Public Symposia from a wide range of domestic and international institutions since 2004-05, which has been essential to sustain the level of IATRC program offerings. Co-sponsor support has ranged from $23 to $145 thousand over this period.

VI. EXPENDITURES

As noted above, the McCalla Report found "little to quibble with in the expenditure pattern" of the Consortium, although they did point to an increase in its administrative costs (p.5)

Expenditures for the period fiscal years 2003-04 through 2008-09 are shown in Figure 4. Most notably, administrative expenditures have substantially increased since the McCalla Report due to the fact that IATRC now provides salary support for its administrative director (see section on operational procedures below). A number of factors explain the trend and variation in other expenditure categories over time, including increasing honoraria for speakers, program length, equipment rental, and catering/hotel expenses in high-cost urban centers.

FIGURE 4. EXPENSES BY ACTIVITY 2003–04 THROUGH 2008–09



VII. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

In view of constant nominal funding from core funding institutions and increasing administrative costs over the 1989-90 – 2002-03 period, the McCalla Report proposed lowering costs by discontinuing the payment of travel expenses to Symposia for elected members of the Executive Committee, except for the Chair, and conducting more of the Consortium's business via conference calls.

The Executive Committee has made a number of changes related to the administration of the Consortium since 2005, based not only on the FSG recommendations, but also on changing circumstances. Most importantly, tightening university budgets no longer allow the pro bono provision of administrative services that the Consortium enjoyed over its first 25 years. As a result, IATRC must now provide salary support for its administrative director which increases costs in this budget category [Figure 4]. Also, IATRC's host institution changed twice over a five year period, which reinforced the importance of maintaining electronic archives of essential records and standardized financial reports.

Accordingly, the Executive Committee decided on changes to operational procedures as follows:

i) **Travel expenses of the Executive Committee to Annual Public Symposia**: The Executive Committee did not adopt the FSC's recommendation to discontinue meeting on the shoulders of the Annual Public Symposia, but rather decided to meet only when justified. The decision is made on a meeting-by-meeting basis. The Executive Committee has met at five of the six Annual Public Symposia since 2005. It should be noted that Executive Committee members have been instrumental in recruiting co-sponsors for five Annual Symposia since 2005, and have been co-organizers of two, so their attendance at these conferences has served multiple purposes.

ii) **Internal communications**: The Executive Committee adopted the practice of convening via conference call between meetings, with frequency varying from monthly to quarterly, as needed.

The Executive Committee has also established a restricted-access, extra-net website for use by Committee members to increase the efficiency of distribution and archiving of important documents, such as the minutes of meetings extending back to the inception of the Consortium. This tool, in combination with the digitization of all Consortium records, establishes a virtual library that helps new Committee members come up to speed quickly and seamlessly preserves a great deal of institutional memory at no cost if a different university hosts the Consortium at some point in the future.

iii) **New financial report**: The Executive Committee has adopted the use of three new formats for internal financial reports, which allows members to examine multi-year summaries, financial trends, and detailed statements to inform program management decisions.

VIII. ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The McCalla Report recommended several changes in organization and governance of the Consortium. The recommendations, and subsequent decisions of Consortium members as codified in the revised Blue Book, are as follows:

i) **Change requirements for membership**: The Consortium adopted the recommendation to eliminate the requirement for a letter of support from the prospective member's institution. The Consortium also agreed to revise the criteria for a membership becoming inactive, including the possibility of six years of no participation in Consortium activities resulting in termination of the membership.

ii) **Change election procedures**: The Consortium adopted the recommendation to allow all members eligible to vote for all elected members, rectifying the "democratic deficit" of the Consortium under previous rules which disenfranchised members from core funding institutions. It also adopted the FSG's recommendation to allow members to vote in absentia, using e-ballots to achieve this objective. The introduction of e-ballots has substantially increased the number of Consortium members voting in each election.

iii) **Re-structure the Executive Committee**: The original structure of the Committee was maintained. The Consortium did not adopt the FSG's recommendation to re-structure the Executive Committee to include a Chair elected at large, three to four Program Committee members, and representatives of each of the three current funding organizations. There was concern that the proposed structure would not be as effective in achieving organizational goals as the creation of a separate Program Sub-Committee wholly dedicated to the development of proposals for Annual Theme Days and Public Symposia (see below) and could potentially increase administrative costs. The

Consortium agreed with FSG recommendations to extend terms to three years, and to stagger terms to ensure continuity in operations.

iv) **Establish a Program Sub-Committee**: The Consortium agreed to establish a Program Sub-Committee, with three to four members each serving staggered three-year terms. They are appointed by the Executive Committee rather than elected by Consortium members (as recommended by the FSG) and their proposals are discussed at the Consortium's business meeting to provide more opportunities for input from members.

IX. CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD

The findings of this report were reviewed extensively by the Executive Committee at its meeting on December 11, 2010, and further discussed at the Business Meeting on December 13. Based on these deliberations, the Executive Committee concurs that:

- The decline in attendance at the annual General Meeting has been reversed, due in part to the diverse and relevant set of topics chosen for Annual Theme Days by the Program Committee and to the Hewlett Foundation grant which provided financial support for the Fellows and their mentors to participate in Consortium activities. The Executive Committee plans to continue the current successful model for planning, financing, and organizing the annual General Meeting.

- Attendance at the Annual Public Symposia has been highly variable, driven by event-specific factors. However, attendance is but one metric for assessing success, and the Executive Committee thinks that all of the symposia have been effective in achieving important objectives including extending the geographical reach of the Consortium and disseminating high caliber research to a diverse audience of trade researchers and policy practitioners. However, the recent decrease in core funding and increasing costs for organizing these events outside of North America raises questions about whether the Public Symposia should continue to be an annual activity of the Consortium (see discussion below).

- Membership has increased and diversified, but there is still a strong bias to North American membership. Continued efforts need to be made in seeking new members in Latin America and Asia, especially if symposia are organized in such locations.

- The Consortium has maintained its scope and focus with a strong track record of diverse and relevant activities. It is critical that the Program Sub-Committee continue to put forward attractive topics for Annual Theme Days with the support of the Executive Committee and membership input. In terms of Annual Public Symposia, the Consortium will consider whether this activity can continue on an annual basis, or whether it should follow a bi-annual model, where the focus is on longer lead times to develop strong local co-sponsorship in tandem with choice of locations. With respect to other activities, while combining IATRC events with several professional association activities has been successful and has provided IATRC with additional external visibility, continued care should be taken not to dilute the uniqueness of IATRC as an organization. Outreach activities with the policy community should continue to be a core IATRC activity.

- The Hewlett Program has not been reviewed in depth in this review, as the program administrator is drafting a separate report for the granting agency now that the three-year capacity building program has concluded. How-

ever, the Executive Committee considers that the program has been a success and is currently considering options for similar proposals to be submitted to other granting agencies.

- Demand for IATRC publications is strong, evidenced by electronic downloads, but arguably there needs to be more published output to supplement the very substantial effort to extend the reach of IATRC research through posting current and archived papers and proceedings on the website. IATRC, through the Executive Committee, needs to commission a new set of Trade Issues Papers on topics that will be relevant to both policymakers and academics, bearing in mind what other organizations are publishing, and take steps to communicate findings through briefings, conferences, and web dissemination of these papers.

- Core funding is essentially what it was in fiscal year 2002-03 and, with current budget constraints, there is little prospect of that changing substantially. In addition, IATRC expenditures continue to rise. A premium should therefore be placed on seeking additional co-sponsorship funding for any IATRC activity, especially the Annual Public Symposia, as the level of funding that can be supplied by the Executive Committee is clearly insufficient to ensure that a symposium is fiscally robust. IATRC cannot be seen by symposium organizers as the "lender of last resort."

- In terms of operational procedures, much progress has been made in improving internal communications of the Executive Committee, and financial reporting has been overhauled in order to improve detail, transparency, and coherence to both the Executive Committee and IATRC members.

- Significant improvements have been made in the organization and governance of the Consortium. The process for becoming a member has been streamlined, and more democratic and improved procedures have substantially increased the number of members voting in IATRC elections. The institution of the Program Sub-Committee has been very worthwhile. With respect to the latter, the Executive Committee will continue to actively cultivate potential members of this Committee, and members at large will be encouraged to provide input to the Program Sub-Committee.

The preparation of this Status Report, the first in the Consortium's history, has deepened the Executive Committee's understanding of the many factors that have contributed to the success of the Consortium over the past five years, and established a sound foundation for charting future directions. We conclude by recommending that the IATRC undertake similar periodic reviews in the future as a useful exercise in transparency and accountability that will contribute to the organization's continued success.

APPENDIX

IATRC Activities, 2005–2010

ANNUAL THEME DAYS

- "Modeling Food and Agricultural Markets" (San Diego, 2005)
- "From Farm to Port: The Export Decision in Agricultural and Food Industries" (St. Petersburg, 2006)
- "Labor Markets in a Global Economy" (Washington DC, 2007)
- "Biofuels, Agriculture and Trade" (Scottsdale, 2008)
- "Private Standards and Non-Tariff Barriers: Measurement, Impacts and Legal Issues" (Fort Myers, 2009)
- Trade in Agriculture: So Much Done, So Much More to Do (Berkeley, 2010)

ANNUAL PUBLIC SYMPOSIA

- "Pressures for Agricultural Reform, WTO Panels, and the Doha Round Negotiations" (Seville, Spain, 2005)
- "Food Regulation and Trade: Institutional Framework, Concepts of Analysis and Empirical Evidence" (Bonn, Germany, 2006)
- "China's Agricultural Trade: Issues and Prospects" (Beijing, China, 2007)
- "Globalization and the Rural-Urban Divide" (Seoul, Korea, 2008)
- "Confronting Food-Price Inflation: Implications for Agricultural Trade and Policies (Seattle, 2009)
- "Climate Change in World Agriculture: Mitigation, Adaptation, Trade and Food Security" (Stuttgart, Germany, 2010)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- IAAE Pre-Conference Workshop, "Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Asia-Pacific Countries" (Queensland, Australia, 2006)
- Policy Roundtable, "Farm Bill Implications for Trade: Agriculture in the Doha Development Round" (Washington, DC 2008)
- International Track Session, AAEA Meetings, "Paul Krugman: His Contributions to Trade Analysis and Economic Geography" (Milwaukee, 2009)
- IATRC Mini-Symposium, IAAE Meetings, "Research Avenues for Non-Tariff Measures in Agricultural Trade" (Beijing, China, 2009)
- International Track Session, AAEA Meetings, "Exchange Rates, Prices and Agricultural Trade: What Have We Learned?" (Denver, 2010)
- International Track Session, AAEA Meetings, "The Contribution of Agricultural Economists to the Understanding of International Trade" (Denver, 2010).