

Go South, Young Man? Yes, But If You Do . . .

Many of the comments by Jose Amador in his recent editorial, "Go South, Young Man!" (PLANT DISEASE July 1981, page 555), have been needed in print for many years. There appear, however, to be a few discrepancies in his presentation. He is quite correct in praising those American plant pathologists for their contributions. However, Dr. Amador's point of view that we benefit more than our South American colleagues must be questioned. I am a North American plant pathologist who has worked for several years in Brazil, and I have seen why our international relations have sagged during the last decade.

There are many excellent opportunities in Latin America for young people so long as they remember that when working abroad they are guests and must act like guests. Many of the plant pathologists already there are "Old Masters," and even though they may not possess an advanced degree, they have considerable knowledge. They must be approached cautiously and given much respect.

I have seen respected American and European plant pathologists act as well-meaning consultants to groups of South Americans, only to be ridiculed by their hosts once they have departed. This ridicule is often well deserved, because the consultant never took the time to learn the customs and resources of the host country. Unaware, the consultant returns to his place of business believing he has given considerable insight into the problem. This type of situation is best avoided by careful preparation through study of the host country, its language, and its problems.

Involvement in the Caribbean Division (by far the largest in APS) might be seen as lackluster because of a well-defined APS policy. The dissemination of news may be more important, however. *Phytopathology News* often takes months to reach its destination, since mail travels by surface carriers from the States. Travel, although not difficult, is usually costly because of the greater distances involved. In many Latin American countries, the individual normally provides travel funds. This is quite different from the North American system, where funds are often provided through the employer or from grants. Student participation at meetings is restricted by this lack of funding.

Because it often takes several weeks for a person to become adapted fully on first visits to foreign countries, financial

support by the Society for advanced student travel to meetings and seminars may be little more than paid vacations. Financial support by the Society for advanced students and young professionals for travel to projects within foreign countries would be money well spent for both the individual and the Society. Visits of this type should be from one to several months in duration to allow the person time to adapt to the culture, climate, language, and resources. This would provide an educational experience unparalleled by any academic environment.

Exchange of information is essential for continued work with our Latin American colleagues. Whereas American journals publish in English, many Latin American journals publish in four or five languages. This means that Latin Americans can communicate among themselves, while North American professionals, often without any language training, cannot comprehend the thoughts of their Latin American colleagues. Most Latin American professionals are proficient in English so this is not what keeps them from publishing in PLANT DISEASE or *Phytopathology*. Latin American journals publish free of charge (eg. *Fitopatologia Brasileira*, *Fitopatologia*) or for a nominal fee and also supply 25–50 free reprints, while North American journals sock the authors for \$25 (*Mycologia*), \$65 (PLANT DISEASE, *Phytopathology*), or more per printed page. This is a tremendous sum of money when the Latin American author must dig into his own pocket. A page charge waiver might bring in valuable foreign manuscripts.

We call *Phytopathology* and PLANT DISEASE international journals, but during the first 7 months of 1981 only 19 and 24%, respectively, of the articles came from outside the United States. Two other international journals, *Physiological Plant Pathology* and *Phytopathologische Zeitschrift*, had 74 and 90%, respectively, foreign articles in the same time span.

APS must solicit articles from outside sources, but why stop there? Why don't we include some of our South American colleagues as Associate Editors of *Phytopathology* and PLANT DISEASE? Why do we not send some of our valuable research to Latin American journals for publication? After all, they usually accept English manuscripts. Printing some of our research there would open pathways for exchanges of information.

Now that the importance of good communication and mutual respect is understood, it would obviously be foolish not to improve our relationships with our Latin American colleagues. APS should

be in the forefront to help encourage exchanges of our young men and theirs. The International Cooperation Committee of APS should establish a system by which a North American student can be sponsored for a span of time at a Latin American research facility or university. The educational benefits and personal satisfaction will be great for anyone who dares to go south.

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Epidemic and Epidemiology: Familiar, Established Terms

The June 1981 issue of PLANT DISEASE contains an appeal from Victor E. Green, Jr., (page 459) that pathologists should use the term *epiphytotic* rather than *epidemic* when referring to plant diseases. This supports a similar plea by C. C. Ryan and R. G. Birch in 1978, who advocated using *epiphytology* instead of *epidemiology* (*Phytopathology* 68:681).

It is difficult to see the justification for erecting such divisive semantic barriers to supplement those already existing between workers in different biological disciplines. Epidemics of disease in plants have much in common with those of man and other animals, and there is much to be gained from a common approach to "comparative epidemiology" in a search for unifying concepts of wide general validity (Thresh, J. M. 1980. An ecological approach to the epidemiology of plant virus diseases. Pages 57-70 in: J. Palti and J. Kranz, eds. *Comparative Epidemiology*. Pudoc Publishers, Wageningen, Netherlands. 122 pp.).

I for one will continue to use the familiar, well-established terms *epidemic* and *epidemiology* and hope that others will do likewise.

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