Report on the Chania Mediterranean Agronomic Institute

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Report on the Chania Mediterranean Agronomic Institute

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The Chania Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (C-MAI) is the newest link in the chain of the four ICAMAS institutes. Established on the basis of ICAMAS Governing Body Decision 58 (82) 8, 10 December 1982 and on the subsequent agreement between the Centre and the Greek government, C-MAI is hosted and financed by Greece and has the status of an international post-graduate training and research establishment.

The Institute's premises are very modern and beautifully located amidst groves of pines, citrus, kiwi, avocado and olive trees in the vicinity of Chania. At present, work is still in progress to supply its laboratories with the required equipment, to build an open-air amphitheatre for lectures and cultural events, to plant different Mediterranean species of forest trees in an arboretum, to build facilities for athletic activities and to obtain the necessary equipment and software for the Institute's Computer Services Department.

I - Cooperation between C-MAI and other higher education and research establishments

C-MAI is located near the Subtropical Plants and Olive Trees Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture. Our instructors and trainees have free access to the laboratory facilities, green-houses, plantations and experiments of our neighbouring institute. In addition to this, its highly qualified research personnel has always assisted our Institute in all possible ways.

Apart from this, we have had contacts with the Technical University of Crete in Chania. Its Computer Services Department is going to assist us in our efforts and its scientific personnel will give our first-year courses on automatic data processing and linear programming.

We have had fruitful contacts with the University of Crete and the Institute of Molecular Biology in Heracleion. In February, our trainees and post-graduate students in the Molecular Biology Institute participated in a common course on tissue culture, somatic embryogenesis and protoplast technology. The prospects of even closer and more fruitful operation between C-MAI, the University of Thessaloniki (Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences, Schools of Agronomy and Forestry) and the Agricultural University of Athens are good. We are gradually extending our contacts with the institutions of higher learning and research in Greece and, as soon as this operation is completed, we will extend our contacts to institutions and research establishments in other Mediterranean countries. We would thus welcome contacts, suggestions and proposals for concrete cooperation from other institutions in Mediterranean countries.

II - Specialization cycles at Chania

a. Background

1. By Decision 64 CA (86) 4, the ICAMAS Governing Board adopted the **Chania** *ad hoc* **Group Report on the Teaching Program for 1986/1987**. In this report, three post-graduate areas (cycles) of specialization are foreseen for C-MAI:

(i) Subtropical crops and crops under protective covering (for agronomists).

(ii) Mediterranean forestry (for foresters).

(iii) Integrated development of Mediterranean rural zones (for economists).

2. Specialization Cycle 1(i) covers some economic and all biological aspects of:

- subtropical Mediterranean tree crops (olive, citrus, avocado, *actinidia*) and

- cultivation of vegetables and flowers under protective covering.

3. Specialization Cycle 1(ii) includes all the biological and some economic aspects of Mediterranean forestry, management and development of arid zones, forest and range ecosystems.

4. Specialization Cycle 1(iii) covers all aspects of production economics, marketing, farm management, cooperatives, project appraisal, programs for restructuring Mediterranean crops and the economics of renewable resources (bioeconomics).

5. The Institute started implementing specialization Cycles 1 (i) and 1 (ii) in the 1986/1987 academic year in accordance with the Report of the *ad hoc* Group. Until now, the program has been implemented as scheduled.

b. Courses planned for 1987/1988

1. The suggested courses for 1987/1988 are not new. They are those that the Governing Board decided on by Decision 64 CA (86) 4 in Tunisia in 1986.

2. On the basis of Decision 64/CA (86) 4 and on the experience of the 1986/1987 academic year, the Institute is planning the following training activities for 1987/1988.

a) To split Specialization Cycle 1(i) into two distinct cycles and to offer them in an alternating and rotating manner. Specifically, one specialization cycle on cultivation of vegetables and flowers under protective covering will be implemented in 1987/1988 and another on subtropical tree crops (olive, citrus, *acinidia*, avocado) in 1988/1989, subsequently reverting, to vegetables and flowers in 1989/1990, and so on. The reasons for this functional split are as follows:

- Specialization Cycle 1(i), as it stands now, covers too vast an area in only one academic year and does not allow for in depth studies. In order to cover both subtropical tree crops and vegetables and flowers in one year, an abnormally feverish tempo of studies is required at the expense of digesting and consolidating the information presented.

- the two parts of Specialization Cycle 1(i) are addressed to two distinct groups of agronomists with different interests: one group being interested in subtropical tree crops but not in greenhouse vegetables and flowers, and another in

vegetables and flowers but not in subtropical tree crops.

b) To repeat the specialization cycle on Mediterranean forestry, as it is currently implemented, with only slight modifications in the timing of the individual courses.

c) To start the third specialization cycle on integrated development of Mediterranean rural zones, as stipulated in the Report of the *ad hoc* Group and adopted by Decision 64/CA (86) 4.

d) To pursue the second year of studies in the fields 1(i) and 1(ii) noted above, leading to the ICAMAS master's Degree, as stipulated in the report of the *ad hoc* group and decided by Decision 64/CA (86) 4 of the Council. As stated in the report, students who have received the ICAMAS Diploma may be permitted to do further independent work in a chosen field. Before commencing with their own personal research work, however, students should receive some instruction of a methodological nature at the beginning of the year which can include, if needed, some highly specialized courses of substantive nature.

c. The organizaton of C-MAI programs in the 1987/1988 academic year is presented in **figures 1** and **2 below**).

III - International intensive courses being planned

The C-MAI has submitted to the General Secretariat two detailed proposals (Daily teaching programs and subject titles) concerning international intensive courses on the following subjects.

a) Mediterranean floriculture (8 weeks)

b) Mediterranean rangelands (4 weeks)

These courses will be offered to a high-level team of Mediterranean trainees as soon as the required financing is secured.

IV - Research

The Institute is planning to start its research activities this year. Apart from the research of second year students, working on their master's degree theses, the Institute will assign research studies to external research workers on themes like "marketing and forecasting models for Mediterranean agricultural products".

In 1987, the Institute will start its cooperative international research with the aim of creating a coordinating Mediterranean networks of research groups on subjects of regional character.

We have submitted to the General Secretariat the following cooperative research proposals for such networks:

1. Forest fire prevention

2. Afforestation techniques and choice of species in Mediterranean areas

3. Improvement of browse production in Mediterranean evergreen sclerophylle brushlands

4. Conversion of coppices into high stand forests

5. Salinity problems

6. Aromatic and medicinal plants.

V - Some concluding remarks

I would like to conclude this report by bringing to the attention of participants the need for interdisciplinary approaches to socio-economic and ecological problems. This approach will assist us to train senior personnel able to contribute to integrated rural development.

The Green Revolution debate has brought home the message that the totality of the effects of a development strategy cannot be adequately appreciated by simply putting together findings of the different branches of social and natural sciences. Against this background, the concepts of

sustainability and natural resource management have been evolving in recent times as responses to rising demands for holistic approaches. We have to face the problems of managing sustainable production systems in an interdisciplinary framework for the Mediterranean region. The history of the relationship between man and nature (especially Mediterranean renewable resources such as soils, water, rangelands, forests, etc.) has been mostly a history of resource depletion and environmental degradation. It is high time to turn this virtuous circle of total exhaustion into a virtuous circle of conservation and development under the guidance of the sciences of rational resource management.

Annex

Figures

Figure 1: Organization of C-MAI programs in the 1987/1988 academic year

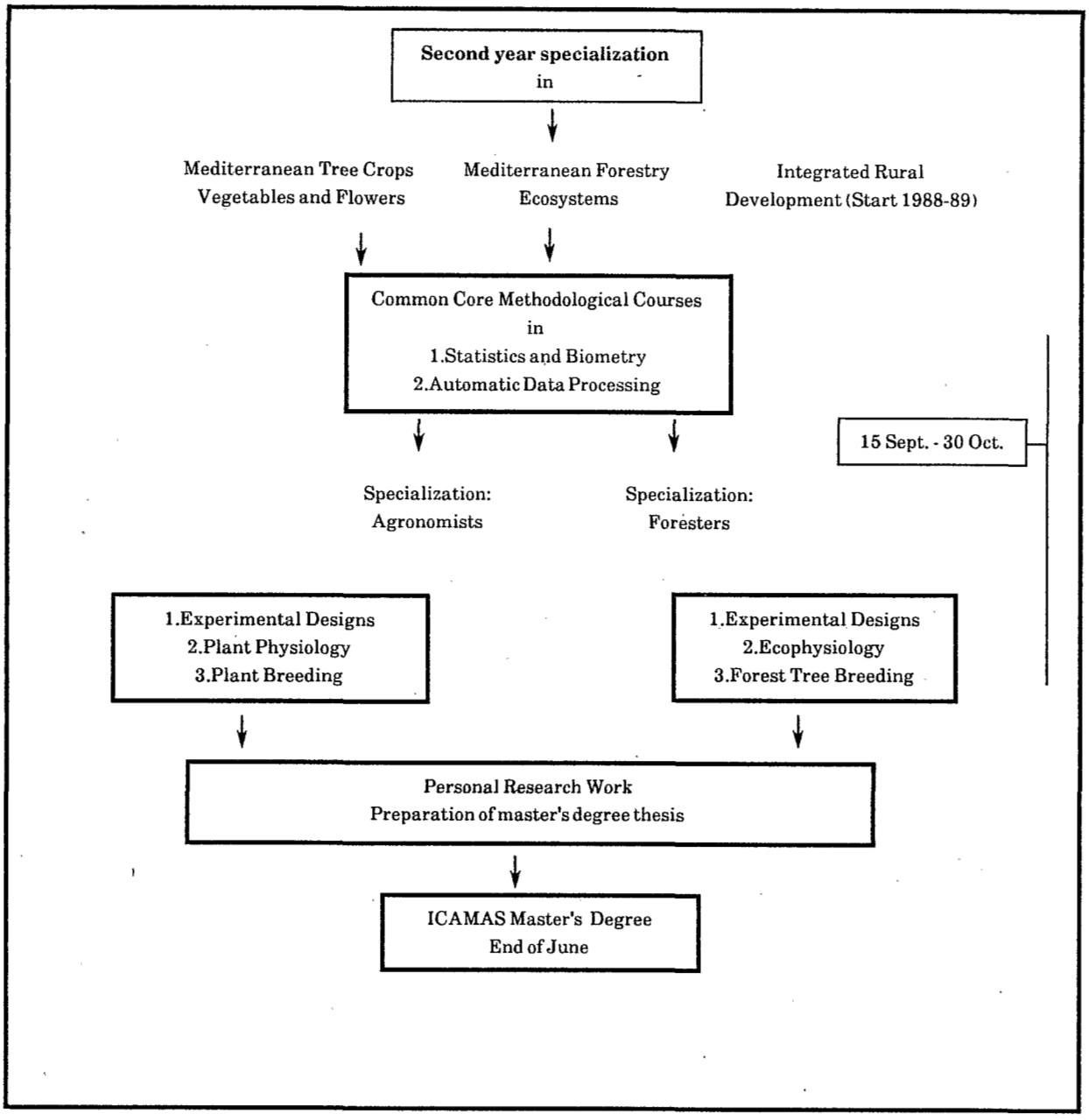

Figure 2 : Organization of C-MAI programs in the 1987/1988 academic year