

Inaugural Address

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Distinguished Guests and Participants,

On behalf of the Symposium Organizing Committee of the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, I have the honor and privilege to open the International Symposium on Pastures in the Tropics and Subtropics sponsored by the Tropical Agriculture Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan.

Above all, I would like to extend my cordial welcome to all the participants, in particular to those who have come over to Japan from abroad.

The Tropical Agriculture Research Center was established in 1970 with the objective of contributing to the development of agricultural technology in the tropical areas in undertaking research programs in a spirit of international collaboration. The basic principle of our research activities is to work together with overseas scientists on a partnership basis to solve technical obstacles which hamper the agricultural development of the tropical countries. The activities of the Center cover a fairly wide range of research fields such as crop production, soil fertility, plant protection, forestry, agricultural engineering, etc.

One of the major activities of the Center is to send research scientists from Japan to overseas research institutions located in the tropical countries to conduct collaborative research work in agricultural fields. About 40 staff members of Center with long-term assignments are engaged each year in such collaborative activities in many parts of the world, mainly in the Asian countries and partly in the Latin American countries.

An other important activity of the Center is to hold international symposia for exchanging information and views among different countries and among scientists concerned. Since 1967 the symposia have been held every year, covering such subjects as crop diseases, animal production, methods of crop breeding, optimization of fertilizer effect, water management in paddy fields, silvicultural technologies, tropical soybean, etc.

The present symposium, the eighteenth of its kind will give the opportunity to consider various aspects relating to the improvement of pastures in the tropics and subtropics. Undoubtedly, for the past decade, there has been an increasing trend in the demand for meat and milk products as a source of protein in the diet of the populations inhabiting the tropics and subtropics. It is thus necessary to raise the low productivity of livestock in these regions which is mostly associated with the insufficiency or poor quality of the feed resources due to the edaphic and climatic conditions peculiar to the tropical and subtropical zone. Consequently, it is important to improve the current systems of pasture management and production through the application of a variety of methods. This includes oversowing of legumes in the native grasslands and grazing areas, establishment of improved pastures based on grass-legume mixtures well-adapted to the local conditions, integration of pastures within the prevailing agricultural systems as well as optimum utilization of local feed resources and agricultural by-products, particularly in the arid tropics and in the densely populated areas of monsoon Asia.

I am convinced that the discussions in the present symposium will further contribute to the enhancement of research in these fields.

I sincerely hope that the symposium will be successful and that through our joint effort friendship and cooperation will be strengthened.

Thank you.