



OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION  
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From the Minister

8 February 1980

Dear Jim,

In your letter of 31 January following the Prime Minister's talk with Mr Marten on our scientific work, you asked for further information on the possible transfer of responsibility for the Centre for Overseas Pest Research to the University Grants Committee or to one of the Research Councils at a net saving to the aid programme.

Mr Marten considers that the work of COPR is an important component of our aid programme and that wherever it is done it will have to be paid for out of public funds. A brief note about some of the more important aspects of its work is attached.

The work of COPR involves applying British skills and techniques to overseas circumstances. By contrast the five Research Councils are funded by the DES and their Royal Charters require them to spend this money on fundamental research relevant to Britain's needs.

The application of funds administered by the University Grants Committee ultimately depends upon the Universities' own decisions about the lines of research they wish to pursue. Some of the work they choose to do is indeed close to the scientific fields in which COPR operates but there are safeguards against duplication of effort. The Universities are represented on the research committees which provide professional guidance to the Centre and there is similar representation in the opposite direction from COPR.

There have been instances, and will no doubt be others, where work originating in COPR has developed in such a way as to make it appropriate to transfer the effort, at aid programme expense, to a Research Council or other institution. ODA professional advisers keep a keen eye open for possibilities of this sort, but the general principle concerning overseas oriented work is unaffected.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Peter Shaw (Department of Education and Science).

Yours,  
*Susan Unsworth*

(Miss S E Unsworth)  
Private Secretary

T Lankester Esq  
10 Downing Street

CENTRE FOR OVERSEAS PEST RESEARCH : SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WORK

COPR provides research, training, advice, information and assistance on the use of modern control compounds and techniques, to increase crop yields, improve animal and human health, reduce costs of control programmes and diminish environmental contamination. This improves food supplies world wide.

1. Locusts

Methods initiated by COPR have resulted in Migratory Locust and Red Locust in Africa ceasing to be major problems. The threatened plague of Desert Locust in 1978 was checked by campaigns coordinated by COPR. FAO is now assuming this role, and we are moving out of it.

2. Armyworm

The threat of the African armyworm to crops and pasture became critical in the 1960s. COPR responded to appeals for help by creating a forecasting system for outbreaks so that the armyworm moths can be dealt with on arrival.

3. Tsetse and trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) control

COPR's multidisciplinary approach enables it to cover all aspects of tsetse research and control and its services are much in demand. In Somalia for example the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development agreed to finance a five year \$5 million survey and research scheme provided that we, through COPR, provided the technical and supervisory backup.

4. Cooperation with British industry

COPR is a world authority on ultra low volume spraying. It assists in the development of special chemicals for major pest problems. Through its wide international contacts COPR has introduced many firms to new markets.

5. Staff of COPR

There are at present approximately 100 scientists including biologists, chemists and physicists, and about 50 other staff. (Some projects are undertaken for multilateral institutions on repayment terms). Net cost this year about £1½ million.



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