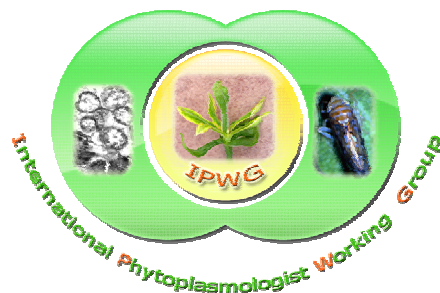


INTERNATIONAL PHYTOPLASMOLOGIST WORKING GROUP



Foreword

Phytoplasma research has progressed greatly during the forty years since the fastidious pathogens have been identified by plant pathologists and entomologists in Japan. The intricate interactions between insect vectors and phytoplasmas continue to attract plant pathologists, entomologists, and molecular biologists, who contribute new findings from laboratories around the world.

I still remember the time when phytoplasma diseases were believed to be caused by viruses. I also recall the time when tubercle bacteria could not yet be cultured in artificial media and, together with leprosy and syphilis pathogens, were considered fastidious. Until 1960 mycoplasmas were called fastidious PPLO (pleuropneumonia-like organisms), but Channok and Hayflick succeeded in growing them in a culture medium and the PPLO name was changed to mycoplasmas.

Phytoplasmas multiply in plants and specific invertebrate animal vectors, but not yet in artificial culture media. I hope that collaboration between phytoplasma researchers and microbiologists will eventually result in the cultivation of the fastidious phytoplasmas. We are

witnessing at the First Phytoplasma Meeting the close collaboration between researchers from universities and laboratories in countries on different continents. Science recognizes no political, religious, ethnic, or geographic borders and scientists speak only one language – the language of science. Scientists can collaborate with each other, irrespective of background and political beliefs.

I hope that at the Second Phytoplasma Meeting, which I would like very much to attend, there will already be reports about the successful cultivation of phytoplasmas.

I am writing today to you and all participants of the First Phytoplasma Meeting to express my best wishes for your continuous and successful research and happy life.

July 24, 2007
Karl Maramorosch