

## **History of Sciensano [1]**

Sciensano is the result of the merger of two sister institutions, the ISP (Scientific Institute of Public Health) and the CERVA (Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre).

Founded in 2003, the ISP brought together at the time the Pasteur Institute of Brabant and the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, both of them looking back on more than a century of history as a reference in public health.

CERVA was officially established in 1997 but its institutions have existed since the early 1900s. It focuses on the safety of food production, veterinary health and public health.

Given their complementary activities, the merger between the ISP and the CERVA in 2018 has allowed for a streamlining of their human and material resources while offering a global response to the health challenges posed by today's society. Sciensano is based on the 'One Health' concept whereby human health, animal health and environmental management are intrinsically linked. Sciensano seeks to decipher the mechanisms governing interactions between humans, animals and the environment to prevent, assess and minimise threats to public health.

**Sciensano connects health, science and society.**

**A look back over the key events that have marked its history.**

### **Birth of PIB-IPB, ancestor of WIV-ISP**

Creation of the Pasteur Institute of Brabant.

1900


Pasteur Institute of Brabant, rue du Remorqueur in Brussels



Pasteur Institute of Brabant, rue du Remorqueur in Brussels (circa 1905, © WIV-ISP archives)

1905

Immunisation against rabies



Immunisation against rabies (circa 1905, © WIV-ISP archives)

## **Rabies in Belgium**

The Pasteur Institute of Brabant was the only institute in Belgium to carry out research on the rabies virus. Patients infected with this disease could be treated free of charge at the Institute. Following the efforts of researchers for more than 100 years, rabies in Belgium was eradicated in 2001.

## Creation of the IRC, the forerunner of the CERVA

The IRC (Institute for Chemical Research) originated in the Laboratory of Chemical and Oniological Research of the Belgian Congo founded in 1912 in the Economy Department of the Belgian Congo Museum. It was then attached to the Ministry of the Colonies. Its activities focused on the chemical study of the natural productions of the colony. After the Congo gained its independence, the laboratory was transferred to the Department of Agricultural Research within the Ministry of Agriculture. Its mission included the study of agrochemical problems and, since the 1970s, the problem of the environment.

1912

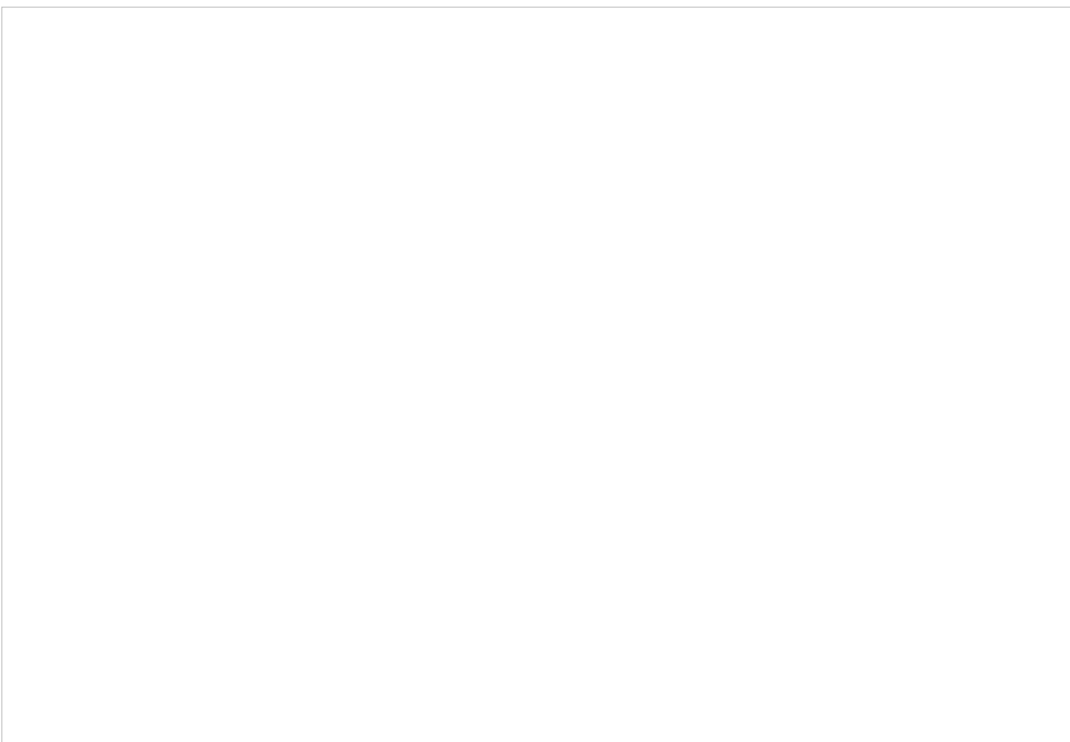
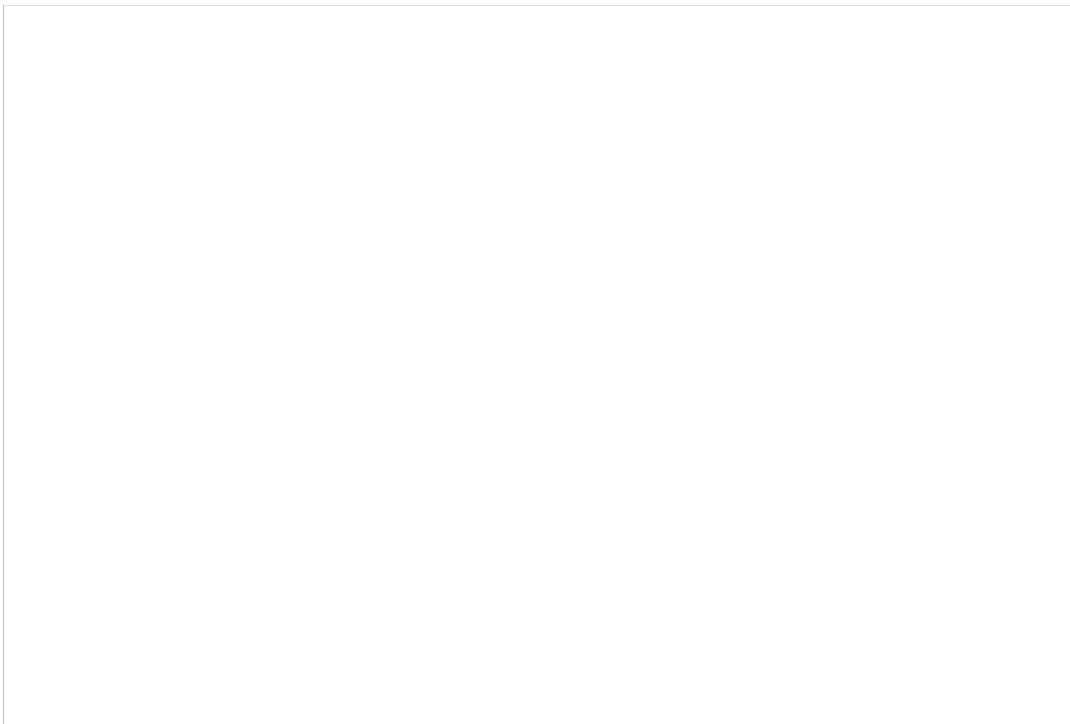


Photo prise dans les laboratoires de Tervuren (agrochimie) en 1976 (©archives Sciensano)  
1919



Front page of 'Traité de l'immunité dans les maladies infectieuses' signed by Jules Bordet (left, 1954) and Nobel Prize certificate (right, 1919) (© WIV-ISP archives)

## **Nobel Prize**

Jules Bordet, director of the Pasteur Institute of Brabant, received the Nobel Prize for physiology or medicine for his research into immunity.

## **Creation of the NIDO-INRV, at the origin of CODA-CERVA**

It was the return of rinderpest on Belgian soil in 1920, which imposed the necessity of setting up a Belgian laboratory capable of making rapid diagnoses. This laboratory was founded in 1930 and was named NIDO-INRV (National Institute of Veterinary Research) in 1957. Its mission was to guarantee animal health and thereby public health.

1930

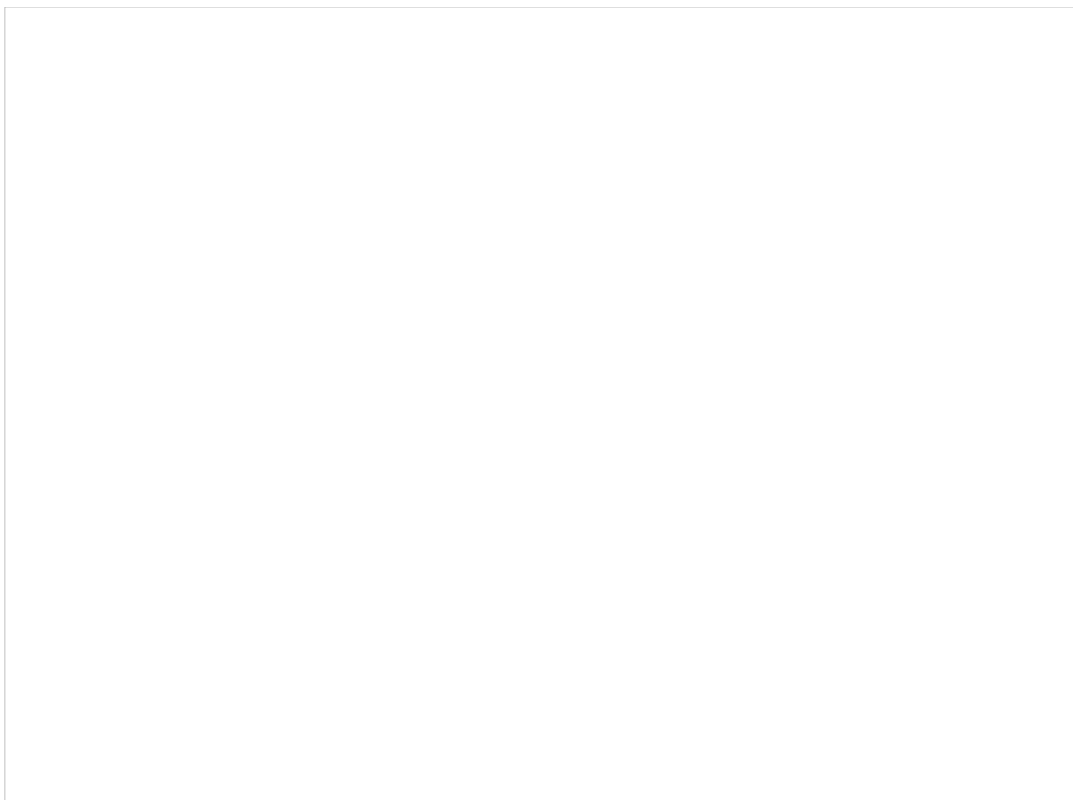


Photo de la façade côté rue du bâtiment A du Cerva, alors INRV, en 1938 (©archives  
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1951

IHE info brochure for the World Exhibition of 1958



IHE info brochure for the World Exhibition of 1958 (© WIV-ISP archives)

## **Birth of the IHE, ancestor of WIV-ISP**


Birth of the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology bringing together the various health laboratories.

## Environmental pollution

The Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, conducted one of the first studies into the influence of the environment on public health in our country.

1977

Mobile measuring device for sulfur dioxide and fumes



Mobile measuring device for sulfur dioxide and fumes (circa 1970, © WIV-ISP archives)

1997



## **Birth of CODA-CERVA, the Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre**

In 1997, a merger took place between the National Institute for Veterinary Research (INRV) and the Institute of Chemical Research (IRC), which gave birth to the Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre (CODA-CERVA). CODA-CERVA has nearly 200 employees and is broken down into four operational directorates: “Viral Diseases”, “Bacterial Diseases”, “Interactions and Monitoring”, and “Chemical Safety in the Food Chain”.



# Creation of the Scientific Institute of Public Health (WIV-ISP)

Due to the complementarity of their respective activities, the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (IHE) and Pasteur Institute of Brabant (PIB-IPB) merged. This marked the birth of the Scientific Institute of Public Health (WIV-ISP) as we know it until 2018, the year of its merger with the CODA-CERVA. Today, they form the new Belgian health institute Sciensano.

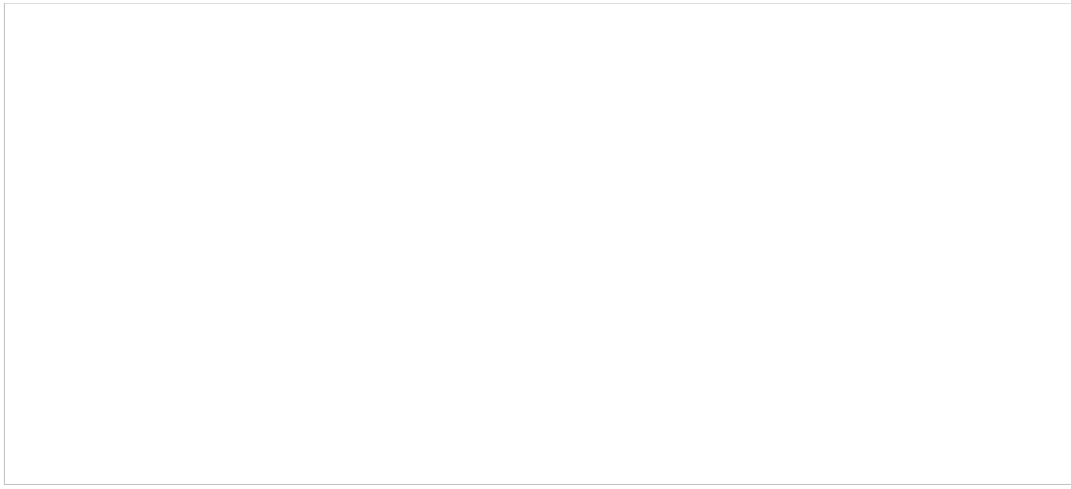
2003

The first logo of the Scientific Institute of Public Health



The first logo of the Scientific Institute of Public Health

2018



## Creation of Sciensano

Creation of Sciensano, the result of the merger between the Scientific Institute of Public Health (WIV-ISP) and the Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre (CODA-CERVA), both experts in the field of health for more than 100 years. Sciensano can count on more than 950 staff members who are committed to health every day.

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### Links

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