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Annual Report 2009

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## 100 years young

In 2009, we proudly celebrated our centenary. We did so with our clients and professional relations, with each other and, last but not least, with Queen Beatrix when she honoured us with a visit on 5 June, during which she showed great interest in our work. These were inspirational occasions in an exceptional and above all dynamic year. It was a year that spotlighted the past, but also the present and the future.

In close cooperation with numerous other public health organisations and authorities, RIVM coped professionally and successfully in 2009 with the pandemic threat of Mexican flu. Other noteworthy cases were the increasing spread of Q fever, possible health effects of the Corus steel plant in the IJmond region, and the efforts made in respect of lifestyle and health, such as the project called NL de Maat ('measuring NL').

A characteristic feature of all our work was the importance of a dialogue, as we saw during the campaign for vaccination against cervical cancer. There is a need for dialogue with each other, with our colleagues in the field, and, above all, with the public and society as a whole. The influence of the media, especially modern media, is becoming an increasingly important factor, so communication is playing an ever-greater role in the development as well as the implementation of policy.

The government's instruction aimed at downsizing RIVM by 200 employees proved a catalyst for a large-scale transition within the Institute. Various reorganisations and

transition processes were started in 2009 so as to assure the quality of our work in the years ahead. In doing so, we are taking into account the declining revenues from government due to the global financial crisis. A review of our duties has not been ruled out, also with a view to reinforcing RIVM's identity and positioning in relation to other institutes.

RIVM's development reflects developments in society, past and present. Today, 100 years young, RIVM wants to take on the challenges of the future overtly. We want to do so in close cooperation with each other, with our clients, with our partners, and with our other professional relations.

Dr. Marc J.W. Sprenger  
Director-General RIVM

## Profile

The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) is a knowledge and research institute dedicated to promoting public health and a healthy and safe living environment. The core tasks of RIVM, performed in a national and international context, serve to support government policy.

### Tasks

- Policy support
- National coordination
- Prevention and intervention programmes
- Provision of information to professionals and the general public
- Knowledge development and research
- Support for inspectorates

RIVM is responsible for providing impartial and reliable information to professionals and members of the public in the fields of health care, medication, the environment, and nutrition and safety. Our objective is to make optimum use of scientific knowledge and expertise and to make it accessible.

## Independent knowledge and research institute

The main commissioning bodies of RIVM are the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The Institute also undertakes work for the Ministry of Defence and other ministries, departments, and authorities, including inspectorates and international organisations like the European Union and the United Nations.

RIVM is committed to being a reliable partner for the authorities and professionals. However, our commissioning bodies have no influence over the arrangement and results of our work. The Institute has an independent scientific position regulated under the RIVM Act. Scientific independence is an absolute precondition for RIVM, both in the performance of its tasks and in its considerations on whether to enter into strategic knowledge alliances.

RIVM guarantees that there will be no conflicts of interest. RIVM may provide to third parties the available knowledge and information independently of clients.

The Scientific Supervisory Committee monitors the scientific quality of the Institute. The Committee consists of a number of highly respected scientists. A summary of the annual report of the Scientific Supervisory Committee can be found on page 32.

## Projects, Studies and Developments

## Young people choose cigarettes for taste and price

Via schools and websites, RIVM interviewed almost 5,000 young people about their smoking habits and choice of product. On 3 December 2009, the results were presented to André Rouvoet, Minister of Youth and Family. The study showed that 70% of young people who smoke choose their brand for its taste. Brand availability and price are other considerations. For that reason, RIVM takes the view that use of natural and artificial additives like vanilla and other flavourings should be restricted. There is also room for improving the information given to young people about what cigarettes contain. RIVM further recommends robustly using targeted publicity campaigns to encourage young people to stop smoking, focused for example on young people with a lower level of education.

## Successful tackling of Mexican flu

On 11 June 2009, the World Health Organization announced phase 6 for the new influenza A (H1N1). This officially declared the existence of a flu pandemic which, it transpired later in the year, turned out to be relatively mild in terms of its scale and health risks. Nevertheless, the impact was considerable, both for members of the public and for all the health organisations involved. As an orchestrating organisation, RIVM immediately invoked all scenarios. Years of preparatory work bore fruit. Close cooperation between the Centre of Infectious Diseases Control and the Health and Care sector of RIVM assured rapid dissemination of the required high-quality knowledge and expertise to the various operational authorities. Laboratories, municipal health departments, *Postbus 51* (the government's public information service) and GPs were among the numerous parties that helped to ensure a successful and highly professional approach to Mexican flu.

## Lifestyle interventions in the Netherlands

In April 2009, the Healthy Living Centre presented the results of various studies conducted among local professionals (municipal health departments, home care organisations, mental health care departments, and municipalities) about the use, experience and wishes concerning health-promoting interventions and methods. One of the findings of the research was that local organisations often find it difficult to apply existing interventions and associated products because these are not entirely compatible with the specific local situation. RIVM established the Healthy Living Centre in 2008 to improve cohesion and coordination of steps to promote health among the population. The identification of the different needs and wishes that exist marks an initial step towards improving the supply-and-demand match.

## Sharp rise in diabetes

The number of people in the Netherlands with diabetes mellitus (types 1 and 2) will double in the years up to 2025 to an estimated 1.3 million. This emerged from research conducted by RIVM in 2009. Some of the increase is attributable to the increase in the number of people who are overweight and take insufficient exercise. Other factors contributing to the increase include the ageing of the population and the increasing attention being directed towards early identification of people with diabetes and pre-diabetes. All in all, this will lead to a growing demand for healthcare services in the years ahead. This makes it important to optimise care and also to develop new forms of care. At the same time, the Netherlands must continue searching for effective ways of stimulating healthy food and sufficient exercise to prevent overweight and inactivity.



## RIVM cooperates with Chinese university

RIVM and the Dalian University of Technology in China have been cooperating since 2009 on improving the environmental risk evaluation of nanoparticles. Nanoparticles are frequently used to make materials stronger, more elastic, or more scratchproof. However, a lot of knowledge needed for estimating the potential risks for man and the environment is still missing.

The cooperation with two researchers at the Chinese university is taking place under a Dutch government exchange programme (NUFFIC) and the China Research Council. The research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. W. Peijnenburg of RIVM's Laboratory for Ecological Risk Assessment. On 1 June 2009, he was appointed a visiting professor at the Dalian University of Technology.



## Online reporting of cosmetics complaints

Since November 2009, consumers have been able to report skin complaints and other oversensitive reactions after using cosmetics on the website [www.cosmeticaklachten.nl](http://www.cosmeticaklachten.nl). A questionnaire is used to obtain information about the complaint and the product. This information yields a greater insight into all skin complaints potentially caused by cosmetics. In due course, this might make it possible to reduce such complaints both in number and in seriousness.

This online reporting forms part of a three-year RIVM study being conducted for the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA). The research is being carried out in cooperation with affiliated dermatologists, GPs, and the Dutch Cosmetic Association (NCV).

## Animal-related MRSA

Research was carried out by a consortium of veterinary and medical knowledge institutes coordinated by RIVM and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine into the spread of MRSA in animal production chains and into the transmission of MRSA from animals to humans. The results showed that MRSA occurs widely in Dutch intensive livestock farming and that intensive contact with pigs and veal calves heighten the risk of infection with the bacterium. Although this does not usually cause health complaints, it can occasionally result in wound infections.

As a result of the findings of the study, persons in contact with living veal calves, along with those in contact with living pigs, have been designated as a risk group in the MRSA guideline for hospitals. The study was carried out on the instructions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.



## New CBRN response unit

To respond even faster and more efficiently to CBRN incidents (incidents of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear nature), a new CBRN response unit of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment and RIVM went into service on 22 October 2009.

The CBRN response unit consists of three vehicles. There is one mobile chemical-biological laboratory (MCBL) and two mobile radiological-nuclear measurement (RN) vehicles. The MCBL is deployable for simultaneous identification of chemical and biological substances. The vehicle allows on-site determination of the nature and scale of an accident or incident. The two mobile radiological-nuclear measurement vehicles will be deployed in the event of nuclear accidents and radiological incidents. The vehicles carry the latest equipment for extensively measuring radiation and all kinds of radioactive substances and can even take measurements while in motion.

## Integral approach to health arrears

The health of people with a low socio-economic status is generally poorer than that of people with a high socio-economic status. On the instructions of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, RIVM examined policy measures that might contribute, within and outside the public health sector, to reducing health arrears and determined how much is known about the effects of existing measures.

The study revealed that, while numerous policy measures exist for reducing health arrears, little is known about their effects, because they have been examined little if at all in relation to their reduction of the arrears. This means that more research is necessary. The researchers also advocated a more integral, sector-overarching approach to health arrears.

## Regional cooperation in measuring air quality

RIVM concluded agreements in 2009 with the City of Amsterdam and DCMR Environmental Protection Agency of Rijnmond (the greater Port of Rotterdam area) for intensive cooperation in measuring air quality. Among other things, the organisations decided to make their measurements available to each other, which means that all the results of regional measurement stations are now available online 24 hours a day. This step has greatly improved the provision of information to the public. With a view to managing the measurement networks, the organisations are also working towards joint procurement of particulate matter measurement equipment. This has cost benefits and will improve harmonisation of measurement methods and thus make comparison of measurements easier and more reliable.



## Illegal weight-loss products dangerous

Illegal weight-loss products found in the Netherlands in recent years are becoming increasingly dangerous. This emerged early last year from the results of an RIVM trend analysis covering 2002-2007 conducted for the Health Care Inspectorate. In many cases, the products are counterfeit medicines or 'natural' nutritional supplements adulterated with active substances from drugs. If taken, these can result in complaints such as psychoses, heart and vascular problems, and sometimes even death. The RIVM analysis, which also involved the Customs laboratory, the Netherlands Forensic Institute, the laboratory of the Royal Dutch Association for the Advancement of Pharmacy, and the National Poisons Information Centre highlighted the need for good international registration of these health complaints to obtain a picture of the seriousness and scale of the problem.

## Updated HPV vaccination campaign

Last year, unexpectedly strong anti-vaccination sentiments, caused considerable anxiety and mistrust about vaccination against cervical cancer (HPV vaccine). Traditional media and all kinds of Internet forums and chat communities gave considerable exposure to unfounded objections. The result was a turnout of only 50% for the initial catch-up campaign in March for girls between 13 and 16. RIVM responded, together with a communications agency specialising in young people, by adapting the campaign that could help restore confidence in the vaccine. The core message is that HPV vaccination is effective and safe. The regular vaccination campaign for girls aged 12 will start in April 2010. Through the renewed website [www.prikenbescherm.nl](http://www.prikenbescherm.nl) and other more state-of-the-art means of communication, RIVM hopes to give the girls and their parents more help in making an informed decision about vaccination against cervical cancer.



## Increase in Q fever

Despite the goat Q fever vaccination policy launched in the fall of 2008, the number of human disease reports increased again in 2009.

The bacterium was also found to have geographically expanded from Brabant to the surrounding provinces of the Netherlands.

RIVM analysed all available knowledge and on request submitted several control recommendations. On the strength of this advice, it was decided at year-end 2009 to cull all pregnant goats at infected farms.

Earlier, RIVM had launched a varied research programme to identify the magnitude of the public health problem, risk factors for Q fever, evaluation of interventions and the best solution to the problem. RIVM is analysing the sources of the disease and its possible origin in close cooperation with the Animal Health Service (Deventer), Central Veterinary Institute (Lelystad), municipal health departments, medical specialists of the affected region, and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University.



## 'Measuring NL'

In 2009, RIVM began a large lifestyle and health survey. More than 10,000 Dutch people, distributed across five provinces, were invited to participate in the national survey dubbed *NL de Maat* ('measuring NL'). The purpose of the survey is to gather representative data in order to improve health policy and thus healthcare and prevention in the Netherlands. This includes targeted initiatives to respond to overweight, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

The response in this pilot phase of the survey was lower than expected. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find people who are willing to participate in such a survey. With a view to increasing the response, the structure of the follow-up to this survey scheduled for autumn 2010 will be modified.



## Dutch Nutrients Database goes online

An extensive selection from the Dutch Nutrients Database (NEVO) has been available online since October 2009. It is possible to view data about energy and some 170 nutrients online for over 1,700 food products. Searches can be made by entering the full or partial name of the food product or the NEVO code. This displays the nutritional values and associated source information of these food products. It is also possible to compare the nutritional values of different products.

NEVO Online is published by RIVM and provides the very latest data. A new printed NEVO table will be published in 2011.



## RIVM celebrates centenary

RIVM proudly celebrated its centenary in 2009. Our Institute's rich history was recorded in an attractive centennial book, on film, and in poetry. We looked back as well as forward. We celebrated this milestone in the company of our clients



and professional relations at a centennial conference held at the *Beurs van Berlage* in Amsterdam. We also celebrated it with Queen Beatrix, who honoured us with a visit on 5 June 2009 at which she displayed great interest in our work. And we



celebrated it with each other, during the 'Parade of the senses', a lively party held at the *DeFabrique* events venue in Maarsse. For more information about RIVM's history, visit [www.rivm.nl](http://www.rivm.nl).

## Lung cancer study around Corus plant

In certain areas of the IJmond region and particularly at places in the proximity of the Corus steel plant, the incidence of lung cancer is higher than the regional average. Following a large-scale study conducted on the instructions of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, RIVM concluded in 2009 that it was not possible to automatically attribute these extra cases of lung cancer to emissions from the Corus plant. A small proportion of the cases might possibly be due to past Corus emissions of contaminated substances into the air. Other potential causes include a person's smoking history, occupational exposure, or other sources of air pollution in the IJmond region. After exposure to carcinogenic substances, it takes years for lung cancer to manifest itself. Therefore, a more frequent incidence of lung cancer is definitely not a reflection of the present-day quality of the environment.



## New regional structure for RCP

A new organisational structure was put in place on 1 February 2009 for the Regional Coordination Programmes (RCPs) of the Centre of Infectious Diseases Control. The nine old vaccination administration units and their overarching organisation, the National Association of Vaccination Administration Units, were transformed within RIVM into a single central national office in Bilthoven with five regional offices at different places in the country. This new structure reflects the national development started by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport towards health regions and greater uniformity in organisational structures and working practices.

The RCP coordinates implementation of the National Immunisation Programme, the heel prick test for the neonatal screening programme, and blood tests among pregnant women (prenatal screening). Each year, there are more than 2.7 million vaccinations. Besides distributing the vaccines and recording vaccination data, it is important to maintain supervision over quality and provide medical advice.



## Food safety among infants and young children

The nutrition of infants and young children in the Netherlands is safe as regards their exposure to natural toxins like fumonisin B1, deoxynivalenol, patulin, nitrate, and organophosphate pesticides. For dioxins (found particularly in animal fats) and acrylamide (found in fried and deep-fried products), there is a small chance of negative health effects. However, further research is necessary in order to estimate the exact likelihood. This transpired in September 2009 from research conducted by RIVM and the RIKILT Institute of Food Safety. The research combined the consumption data of the Food Consumption Survey among infants and young children with data from the monitoring of concentrations of the examined substances in products.

## Relationship between food and cancer

People who eat a lot of vegetables and fruit appear to be 20-25% less likely to develop colorectal cancer than people who eat little of these foods. However, this applies only to non-smokers. For smokers, the eating of vegetables and fruit actually appears to increase the likelihood of colorectal cancer slightly. This emerged from research conducted by RIVM in EPIC, a major survey among 500,000 Europeans into the relationship between food and the incidence of chronic diseases.

Eating vegetables and fruit also has countless benefits for smokers with regard to other chronic diseases, so they too should continue eating vegetables and fruit. Naturally, giving up smoking would be even better for their health.



## Digital breast images

On 19 March 2009, Ab Klink, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport, gave the starting signal at RIVM for a new national system for taking digital breast images. Each year, breast images are made of around 920,000 women under the national breast cancer screening programme. The digital breast images enable easier detection of breast cancer at an early stage. The laboratory technician can see at a glance whether the image is satisfactory. Digitising the information makes it possible to work in a better and more efficient way.

The new national network connects all 57 mobile and 8 fixed screening centres, 19 administrative units and 19 assessment units to one central database and establishes a uniform working process. RIVM's Centre for Population Screening and the regional screening organisations spent three years building the new system.



## Green Star Award

On 7 May 2009, the Netherlands received the Green Star Award, an international award for the rendering of support in response to global environmental disasters. The Netherlands earned the award for three innovative projects jointly initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, and RIVM. The award was in recognition of an internationally deployable measurement and sampling unit and a fast screening method developed by RIVM for estimating a disaster's environmental impact. According to the jury's report, these projects have contributed significantly to improving international assistance following environmental disasters. The Green Star Award is an initiative of the International Green Cross, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



## Organisation and Financial Data

### Regulation of (chemical) Substances of Very High Concern

At the request of the national government, RIVM is coordinating the implementing duties under REACH, the European Regulation on chemicals and their safe use. REACH stands for Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemical substances. The Regulation requires the business community to demonstrate that it is possible to safely use tens of thousands of chemicals in hundreds of thousands of products. The European authorities may regulate Substances of Very High Concern (SVHCs) in ways including restriction of their use or their gradual replacement by less hazardous alternatives. RIVM has developed a systematic and practical method for regulating SVHCs and has suggested a group of 29 very hazardous substances for which, after a scientific and policy check, European member states can take measures.

## Cooperation arrangements

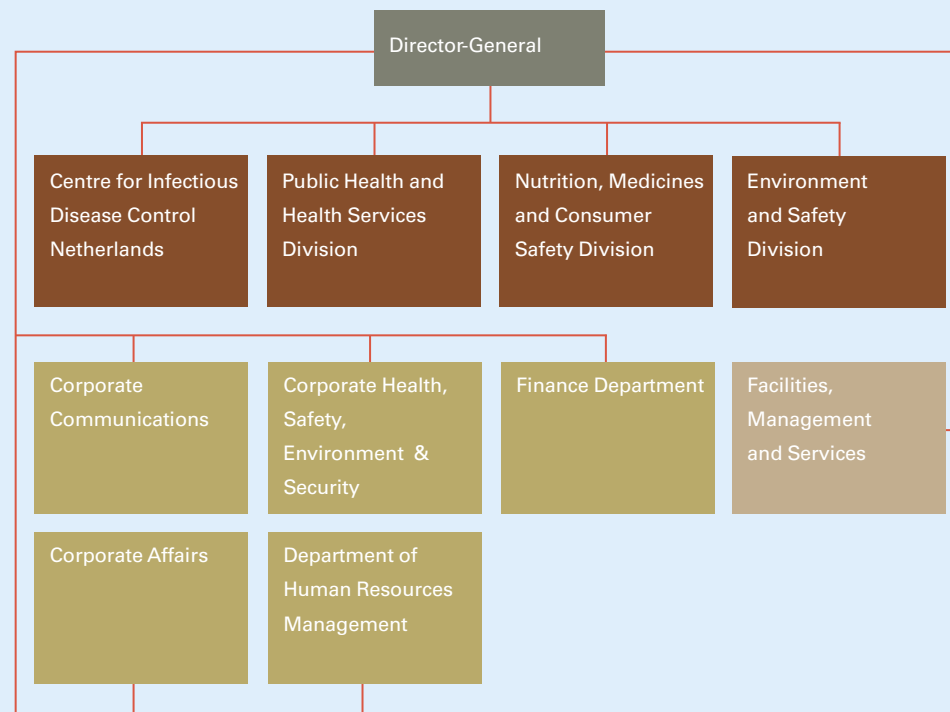
Nationally and internationally, RIVM has numerous cooperation partners. Within the Netherlands, RIVM collaborates with research institutes like the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), the Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research (NIVEL), the Institute of Food Safety (RIKILT), the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI), the Water Department of the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management (RWS), Deltares Institute for Delta Technology, Agentschap NL (an agency resorting under the Ministry of Economic Affairs), and several universities. Contacts with planning agencies are equally important. RIVM also maintains close and functional ties with municipalities, provinces, and municipal health authorities.

Internationally, RIVM is a member of various networks that support the European Commission. RIVM also cooperates with institutes like the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in Stockholm, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in Parma, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, the European Medicines Evaluation Agency in London (EMA), the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines (EDQM) in Strasbourg, the European Environment Agency (EEA) in Copenhagen, and the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki. RIVM further maintains close contacts with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.

## Possible relocation RIVM

RIVM signed a letter of intent on 3 July 2009 for an agreement with the University of Utrecht, the City of Utrecht, and the Government Buildings Agency for a possible relocation to the Utrecht Science Park in Utrecht's Uithof district. A preliminary study by the Government Buildings Agency and RIVM identified relocation as a financially more attractive option than restructuring and renovating the present complex in Bilthoven. The relocation also fits in with RIVM's wish to play a leading role as a knowledge institute that gives prominence to cooperating and sharing facilities. The possible new premises of RIVM will further boost the Utrecht Science Park as it develops towards an internationally front-running centre for scientific research, academic patient care, and knowledge-intensive activity. Besides organisations like TNO, Deltares, the Hubrecht Institute, and the SRON Netherlands Institute for Space Research, the site is home to several companies active in the life sciences field.

## Organisation chart on January 2010



Director-General: Dr Marc Sprenger

Deputy Director-General: Drs Niek Parlevliet

Director of the Centre for Infectious Disease Control: Prof. Dr Roel Coutinho

Director of the Public Health and Health Services Division: Dr Moniek Pieters

Acting Director of the Nutrition, Medicines and Consumer Safety Division: Dr Henk Derks

Director of the Environment and Safety Division: Dr Reinout Woittiez

# Financial statements 2009

Balance sheet at 31 December 2009 (all amounts in EUR x 1,000)

	31-12-2009	31-12-2008
<b>Assets</b>		
Intangible fixed assets	1.354	1.332
Property, plant and equipment	8.171	8.414
- land and buildings	-	-
- installations	2.000	1.857
- other fixed assets	6.171	6.557
Inventory	20.240	13.876
Accounts receivable	7.822	13.012
Accounts receivable Parent department	35.000	-
Other receivables	1.901	3.243
Outstanding and prepaid items	13.222	3.879
Project sales not yet invoiced	4.341	3.714
Cash and cash equivalents	59.880	129.126
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>151.931</b>	<b>176.596</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Equity	8.156	9.724
- operating reserve	8.685	13.391
- reserves required by law	-	-
- undistributed profits	529	3.667
Provisions	15.087	16.803
Accounts payable	8.312	10.246
Other debts	737	1.322
Instalments received in advance	46.719	47.271
Accrued liabilities	72.920	91.230
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>151.931</b>	<b>176.596</b>

Itemised statement of income and expenditure over 2009 (all amounts in EUR x 1,000)

Itemisation	A Amount originally budgeted	B Actual amount	C = B - A Difference
<b>Income</b>			
Revenues from Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (owner)	13.144	18.957	5.813
Revenues from Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (commissioning body)	93.248	145.807	52.559
Revenues from Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment	43.587	53.684	10.097
Revenues from Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality	650	519	131-
Revenues from other departments	2.625	4.336	1.711
Revenues from third parties	166.363	144.660	21.703-
Interest received	1.461	1.038	423-
Released from provisions	-	2.152	2.152
<b>Total income</b>	<b>321.078</b>	<b>371.153</b>	<b>50.075</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Operating expenses	317.062	363.186	46.124
Interest paid	213	440	227
Depreciation	3.803	5.226	1.423
Added to provisions	-	2.830	2.830
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>321.078</b>	<b>371.682</b>	<b>50.604</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>529-</b>	<b>529-</b>

## Notes to the financial statements

The operating statement shows that income and expenditure were significantly higher than budgeted. This is largely due to the introduction of vaccination against cervical cancer as part of the National Immunisation Programme and to extra activities undertaken for the national Mexican flu vaccination programme, the income and expenditure for which were not foreseeable at the time of preparation of the budget.

The balance of income and expenditure over 2009 came to - €0.5 million and is attributable to almost cost-neutral regular operations (- €0.8 million), interest earnings (€1.0 million), and a movement in provisions (- €0.7 million).

The National Audit Office issued an unqualified auditor's report for the financial statements.

## Staff

At year-end 2009, RIVM employed 1,553 people, filling a total of 1,378.4 FTEs.

In 2009, 119 employees left RIVM and 50 new employees were appointed. Our workforce includes 47% staff with an academic degree and 27% postdoctoral researchers. RIVM employs 21 part-time professors.

In the year under review, our workforce included 46% women; in the higher pay scales (from 10 up to and including 13), the proportion of women was even higher at 50%. It is only in the very highest scales (from 14 upwards) that women are underrepresented at 27%. The average age of RIVM employees is 45 and the average length of service is 11 years.

The sick leave rate was 3.7% in 2009. Short-term absence due to illness accounted for roughly half this percentage. As a result, the sick leave rate is 0.5% below the maximum standard of 4.2% set for RIVM.

## Highlights from the Annual Environmental Report

RIVM shares its site with the Netherlands Vaccine Institute (NVI) and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL). The environmental licence is issued for the entire site, with various environmental facilities being shared, e.g. wastewater and waste collection facilities. Consequently, the Annual Environmental Report provides a picture of RIVM, NVI, and PBL.

RIVM obtained a combined new permit (General Permit) under the Environmental Management Act and the Pollution of Surface Waters Act in 2008. The permit includes a Company Environmental Plan legally valid for 2007-2010. The Plan includes various improvements such as soil protection measures, a central system for registering chemicals, and sustainable procurement.

On 27 November 2009, RIVM signed the new Utrecht Convention in its capacity as member of the Sustainability Network. By so doing, RIVM has endorsed the need to work together on a sustainable development of society.

Compared with 2008, the environmental performance of RIVM, NVI and PBL in 2009 was as follows:

- Water consumption decreased by 7.5% to 125,500 m<sup>3</sup> due to a decrease of water consumption in the sterilisation process.
- The quantity of pollution units in waste water increased from 665 to 690 as a result of more discharges of organic substances.
- The total quantity of waste decreased by 0.5% to 797 tons. Waste includes industrial waste, building and demolition waste, and minor hazardous waste.

RIVM, NVI and PBL spent approximately €5 million on environmental, energy and water costs in 2009 (including energy consumption, waste, and levies for waste water).



## Scientific Supervisory Committee

The task of the Scientific Supervisory Committee is to monitor the scientific quality of RIVM. It does so by maintaining supervision over and advising on the level and quality of performed research and the quality system of RIVM. Based on its findings, the Committee issues a statement each year regarding the quality of research and the quality system of RIVM. The Committee reports its opinion to the Institute's owner, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

RIVM had an eventful year in 2009. RIVM was repeatedly in the news in the year under review, among other things because of the commotion surrounding the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign, Mexican flu, outbreak of Q fever, and the Zembla television programme about the gassing of sea containers. As a result, the dynamics of RIVM were reflected during the Committee's meetings.

RIVM celebrated its centenary in 2009 and the Committee enthusiastically joined in the celebrations.

The Committee made a self-evaluation in 2009. The report shows that, on the whole, the Committee is positive about its interaction with the RIVM Board, the effectiveness of supervision, and the Committee's composition and equipping for its task. The self-evaluation was submitted to and discussed with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (the owner).

As in 2008, the Scientific Supervisory Committee was informed extensively about the consequences of discharging the responsibilities assigned to RIVM by central government. The Institute has opted to continue its work across the full spectrum, but to perform less in-house research and to concentrate on its coordinating tasks. As a result, the research base within the Institute will become narrower and the Institute will be more dependent upon the results of research conducted elsewhere. This is a cause of concern for the Committee from the point of view of scientific quality, also in 2009. RIVM launched various operational and strategic actions in 2009 to limit the undesirable effects of this step in the organisation. Strategic talks are being held with parties, including the owner.

The Committee will continue to watch over developments concerning the responsibilities of RIVM and the processes of change that have been started and their potential influence on scientific quality, also in relation to RIVM's international activities.

The Committee obtained comprehensive information about the background to introduction of the HPV vaccine in the National Vaccination Programme and about the lessons for external communication following the Zembla television programme about gassed containers.

In September 2009, the Committee received a request from the Directorate-General of Health of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport for a second opinion on the RIVM's reports on passive smoking and alternatives to smoking areas.

There was a discussion in early 2009 of the scientific audit called 'Measuring and modelling environmental quality' started in 2007 and finished in 2008 at the Environment and Safety Sector. In December 2009, the Committee took cognizance of the follow-up to the recommendations. Preparations began in 2009 for a scientific audit of the Centre of Infectious Diseases Control and for the 'Evaluation of medicines and medical products' scientific audit. The Committee is satisfied with the serious way the audits are being conducted. The Committee was also closely involved in the implementation and substantive quality of the RIVM Strategic Research ('SOR'). In 2009, the Committee made recommendations for preparation of the new strategic spearheads for 2010-2014.

On the basis of the provided information, the positive results of the audit, and the talks held with the management of the Institute, the Committee has concluded that RIVM has succeeded admirably in assuring the scientific quality of its research.

## Colophon

### **Text**

RIVM Communications

### **Project coordination and final editing**

RIVM Communications

### **Design**

RIVM Publishing

### **Photography**

Hollandse Hoogte

iStockphoto

Hans Oostrum fotografie

Dennis Sies fotografie

Photography LML/MEV

Edith van Putten

Frans van den Berg

Wim te Brake

Cats & Withoos

Frank van Dam

Nationale Beeldbank

Michiel Wijnbergh

Phovoir

### **Print**

Deltahage B.V., Den Haag

This annual report is also available in Dutch.

Please e-mail RIVM at [info@rivm.nl](mailto:info@rivm.nl)  
for additional copies of this report.

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