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## 'Iguana Mama' Wins Top Science Award

**SELF**-appointed Iguana Mama Dr. Dagmar Werner received the Bruno H. Schubert science award in her native West Germany this month for her innovative green iguana farming program.

Herpetologist and professor of wildlife sciences at the Universidad Nacional, Werner is the director of Costa Rica's Green Iguana Foundation -- a pioneering organization that encourages iguana protection and reforestation by raising the cold-blooded oversized lizards for meat.

West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher presented Werner with the prestigious annual prize, awarded by a commission of experts for special merit in the field of environmental conservation.

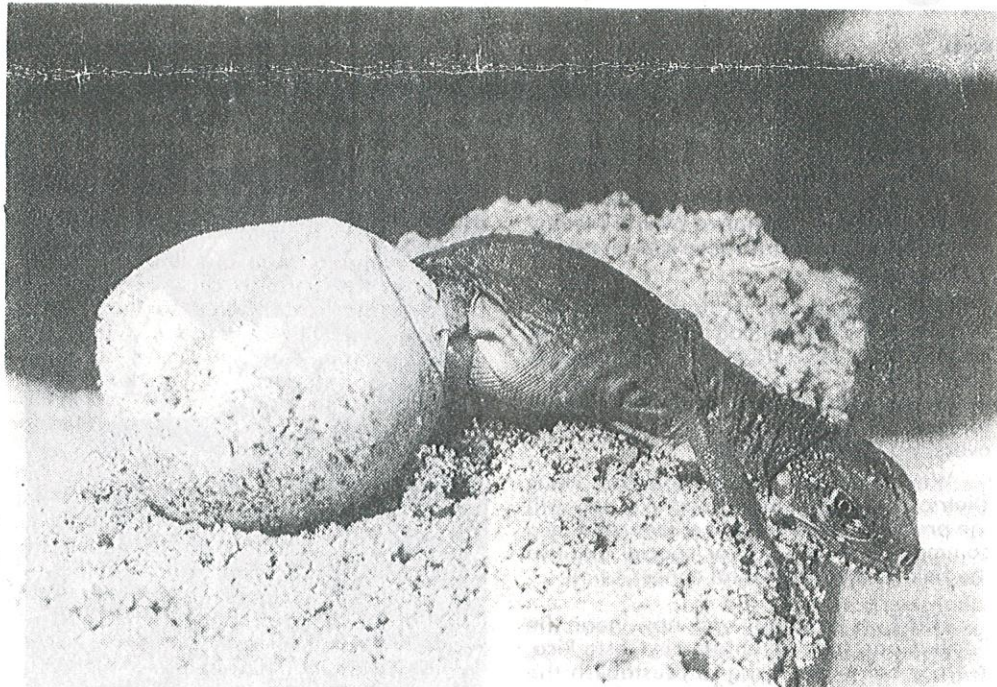
**FIRST** in Panama, and now near the Pacific Coast town of Orotina in Costa Rica, Werner has been trying to reestablish the endangered species as livestock for years (TT, Dec. 9, 1988). A traditional delicacy hunted almost to extinction in Latin America, iguana meat tastes like chicken, but is higher in protein and has almost no fat. Iguana eggs and leather are also useful.

Iguanas consume in three years what a chicken eats in 4 months, according to Werner, so although they mature more slowly, they are much cheaper to raise.

Werner reasons that if iguanas become economically profitable, their survival will be guaranteed, and will also encourage the planting of trees -- their natural habitat.



Cattle ranching, among other causes, has contributed to Costa Rica's extremely high deforestation rate.



Photos courtesy Dagmar Werner

**"IGUANA Mama' Werner with a trio of the endangered animals; above, a baby iguana hatches on one of the scientist's experimental farms.**

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