



ICAR Newsletter

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International Committee
for Animal Recording



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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 36th ICAR Biennial Session (16 - 20 June 2008, Niagara Falls, NY) was the first biennial session ever held in the United States of America. The National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, the host of the Session, offered excellent facilities, accommodation and program for the 450 participants coming from 43 countries. The Session was supported by 20 sponsors and 2 guest speakers.

This biennial session included several events:

- Meetings of ICAR Working Groups and Sub-Committees.
- ICAR technical plenary and parallel sessions.
- INTERBULL Sub-Committee Meeting.
- Meeting of managers of Dairy Herd Improvement associations.
- Workshop of ICAR Reference Laboratory Network.
- Meeting of North American Laboratories.
- Ordinary and extraordinary ICAR General Assemblies.
- Animal Identification Summit.
- Manufacturers' showcase.
- Exhibition of ID and recording devices (30 exhibitors).

On behalf of all participants and all Members of the ICAR, I wish to express to the Organizing Committee chaired by Jay Mattison my thanks and appreciation for the excellent organization of the Session and accompanying events.

Sub-Committees and Working Groups have produced a number of new guidelines and corrections to the existing ones. Guidelines will come in force in October 2008 in accordance with the new procedure for approval which envisages full participation of Members in the final formulation. A new Strategic Plan oriented towards meeting new challenges and needs stemming from technical progress and developments in animal industries was presented. The Extraordinary General Assembly of ICAR approved changes in the ICAR Statutes (transfer of the seat to Rome, powers of the Board in admission of new Members and terms of office of Board members). Addresses by Under Secretary Bruce Knight, Mark Adam, Jay Mattison, Greg Wickham and Ms. Erin Ogden completed by technical visits offered an excellent opportunity to know more about US animal industry and its achievements. One hundred and sixteen participants presented research papers and reports, with many others taking part in lively discussions. All this made the 36th ICAR Session a milestone in the ICAR history of servicing its Members and the animal industry worldwide.

In this issue of the ICAR Newsletter you will find some highlights of the activity undertaken by our Association and its governing and technical bodies in recent months. Complete presentations and reports will be published in Proceedings of the 36th Biennial Session. Most of the presentations can also be found on the ICAR web site.



Neil Petreny (ICAR President) during his official speech.

Neil Petreny, President of ICAR

48 HOURS TRACEABILITY OF ALL ANIMAL SPECIES IN PRODUCTION - GOAL OF THE NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM IN USA

BRUCE KNIGHT, UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE in his address to the 36th ICAR Biennial Session underlined that the voluntary system of animal identification in USA, available through the US Department of Agriculture, encompassed three basic components: registration of premises, animal identification and animal tracking. Premise registration makes it possible to locate animal operations and to reach producers. Identification and tracking are based on state-of-the-art RFID technology in order to create quicker and more efficient database traceability. Poultry, pig and sheep sectors have already reached a high level of participation. The highest priority of the system is an increase in participation within dairy and beef sectors. In order to increase the efficiencies of animal tracking and traceability, there is a need for the standardization of technical norms so as to ensure the U.S. has an internationally appropriate identification system. The efficient ID system will contribute to the implementation of the country of origin labeling, in place as of September 2008 for animal products, red meats, chicken and goats.

ICAR WORK IN ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

ICAR standardized procedure for testing of RFID devices is in the transition to become the ISO standard 24631. ICAR received the nomination as the ISO Registration Authority for the International Standards ISO 11784 and 11785, this giving another success to ICAR in servicing animal keepers, service providers and authorities worldwide. The work of ICAR in the field of animal identification can be illustrated also by a number of tested and approved devices: 81 types of ear tags, 53 types of injectables, 35 types of boluses, 8 tag attachments and two types of non-synchronizing portable readers. Mr. Ole Klejs Hansen, Chairman of the ID Sub-Committee informed the ICAR General Assembly that two rounds of laboratory tests of conventional ear tags have been completed and that field performance tests have commenced.

GENOMIC EVALUATION

ICAR Sub-Committee INTERBULL agreed that the use of molecular genetic evaluation data and the orientation towards more complex selection strategies should be included in the new INTERBULL Strategic Plan as the base for future activities in the field of the international genetic evaluation. The Joint ICAR - INTERBULL meeting held within the 36th ICAR Biennial Session reviewed the state of the art in the use of SNPs for genetic evaluation of bulls. Participants agreed that the use of 50 000 SNPs offered significantly higher reliability in estimating young bulls than the standard method (parent average) but significantly lower reliability for estimation of breeding values than standard progeny testing. Some countries are already using the genomic evaluation for pre-selection of young bulls for testing, while in some other countries there are plans for incorporating genomic evaluation in their official evaluation. Reinhardt Reents, Chairman of INTERBULL, in his report to the ICAR General Assembly, underlined the need for more research in this field. National and international experiences and practices, as well as recent scientific results and evidence in the use of molecular genetic data for breeding value estimation, will be analyzed at the INTERBULL workshop to be held in January 2009.

APPROVAL OF NEW RECORDING DEVICES

In the period June 2007 - June 2008, the ICAR Board approved the use of the following milk recording devices:

- Delaval MU 480 for cattle (tied up milking or stanchion barns).
- Dematron 75 control unit for Metatron 12 milk meter.
- Afikim Afifree milk meter for goats.

- SCR milk meter for goats.
- WMB Lactocorder milk meter for goats.

Random coupling of ICAR approved milk meters and samplers?

Uffe Lauritsen, Chairman of the ICAR Sub-Committee Recording Devices, informed the General Assembly of the tests the Sub-Committee had carried out in 2007 on random coupling of ICAR approved milk meters and samplers. The test analysis show that in all cases random coupling compromised reliability and accuracy of milk recording. The Sub-Committee came to the conclusion that each meter-sampler combination has to be ICAR tested and approved before accepted in official milk recording use. Any stakeholder is free to apply and pay for an ICAR approval test of a new meter-sampler combination.

The ICAR Board has approved this Sub-Committee's proposal together with the other changes proposed to Section 11 of the Guidelines regarding testing of recording devices.

ON-FARM MILK ANALYSIS: A NEW CHALLENGE FOR ICAR

Neil Petreny, President of ICAR, in presenting main features of the ICAR Strategic Plan, outlined an objective to have approved standards for on-farm milk analyzers by the end of 2008. The ICAR Sub-Committee on Milk Analysis (SC MA) formed a working party (experts from the SC MA, SC Recording Devices, WG Sheep Milk Recording, WG Lactation Calculation Methods and WG Animal Recording Data) to establish ICAR guidelines for the use of on farm milk analyzers. New guidelines should establish acceptable limits for accuracy for on-farm milk analyzers and overall consistency in the milk recording system. They will assist milk producers in the correct use of devices and manufacturers in designing and developing user-friendly and accurate equipment. Guidelines would also contain methods for testing, approval and maintenance of on-farm milk analyzers.



Exhibition hall at Niagara Conference Centre.

REFERENCE SYSTEM FOR SOMATIC CELL COUNTS - NEW ICAR PROJECT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FEDERATION (IDF)

Olivier Leray, Chairman of SC Milk Analysis, informed the General Assembly on the new project aimed at establishing reference system for somatic cell count (SCC) in milk. The project will be implemented in close co-operation with the International Dairy Federation (IDF). It will rely on the experience, expertise and active participation of the ICAR Reference Laboratories Network and its 38 laboratories from 32 countries.

14 LABORATORIES FROM 11 COUNTRIES ACCREDITED FOR PARENTAGE CERTIFICATION

The ICAR Board, following results of the inquiry carried out by the Working Group Genetic Analysis, accorded accreditation for genetic analysis of parenthood to 14 laboratories from 11 countries. Paolo Ajmone Marsan, Chairman of the WG, underlined that the future program of the WG focused on new technology in the use of genetic data in animal identification and selection, such as use of SNPs in paternity testing, SNPs in Marker Assisted Selection, genomic selection and sequencing. The program will be implemented in close cooperation with the International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG) which deals primarily with scientific matters, while the ICAR WG will develop technical application of scientific results for the purpose of ICAR programs and mandate.

ICAR GUIDELINES ON ALPACA SHEARING MANAGEMENT, FIBRE HARVESTING AND GRADING

The newly established ICAR WG Animal Fibre produced Guidelines on alpaca shearing management, fibre harvesting and grading as a first result of its ambitious program in supporting producers of alpaca fibre worldwide, in particular producers from the Andean regions of Latin America. Marco Antonini, Chairman of the WG, informed that the program of the WG covers broad issues related to definition of breeding objectives, development of accurate recording methods for animal fibres and organization of selection plans.

A DECISION SUPPORT PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING IDENTIFICATION AND RECORDING SYSTEMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The ICAR Task Force Developing Countries has undertaken the preparation of a framework of a decision-making process for the establishment of animal identification and recording in low to medium production systems in developing countries. The framework was discussed through e-mail consultations between members of the Task Force and at the workshop held in Budapest, Hungary, 26 - 29 May 2008. The TF identified the global context, driving forces and reasons for failure and success. FAO provided financial support for the meeting of the ICAR Task Force Developing Countries, as well as for the participation of members of the TF at the workshop on development of animal identification and recording systems for veterinary surveillance and livestock development in countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

The ICAR Certificate of Quality has been accorded to NMR, United Kingdom, for Identification and Dairy Production Recording and to ICBA, Israel for Identification, Dairy Production Recording and Genetic Evaluation.

NEW ICAR PUBLICATION POLICY

The ICAR Board decided to publish proceedings of the 36th Biennial Session in the ICAR Technical Series instead of the EAAP Scientific Series. The implementation of this decision would certainly mean an increase in professional and scientific quality of Technical Series and would also decrease costs of publication.

Thus, ICAR is proud to inform that its website contains at http://www.icar.org/pages/Niagara_session.htm 120 files PDF of the presentations held in Niagara. This good result has been made possible with the collaboration of all the speakers and the local organising committee which are warmly acknowledged.

The Proceedings of the Niagara session are being finalised. The publication will be printed within the ICAR Technical Series (#13) and the hard copy is expected by December and will be distributed to the participants. The Proceedings will also be made available through the website in order to increase the distribution and availability.

JOSEPH CRETENAND RECEIVED THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Neil Petreny took great pleasure in presenting to Dr. Joseph Crettenand from Switzerland the President's Award for his valuable contribution to the attainment of the ICAR objectives during his professional career. As a Chairman of the ICAR Sub-Committee Recording Devices and President of ICAR 1998 - 2002 he initiated the evolution of ICAR from prevalingly regional into a global organization for standardization of equipments and methods in animal identification, recording and genetic evaluation.



Joseph Crettenand receiving the President's Award.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Frank Armitage (United Kingdom), former Vice President and Treasurer of ICAR, Guido Ongaro (Italy), former member of the ICAR Board, Freddy Fikse (The Netherlands), former director of the INTERBULL Centre and Alain Malafosse (France), former Chairman of the Working Group AI and Related Technologies, received the ICAR Distinguished Service Award for their contribution to ICAR during their tenure of office.



From the left: Frank Armitage (Distinguished Service Award), Joseph Crettenand (President's Award) and Alain Malafosse (Distinguished Service Award).

NEXT ICAR SESSIONS PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2009 General Assembly

The General Assembly welcomed the invitation of the Croatian Livestock Centre to host the 2009 session of the General Assembly and the Workshop on management of new recording and evaluation technologies in Porec, Croatia during the week of May. The agenda of the Assembly and the final program of the workshop will be confirmed this fall.

The 37th Biennial Session

Dainis Rungulis, Member of the ICAR Board and representative of the Latvian State Agency "Agricultural Data Centre" - the host of the 37th ICAR Biennial Session to be held in Riga, Latvia from 1st to 4th of June 2010 - presented to the delegates of the General Assembly a video on his country and of the venue of the Session. The invitation and presentation of video was warmly received by the General Assembly.

FROM THE POST-CONFERENCE TOUR - ANIMAL INDUSTRY IN THE LANCASTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Under the efficient and highly professional guidance of JoDee Sattler, member of the Organising Committee and Jere High, General Manager of the Lancaster Dairy Herd Improvement Association, participants at the post-conference tour Pennsylvania - Washington D.C. visited, among other places of professional and cultural interest (the natural park Pennsylvania's Grand Canyon in Tioga County, Gettysburg, home of George Washington, Arlington) several farms in Lancaster County and the DHIA milk analysis laboratory in Manheim, PA.

The visit offered also a possibility to participants to learn more about the US animal industry and on the way it operates at the



Pictures taken during the post-conference tour

farm level. The Lancaster County holds the distinction of being the most productive non-irrigated farming county in the United States. The average size of its 5 293 farms is only 78 acres (cca 24,1 ha) compared with the Pennsylvania average of 132 acres (cca 52,8 ha). Together with other components of the agribusiness industry, they offer over 51 000 jobs or 20% of the total work force in the county. The total cash receipts of farms are US\$ 914 Million, over 80% of which comes from livestock. Each year Lancaster farmers feed 11.9 million people with eggs, 10.2 Million with milk, 3.3 million with chicken, 4.6 million with pork and 72 700 people with beef.

Participants at the tour were impressed with the technical level of both small - one had only 60 cows - and large dairy farms with several thousands cows, automated milking, manure processing ... However, the most important experience was contacts and friendly discussions with farmers and workers, and, also, the touch of the real life.

SOME OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Session

The Biennial Session in Niagara Falls included, in addition to meetings of the ICAR Board, meetings of Sub-Committees and Working Groups, Ordinary and Extraordinary sessions of the ICAR General Assembly, eighteen technical sessions which served for the presentation of and discussion on scientific and research papers on issues related to animal identification, recording, analysis of products and genetic evaluation. The session provided a forum for the exchange of experience among technicians and managers as well as for the presentation of the work of the ICAR technical bodies. An average of six papers were presented at each session and one had 16 (!) presentations.

There were five demonstrations of new equipment for animal identification, recording, milk analysis and farm animal management and five presentations within the Manufacturers' Showcase.

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AND PARTICIPANTS

A total of 450 participants joined the Session and the most represented countries were USA with 131 registrations, followed by Canada (39), Germany (36), France (31) Italy (19) and Sweden (16). The participating countries were 42, representing all the five continents.

... AND SOME CONFERENCE STATISTICS

Participants at the 36th Biennial Session spent 2 000 nights in Niagara Falls hotels, mostly in the excellent Crowne Plaza Hotel. At coffee breaks, lunches and dinners they ate, among other items, 3 500 ice cream bars. During the receptions and official dinners the participants consumed 780 bottles of beer and 114 gallons (about 500 liters) of wine (not per person!).

The following table contains the number of participants by countries (ascending order):

Country	Number of participants
Austria	1
Colombia	1
Cyprus	1
Egypt	1
Peru	1
Romania	1
Croatia	2
Greece	2
Hungary	2
Mexico	2
Norway	2
Tanzania	2
Argentina	3
Brazil	3
Japan	3
Slovakia	3
Uruguay	3
Belgium	4
Czech Republic	4
Lithuania	4
South Africa	4

Country	Number of participants
Spain	4
Ukraine	4
Estonia	5
Finland	5
Israel	5
Korea	5
Australia	6
Switzerland	6
Latvia	7
Slovenia	7
Poland	9
Netherlands	11
Denmark	12
New Zealand	12
United Kingdom	13
Ireland	15
Sweden	16
Italy	21
France	31
Germany	36
Canada	39
United States	131

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

After election in Niagara Falls, the ICAR Board is composed as follow:

President

- Neil Petreny - Canada

Vice-Presidents

- Daniel Abernethy - Australia
- Uffe Lauritsen - Denmark

Secretary

- Reinhard Reents - Germany

Treasurer

- P.L. Gastinel - France

Members

- Badi Besbes - Tunisia
- Clara Diaz Martín - Spain
- Ole Klejs Hansen - Denmark
- Dainis Rungulis - Latvia
- Marco Winters - UK

Accounting Inspectors

- Kaivo Ilves - Estonia
- Jay Mattison - USA

Secretary General

- Andrea Rosati - Italy

CHAIRMEN OF ICAR SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUP AND TASK FORCES

Sub-Committees

The following are Chairmen of the ICAR Sub-Committees:

- Ole Klejs Hansen - Denmark (Animal Identification)
- Reinhardt Reents - Germany(Interbull)
- Olivier Leray - France (Milk Analysis)
- Uffe Lauritsen - Denmark (Recording Devices)

Working Groups

The following are Chairmen of the ICAR Working Groups:

- Marco Antonini - Italy (Animal Fibre)
- Laurent Journaux - France (Artificial Insemination & Relevant Technologies)
- Erik Rehben - France (Animal Recording Data)
- Japie van der Westhuizen - South Africa (Beef Performance)
- Gerben De Jong - The Netherlands (Conformation Recording)
- Paolo Ajmone Marsan - Italy (Genetic Analysis)
- Erling Strandberg - Sweden (Functional Traits)
- Brian Wickham - New Zealand (Interbeef)

- Filippo Miglior - Italy (Lactation calculation methods)
- Deago Kompan - Slovenia (Milk Recording in Goats)
- Jean Michel Astruc - France (Milk Recording in Sheep)
- Dick Koorn - the Netherlands (Parentage Recording)

Task Forces

The following are Chairmen of the ICAR Task Forces:

- Badi Besbes - Tunisia (Developing Countries)
- Filippo Miglior - Italy (Milk Recording Practices)
- Milena Kovac - Slovenia (Pig recording)



Fireworks closing the ICAR Session at Niagara Falls

SECRETARIAT'S CONTACTS

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