
Foreword

There is an increasing interest worldwide in animal identification and recording (I&R) systems including developed countries, countries in transition and developing countries. The reasons for this interest are varied. Traditionally I&R systems were mostly developed as an essential element in breed improvement programmes and have been fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of livestock breeding programs. More recently, the advent of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and the recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF) in Europe has led the importing countries to demand complete traceability of all animals and products of animals they import. The parties of this seminar with geographic focus on the Russian Federation and the CIS countries were convinced that in these countries appropriate systems to trace back the origin of animals and the food of animal origin are the natural and necessary entry point to food safety and security as well as contribution to sustainable livestock development. It was known that many of these countries are in the process of joining the World Trade Organization and have great potential for livestock development and to become net exporters of animals and animal food products in the international market. For these purposes the countries need to prepare their institutions to meet the related challenges and requirements. The main themes of the seminar were to understand the 'state of art' situation in existing policies and institutions and with the inputs of the sponsoring parties to discuss and recommend a 'road map' for the required changes.

Whatever the reason for wanting to introduce I&R schemes, the basic prerequisites remain the same. These are a) a system that is practical and meets its expectations, b) is supported by an appropriate policy and legal framework of a country as well as by the producers and trade, and c) is sustainable and self-supporting.

It is this increasing interest to develop and lay sustainable foundation for I&R systems, that resulted in FAO and ICAR together with OIE and the Government of Finland collaborating to put on a seminar at the 35th ICAR Session, held in Kuopio, Finland, in June 2006 entitled "*Development of animal identification and recording systems for veterinary surveillance and livestock development in countries of Eastern Europe*". The seminar provided an overview of the role played by the ICAR Sub-Committee Animal Identification and its use by ICAR members. The FAO paper on veterinary surveillance and livestock development issues

in Eastern Europe stressed the priority of I&R for animal health, particularly surveillance and control of BSE, FMD and CSF in the Region, and the need for an international standards. Further papers were presented by the European Commission on EU legislation, and by OIE on OIE activities and standards relating to I&R and traceability. Besides the emphasis on the global issues also the importance of local issues like brucellosis and tuberculosis control were brought up. Most of the I&R systems reported by countries were compared with the EU requirements. The Russian representative noted that there was no national system of identification and tracing in the country, despite a mandatory legislative system. It was clear that there was not 100 percent I&R in any of the countries and technical assistance will be required.

A harmonized system and regional collaboration was accepted desirable but this had not yet been achieved as some countries had agreed but others refused regional cooperation. There was also variation in the transparency of the systems from personal data protection to an open system.

Throughout the seminar, there was an excellent level of debate and discussion from the floor which resulted in an agreed and manageable set of conclusions to be followed by ICAR and FAO.

Personally, and on behalf of FAO Rome and the FAO Sub-Regional Office of Budapest, I would like to thank the ICAR Secretariat for the efficient handling of the logistics and also for the timely preparation of these proceedings and the Finnish organizing committee who ensured that the workshop ran smoothly. And, finally, to all those participants who came to the seminar and whose contribution made it such a success.

Thank you.

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