
Report of the ICAR Task Force for Developing Countries

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This Task Force was launched in March 2008. Its overall objective is to assist developing countries in planning and implementing sound and sustainable animal Identification and Recording (I&R) systems which will contribute to improving productivity of the livestock sector and, consequently, enhancing food security and rural development. More specifically, its aim is to draw lessons learnt from past and current experiences in implementing animal identification, traceability and recording systems and use them for developing a decision-support tool for implementing animal I&R systems for developing countries, based on existing ICAR and FAO standards and guidelines.

As this Task Force is neither species nor trait specific, it will interact with other ICAR task forces, working groups and sub-committees, as needed.

A series of e-mail exchanges were conducted from March to May 2008. After self-introduction by the members, the terms of reference of the task force were introduced and discussed. Then, a questionnaire was sent to all members to report about their national programs. The answers were compiled by Inamura Mitsuhiro (FAO) in a spreadsheet to be validated and discussed during the physical meeting which took place from 26 to 29 May 2008 at the FAO Sub-regional office in Budapest. We are grateful to Elena Couto (ICAR) for organizing the travels and to Andriy Rostanlyy (FAO-SEUR) for helping with the logistics related to our stay and meeting. The contribution of Ole Hansen, Chairman of the ICAR Subcommittee on Animal Identification, was very much appreciated.

The first day was dedicated to reviewing animal identification, traceability and performance recording systems in the TF members' countries. In order to facilitate the comparison between the different 'case studies', the members were asked to follow the sequence of the questionnaire for their presentation. An extensive discussion about the roles of the different stakeholders and the indicators of sustainability followed.

Objectives

Activities

Main outcomes of the meeting

Table 1. Members of the ICAR Task Force for Developing Countries.

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The second day was dedicated to revisiting the proceedings of previous joint ICAR/FAO workshops on animal identification, traceability and recording in developing countries. Each member summarized the outcomes, lessons and recommendations of the workshop assigned to him/her prior to the meeting. The discussion which followed tried to answer the following questions: what has changed since the initiation of these workshops (in the last decade)? Can we draw a typical profile/situation by region (and by species)? How to make the best use of this information? The group was cautious that this exercise should not be a rewrite of what is already there.

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to drafting the outlines of a background paper which will be used as a road map for the TF in preparing the decision support-tool for implementing animal I&R systems in developing countries. The paper starts with a preamble explaining why this group was set up. Acknowledging that there are different definitions for certain terms like identification, recording or registration, it gives the TF's definitions for these terms. The following sections describe the global context and the driving forces for implementing I&R systems in developing countries, and review the stage of development by region (Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe) and purpose (Ownership, Traceability, Performance recording). Then, based on the outcomes of this survey, the reasons of failures and the requirements for success are compiled and a series of recommendations is suggested. The last section of the paper presents the framework of the decision support-tool for implementing animal I&R systems in developing countries.

The outcomes of the 1st TF-DC meeting were presented at the FAO regional workshop on "Development of animal identification and recording systems for veterinary surveillance and livestock development in countries of Central and Eastern Europe" which took place at the same venue from 29 to 30 of May 2008.