
Introduction

Establishing a reliable animal identification (AI) system is of great importance in the animal production sector since it provides the basis for estimating the genetic value of each animal, tracking its genetic history (pedigree), knowing its sanitary status and other basic information that can be used for research and husbandry.

This workshop on animal identification and recording systems for traceability and livestock development in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had two main objectives:

1. To understand the current situation and the needs for developing animal identification and traceability (AIT) systems in Latin America through the use of review papers, case studies and countries' experiences
2. Based on the European and Latin American experiences and the accumulated knowledge, draw the lessons from the successes and failures, and make recommendations for a sustainable animal AIT system in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Workshop was organized by Dr Badi Besbes, Animal Production Officer, FAO, with the support of Elena Couto from ICAR, Tito Diaz and Daniel Urrea from the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Ariel Londinsky from FEPALE.

The Workshop was divided into six Sessions in order to debate the various aims, aspects and needs related to AIT. The conclusions were treated at a global level and a separate facilitator/rapporteur for each Session allowed to summarize the discussions that followed the presentations. A discussion paper completed the manuscripts provided by the speakers of each session .

This by-and-large unique seminal and case study documentation coupled with the knowledge and experience of participants facilitated substantial and quite distinctive interactions among participants.

The Workshop focused on the strategic development of national standards, legal framework and technical tools for a correct management of a recording system. In particular, the experiences from Europe were analyzed to guide future developments in Latin America.

Very important advances in AIT have been realized in Latin America. Different approaches have been developed to meet the specific needs of each country both at sanitary and production levels. These developments are impressive in those countries that export beef and other animal products to overseas markets such as the one in European Union.

This Workshop contributes to the preparation of the FAO guidelines on animal identification, traceability and performance recording, which aim to support developing countries in planning, preparing and implementing such systems .

The Workshop was attended by 120 participants from 27 countries, beside ICAR and FAO staff. They were scientists, research workers, developers and practitioners in the field of animal production.

The Editors