
Introduction

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Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) in transition are making efforts to reorganise milk recording (MR) activities in order to meet international requirements for the recording and registration of animals as well as to serve the expansive needs of farmers. Twelve CEE countries are members of the International Committee of Animal Recording (ICAR); most of them joined within the last two to three years and more countries have applied to join. All countries have to follow ICAR Rules and Regulations in order to be in harmony with international standards. For most of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), this means changes in recording routines as well as in national laws.

Dairy farmers in CEE are facing a new situation, besides improvement of dairy cattle, the MR service should support higher financial gains in herd management and improve the quality of the product. Furthermore, contrary to the past when the State fully covered the cost of the MR service, farmers must now contribute partially and their share will be proportionally increased each year. The decrease in average herd size together with the reduction in the total animal numbers, often places the MR organisations in CEECs in an oppressive economic situation.

The new European Union (EU) veterinary regulation for identification and registration (IR) of cattle and small ruminants, was introduced in 1997 and became valid for EU members as of 01.01.98. While most of the CEE countries are either to become members of the EU or trade with the EU, attempts are made to adjust national law towards EU regulations along with putting them into practice. IR practice is to be implemented as part of the Veterinary Diagnosis and Control System and will no longer be seen entirely as a part of the performance recording and breeding work. However, previously the Milk Recording Organisation was seen as the only institution to provide the IR service for farmers and breeders. The know-how and technical input on Animal ID and Herd Registration should now be incorporated with the intention of bringing the existing animal breeding recording system and database into the new national animal identification scheme required for entry to the EU.

1.0 Background

2.0 Purpose of the Workshop

- to present (conclude) the current status of milk recording, cattle identification and registration in ICAR member and non-member countries in Central and Eastern Europe;
- to introduce international standards as well as their worthy practice of implementation for milk recording, cattle identification and registration in CEE countries;
- to seek advice and recommendations in regard to the altered experiences in reorganising the MR and IR activities;
- to discuss future cooperation with ICAR.