Cattle identification and milk recording in Albania

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The Government of Albania is in the process of reorganising all the technical ministries for the alignment and approximation of the national legislation to EU Directives.

The new strategy of the Veterinary Services is based on a step by step action to adapt its activities to the European Directives and Standards. The animal identification and farm registration system, starting from bovine, is a programme included in this new strategy.

This activity is in a phase of study supported by technical assistance and equipment of an Italian project, “Integrated Livestock Programme”, with the purpose of implementing the system in a pilot area of the country within 1999. A PHARE programme should reinforce this action, starting in 1999, to complete the programme in all regions.

For the above reasons, we can only indicate in the following chapters, the strategy that will probably be adopted in the next months after the final approval of the Government, Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) and EU Commission.

No system of animal identification exists in Albania; maybe a few old cattle (9 years old), might still have ear tags of old activity carried out in State farms before the political change. Some animals (about 1 500 cattle) have been identified for animal health control (1996 FMD outbreaks); it has been suggested to remove these tags. The programme of animal movement control, information system and communication facilities must be reinforced in this phase.
Cattle Identification and Milk Recording in CEEC

Albania is arranged into twelve regions, thirty-six districts, 358 communities and 3,013 villages of which all administrative organisms have been codified in a numeric system according to the National Statistic Institute (INSTAT). Regions, districts and villages are codified at national level. National veterinary staff is present in all the districts covering almost 75% of the communities and activity in the villages is carried out by private vets authorised by the official of the districts.

For the whole institutional activity, the national staff is composed of 400 national vets and 800 authorised private vets.

Albania bovine population 840,000 head (1996) and the average of head/farm is very low, 2.1; for this reason and considering that animals are fed in commune areas, it could be convenient to indicate the village and not the farm, as the epidemiological unit. Table 1 summarises the global situation for the implementation of the “animal identification and farm registration system”.

Table 1. The global situation for the implementation of the “animal identification and farm registration system”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. villages</th>
<th>No. Bovine</th>
<th>Bovine/village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berat</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>53,600</td>
<td>217.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diber</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>67,700</td>
<td>235.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrës</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>53,500</td>
<td>500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbasan</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>107,800</td>
<td>273.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fier</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>127,000</td>
<td>450.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjirokaşër</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>141.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korçë</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>91,100</td>
<td>260.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kukës</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>49,900</td>
<td>259.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lezhë</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>44,800</td>
<td>254.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shkodër</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>85,400</td>
<td>308.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirana</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>73,800</td>
<td>335.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlore</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>46,400</td>
<td>225.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,013</td>
<td>840,000</td>
<td>278.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Albania no specific legislation exists which obliges the farmers to identify animals. A law, following the guidelines described in the following principal EU Directives and the Italian regulations, has been drafted by the Veterinary Service:

- CE Directive of the Council no. 102/92;
- Italian DPR no. 317, 30 April 1996;
- CE Regulation no. 820/97, 21 April 1997;
- CE Regulation no. 2628/97 of the Commission, 29 December 1997;
- CE Regulation no. 2629/97 of the Commission, 29 December 1997;
- CE Regulation no. 2630/97 of the Commission, 29 December 1997;
- CE Regulation no. 494/98 of the Commission, 27 February 1998;

The proposal will be approved by the Government and then the programme will be implemented in a pilot area.

The list of persons and structures involved in the programme and their responsibility:

- farm manager;
- public or authorised field veterinary;
- veterinary of the community;
- veterinary service of the abattoirs or slaughtering areas;
- veterinary service in the districts;
- I.K.V., Instituti Kerkimeve Veterinare, as a national centre for epidemiology;
- veterinary service in the MAF.

- will record any animal movement in/out of the farm and will fill the animal passport for transport;
- will inform, on a specific form, the veterinary service of the community for any head purchased;
- will inform, on a specific form, the veterinary service of the community for any head sold;
- will ask the code of the farm to the veterinary service of the community;
- will be responsible for the farm animal database, recording any animal movement.

- responsible for the management of the eartags according to the needs of the community in which he/she is operating;
- responsible to book the animals (calves or purchased in third countries) with eartags, two per head, within thirty (30) days from birth and, anyhow, before any movement;
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- will complete all documentation, including passport, necessary for the registration of new animals and submit all the forms to the community veterinary service of the working area, informing of any variation;
- will inform the community veterinary service at the end of the farm activity.

Veterinary of the community

- will record any activity regarding the eartag management and will survey the programme in the working area;
- will send the form indicating the needs on eartags to the district;
- is responsible for supplying the eartags to the field veterinary, recording the activity;
- every fifteen (15) days, will send the documentation of the field veterinary to the district;
- is responsible for copying the animal’s passport in the case of it being missing;
- every fifteen (15) days, will send the documentation of animal movement to the district;
- every fifteen (15) days, will send the documentation of animal identification (passport) received by the abattoirs or slaughtering areas;
- is responsible to assign the code to new farms;
- is charged to send any farm and animal variation to the district (every month).

Veterinary service of the abattoirs or slaughtering areas

- they will send the needs on eartags to the MAF;
- they are responsible for updating of the farm database in their area;
- they will receive from the communities, the documentation and will update data regarding animal identification and farm registration;
- periodically they will inform (computer diskette) IKV about any variation regarding farms and animals, using information flux and protocols established;
- they will prepare the information system with MAF;
- they are responsible for managing all information regarding the system in the area.

Veterinary service in the districts

- they will create and survey the central system;
- they will define the total information system together with MAF;
- they will ensure training and service to all the other components of the programme;
- they will produce and publish reports for MAF and the MAF authorised institutions.

I.K.V.
they will order the ear tags;
- they will manage and direct the global system, ensuring the information throughout the country;
- they will ensure communication with the other national institutions to harmonise the different information systems.

- size of the population of bovine animals: 840,000;
- number of dairy cows: 470,000;
- productivity of the dairy cows (official statistics): 1870 kg/cow/year;
- breeds: Holstein-Friesian and Jersey (about 90% of the total cattle population); the other 10% are breeds like Tarantaise (Tarine breed imported from France), Oberiental, Simmental, etc.

There are no beef breeds in Albania (the number of Simmental, Charolaise is not significant).

With the contribution of the Italian project, Albania is 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. In this regard we are accommodating ICAR Rules and Regulations to be in harmony with the international standards (changes in the recording routines as well as in the national laws).

The identification and registration (IR) system is the leading basic registration system for all other activities (herd book registration, AI information, milk recording, etc.). Performance recording and herd registration should now be incorporated as a part of the IR service with the objective of bringing the existing animal breeding recording system and database into the new national animal identification scheme required for entry to the EU.

For the time being, the MR Service exists only for a small population of Tarine breed (about 1,000 cows, pure-breed or crossbreed) in the district of Korca, South Albania. The MR service for this small population is provided by a research centre (State owned) with support from a French project.

All MR services in Albania are to be established and will be provided by twelve regional centres (State owned) as mentioned in the paper. We think that the decrease in herd size per farm would bring some organisational and (particularly) financial problems. That is why we have planned to cover the MR service from the State budget and institutions during a first phase. However, our objective is to encourage and support farmer-owned organisations to take over this service. We will begin with some State regional centres where IR systems and MR services should be integrated.
Milk recording (MR) services will be provided by local offices in regional centres (twelve regional centres). From two to four districts will be covered by each regional centre (local service in each of thirty-six districts in Albania). On a central level, all activities should be coordinated by the Livestock Institution (IKZ) and Livestock Department in the MAF. The decrease in herd size (average two cattle per farm) would place the MR service in organisational and economical difficulties. Apart from assisting State institutions for better organisation of the service, the objective of the Italian project is to support farmers’ associations in order that farmers can cover the increased part of the cost of the service. There is a great need to incorporate the needs of the farmers, breeders, veterinary service as well as the State.

Future cooperation with ICAR is needed to identify the most suitable practice of implementation for MR and IR systems in Albanian conditions.