
Preface

In its half century long history, ICAR has been confronted with various problems and challenges stemming from changes in the environment in which its members operate. ICAR member organizations from Central and Eastern Europe are going through the process of transition and adaptation to market economy conditions. Changes in the animal production sector, such as the emergence of new farm structures, privatization of production assets, liberalization of foreign trade and changes in the role of state in national economy have imposed a need not only for adaptation but, in many cases, for radical transformation of methods of work, organizational forms, financing as well. The process started some ten years ago, and still there are many things to be done in order to make the work of our members more efficient and competitive. Experiences gained by West European organizations and services can be of a great help to our members from CEE countries in developing their own models and approaches in order to meet actual and future needs of their clients.

In addition to specific problems relevant to animal recording, national recording services and organizations in CEE countries are confronted with the new requirements regarding animal identification. However, in this field they are in almost the same position like their West European colleagues: there is a general need to avoid duplication of efforts (and costs) and to introduce systems of life-time identification which would be equally compatible with breeding, management and health purposes.

Bearing in mind the fact that animal recording represents a base of development of livestock production at national and farm levels, any improvement in quality and efficiency of recording is directly reflected in the efficiency of the sector as a whole. By supporting its members to find their place in the new environment, one can say, not without satisfaction and pride, that ICAR has played an important role in restructuring the animal production sector in CEE countries. Results attained are mainly due to the universality of ICAR as a world-wide organization. In these unprecedented circumstances, ICAR's guidelines and recommendations have proved to be viable and universally applicable ensuring a satisfactory degree of uniformity and a maximum of flexibility in the choice of methods.

This Round Table Workshop on animal identification and milk recording in Central and Eastern European countries, organized in cooperation with FAO, ICAR, EAAP and the Polish Animal Breeding Service, in addition to fulfilling its basic objectives – exchange of experience and improved cooperation among ICAR members – has also contributed to the better knowledge of problems and situations in the countries concerned. Country papers presented in this publication demonstrate that ICAR member organizations in CEE countries are endowed with high technical capabilities, skills and knowledge but that they, in some cases, lack the most up-to-date instruments. However, the enthusiasm and dedication of our colleagues from CEE countries, their innovative spirit and desire to learn represent a guarantee for their further successes. ICAR, as their organization, shall always be at their disposal to help, to advise and also to learn from them.



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