
Welcome address to the FAO/ICAR-Seminar

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) I welcome you to this Seminar on the development of successful animal recording systems for transition and developing countries.

I would like to thank very much the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in particular, Dr. Samuel Jutzi and Dr. Juhani Maki-Hokkonen of the Animal Production and Health Division (AGA), for their support.

I thank the local organizers in particular Dr. Ulrich Witschi, Dr. Christoph Böhnner, Dr. Hans Rätzer and Mr. Fritz Schneider, for the very good work they have done.

ICAR is today the worldwide organization for the standardization of animal recording and productivity evaluation. Its aim is to promote improvement of farm animal recording and evaluation through the formulation of definitions and standards for the measurement of traits of economic importance.

ICAR's mission is to provide benefits to its member organizations through actions that they cannot do efficiently themselves:

- providing information and services which help member organizations to develop, operate and manage their business;
- providing information and services which promote benefits of recording and evaluation, thereby increasing the demand for the services provided by ICAR member organizations;
- providing guidelines and standards which facilitate the provision of services and the exchange of information by member organizations both nationally and internationally; and
- providing a body through which member organizations can work together to achieve shared objectives.

The present structure of ICAR as a registered non-profit INGO provides for full participation of its members in developing - among other things - guidelines and recommendations on the basis of the sound scientific evidence. Guidelines represent a minimum of the requirements set up to ensure a satisfactory degree of uniformity of recording among member countries and a maximum flexibility in the choice of methods.

The signing of the International Agreement is the main commitment of any member when joining the organisation. Actually ICAR has 60 member organisations in 49 countries.

The success of ICAR's activity depends on the work of its 3 Sub-Committees, its 12 Working Groups and Task Force.

During the last years, ICAR has organised the following five international workshops with the active support of the FAO and EAAP:

- in Anand (India) in October 1997 on animal recording for smallholders in developing countries;
- in Warsaw (Poland) in August 1998 on cattle identification and milk recording in Central and Eastern European Countries;
- in Bella (Italy) in September 1999 on developing breeding strategies for lower input animal production environments;
- in Bled (Slovenia) in May 2000 on the role of breeders' organisations and the state in animal identification and recording in CEE countries; and
- in Bled (Slovenia) in May 2000 on animal recording for improved breeding and management strategies for buffaloes.

This seminar will offer you the possibility

- to discuss cases of successful adaptation or implementation of animal recording in conditions of economic transition or dynamic structural change;
- to get insight view of the issues of success in institutional, structural and management changes and transitions experienced in animal recording involving market oriented animal production systems at various levels of intensity;
- to evaluate the needs for research and development in livestock recording systems as well as training need for decision makers and stakeholders in transition and developing countries;

- to make recommendations to ICAR and FAO to address the issues which are in their sphere of influence; and
- to exchange experiences among the participants.

I am pleased that several representatives of non-member countries participated in this ICAR Session thus allowing the animal production experts to have the opportunity to verify ICAR purposes and actions. ICAR shall always be available to all countries to help, advise and to learn from them.

Maybe in the next years, some of these non-member countries will join ICAR and share common objectives with the other organisations.

I wish you a very interesting seminar, a successful ICAR Session and a pleasant stay in Switzerland.



Joseph Crettenand
President of ICAR