

# Interbeef Meeting – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011

## Bourg-en-Bresse, France

Minutes of Meeting:

- 1) **Apologies:** Japie Van der Westhuizen, Pavel Bucek, Anders Fogh, Hans Graser.
- 2) **Attending:** Thierry Pabiou, Kirsty Moore, Florence Phocas, Laurent Griffon, Ben Grayling, Brian Wickham, Mauro Fioretti, Clara Diaz, Lubos Vostry, Hana Vostry, Josef Kucera, Jan-Ake Eriksson, Joao Durr.

### 3) Country Reports

Reports were presented for France (Laurent Griffon), Ireland (Thierry Pabiou), UK (Kirsty Moore), Scandinavia (Jan-Ake Eriksson), Italy (Mauro Fioretti), Czech Republic (Lubos Vostry), Spain (Clara Diaz), and South Africa (Ben Grayling). Copies of presentations are to be made available on website subject to necessary approvals and edits. Some of the common themes arising from these presentations included:

- Increased use of slaughter data from commercial and cross-bred animals.
- Genomics research and need for international collaboration to achieve larger training populations.
- Several organisations involved in providing genetic evaluations in some countries with division mainly being on breed.
- More frequent evaluations, more traits and increasing emphasis on female fertility traits.

There was agreement that these country reports were a particularly valuable aspect of the meeting.

### 4) Genetic Evaluations

- a) Chairperson's Report: This report covered the conclusions from recent meetings in Australia, New Zealand and USA. These included:
  - i) Need to work directly with Breed Assns in each country as these organisations are directly responsible for much of beef performance recording in many countries.
  - ii) North America, South American & Oceania include a large part of the world-wide performance recording, genetic evaluation and beef cattle breeding research. It is most important that ICAR beef activities are well linked with similar activities in these regions.
  - iii) The BIF (Beef Improvement Federation) annual meetings are the largest forum world-wide for sharing of practical and technical information on beef performance recording and genetic evaluations.
  - iv) There are many cattle breeds and strains that are being selected specifically for their ability to perform in hotter and more humid production systems that are not currently a focus of ICAR activities.
  - v) There is a lot of research work on the use of genomics in beef cattle breeding. This has resulted in the availability of genomically enhanced breeding values in a small number of breeds and countries.
- b) Funding – Joao Durr presented the latest financial position for the Interbeef funded work being undertaken by SLU. The report shows a positive balance of €19,385 at the end of

2010. There has been no expenditure since then pending the finalisation of the Agreement to continue work for Interbeef.

- c) Interbeef Agreement – Draft 5 was discussed. This draft includes amendments resulting from consultations over the last few months. A number of key issues were discussed.
  - d) Agreement on Future Actions. It was agreed that:
    - i) Draft 5 of Agreement is acceptable to Service Users.
    - ii) Draft Project Plan has a good structure (Service vs Research) and its content reflect the desires of potential service users. Timetable of delivery depends on availability of resources especially funding for SLU and potential research partners.
    - iii) Draft Budget of €100k/yr for three years is agreed. SLU to provide detailed budget separating out service from research costs.
    - iv) Issues between ICAR and SLU in relation to the agreement need to be resolved as a priority. WG want to have SLU provide services as identified in the Agreement & Project Plan.
    - v) Relationship with BIF – recommendation to ICAR that it explores options for closer collaboration with BIF for mutual benefit.
- 5) Guidelines & Standards
- a) BIF Guidelines & link with ICAR Guideline. It was agreed that this should be considered in the discussions with BIF relating to closer collaboration with ICAR.
  - b) Revision of Guidelines relating to animal sales. **Agreed:** Frank to draft revision of this section of the guidelines, taking into account the BIF Guidelines dealing with “Merchandising for seedstock producers”. WG to consider the revision and make a recommendation to ICAR Board in due course.
  - c) New Guideline dealing with “...optical electronic system to estimate chest girth for live weight estimation”. Presentation by Mauro Fioretti based on circulated paper. **Agreed:** should be added to guidelines with calibration evidence and encourage further work to develop other measures (e.g. scrotal circumference). Mauro to provide draft guidelines for consideration by WG and recommendation to ICAR.
- 6) **Surveys** – After discussion it was agreed to recommend that general statistics on beef breeding and performance recording be implemented in collaboration with the ICAR secretariat using the existing framework for dairy cattle.
- 7) **Genomics** – After discussion it was agreed that ICAR should provide guidelines for genomic evaluations for all species covered by its activities. This should be done with a view to ensuring final users of genomic information can make well-informed decisions on its use. There is a risk of farmers losing confidence in the technology if they do not have access to such information from a reliable source.
- 8) **Future Meetings**
- a) Detailed Planning Workshop will be held when the Agreement has been signed. BW & JD to action.
  - b) ICAR 2012 – Cork. Time for WG meeting to be planned for Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012. BW to action.
  - c) BIF 2012. When date and venue is known members of the WG will be notified with a view to ensuring representation of Interbeef WG at the meeting.

- d) South America. ICAR/FAO meeting being held in December. Joao will attend and present on behalf of Interbeef. It was agreed that it is important to make contacts and develop relationships.
- e) Uruguay contact – joint evaluation of several countries in S America – looking to involve Interbeef framework. JD to keep WG informed of progress.
- f) Joao Durr will attend Brazilian Soc of Animal Science meeting later in 2011.

The meeting concluded at 12:30 on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011.

Minutes draft 1 – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011