

INTERBEEF Working Group Meeting

21st November 2013.

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1. Opening remarks

Brian Wickham (BW) welcomed everybody to the meeting and expressed appreciation for organisation and hospitality provided by the Czech hosts.

Pavel Bucek (PB) welcomed all participants to Prague and hope they enjoyed the tour and dinner yesterday evening.

Plans to complete agenda by 4pm.

2. Agenda

The draft agenda, dated 19th November was accepted.

3. Last Meeting

3.1. Minutes

Minutes of the Aarhus meeting were accepted as true and accurate. Minutes are available on the ICAR website under the Interbeef section.

3.2. Matters Arising

Two items to be dealt with from Aarhus meeting:

- 1) Acceptance of new service user – Germany.
- 2) Logo protection now in place.

4. Technical Committee Report

Joao Durr (JD) gave a presentation of the Agenda from Aarhus (copy on web page for the meeting). Main items are on slides given but included the AWW variance components and recommendations, the September routine AWW run, Publication rules and the Calving pilot study.

5. Workplan

5.1. Service – Feedback from Current Evaluation Run and Publication Rules

JD: Presented a summary of the September 2013 AWW routine run (copy available on web page for the meeting).

Thomas Schmidt (TS): Queried the differences between publication rules 2 and 3. There was agreement that the rules were correct and different but that the wording was poor and JD agreed to revise the wording.

JD: Presented some slides regarding the publishable animals in each country and the influence of foreign country animals on those lists.

BW: Remarked that these slides are very interesting and could be used to sell the Interbeef story in the respective countries.

Eric Venot (EV): Gave a presentation on analysis carried out comparing the new AWW results against the official French weaning weight evaluation (presentation and written report available on web page for the meeting). This was a comprehensive analysis and it also raised some outstanding issues to be resolved including:

- 3) The French evaluation includes data from other countries such as Spain, The Netherlands and Italy. This data is not submitted to the Interbeef database. A solution to this needs to be found.
- 4) A possible contemporary group problem was raised by Eric in relation to the Czech data. Zdenka Vesela (ZV) responded that the contemporary groups were ok.
- 5) EV noticed an error in the Limousine covariance matrix for the maternal genetic effect.

- 6) In the Limousine evaluation Eric questioned the low genetic correlations between the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark and Finland.
- 7) In the Charolais evaluation Eric questioned the low correlation between the Czech Republic and France.
- 8) EV raised the issue of non-verified animals who have been flagged as French animals in other countries but whom France have not as yet verified as being French. EV suggested recoding these animals to a new default country called ITB. JD commented that there was a big difference between Invalid and Non verified animals. It was agreed that the Technical working group would make a decision on these animals.
- 9) EV indicated that based on correlations and scale comparisons the new run was in much better agreement with the French evaluation compared to the previous run.
- 10) EV also indicated that the provision of supplementary information regarding the number of progeny from each country for bulls in the Interbeef evaluation would be very beneficial.
- 11) A list of the numbers of publishable animals in each country would also be useful.

BW indicated that it was very beneficial to see the French results.

JD indicated that all the suggestions from France to improve the data returned from the ITB centre were good suggestions. He suggested the process in the dairy evaluation where the pre-release allows ITB to receive feedback ahead of the official release and this mechanism needs to be established for Interbeef.

BW: In the context of preparation for meetings it would be beneficial for participants to prepare and submit presentations and feedback ahead of the meeting.

TP: Reporting on the comparison between the latest ITB run and the Irish evaluation. Irish reliabilities were higher due to crossbred data and correlated trait information not in the ITB evaluations.

PB: Correlations with the Czech evaluation were circa 0.8. Expressed concern regarding the publishing criteria being too strict.

PB: I would like to add to my comments: the situation is better than in the previous run and we found improvement. There are still some points for clarification and open questions concerning the correlation among countries (CR and France, CR and Finland), for example, and variance components.

Emma Carlen (EC): Reporting for Sweden. Indicated the new run was in much better agreement with Swedish ebvs compared to previous run. Copy of EC written report on website.

UK, Finland and Denmark had no comments on the results of the latest run to report.

BW: TP presentation on variance components ahead of feedback.

5.2. Variance Component Estimation – Update on Work Completed Since August TC Meeting in Nantes

TP: Gave an overview of the VCE for the Charolais AWW (copy on web page for the meeting). He apologised for the error in the Limousine covariance matrix for the maternal genetic effect and has sent on a new matrix to the ITB centre. Recommendations implemented from the previous meeting included: changes to the matrix bending process, investigation of

3x3 analyses with France as the link country and pruning of the pedigree. The incorporation of pedigree groups for each country was not implemented this time.

Clara Diaz (CD): Recommended looking at the ratios of the variances from the different models to determine effect of including the maternal component.

BW: There were data restriction issues (low levels of data) around establishing genetic correlations between different countries.

TS: Polled genetics may have an effect on the Charolais analysis where polled genetics have been used a lot in Scandinavian countries but not to the same extent elsewhere.

EV: A recommendation for Thierry to use a 2 digit genetic correlation and a 3 digit standard error in future instead of the 3 digit correlation for reporting purposes.

CD: A possible reason for the difficulties in achieving plausible genetic correlations between Spain and other countries may be due to the depth of pedigree available for the Spanish animals. TP will investigate this.

JD: ITB would perform a new Limousine evaluation run with the new matrix once the dairy run is finished (possibly next week).

5.3. New Service Users

New countries were asked for their current situation.

Tony Aufdermauer (TA) Switzerland indicated that he was having some problems with the uploading process regarding some python scripts. TP was to send on some code and provide assistance.

Friedrick Rheinart - VIT Germany (FR): Germany are new participants and are going to speed up data provision.

Japie Van der WestHuizen - Studbook SA (JvW): Working hard to get Charolais included. No feedback has been received from Latvia. BW to contact them for updated information.

BW: New countries should use JD's and EV's slides to help sell the Interbeef story in their own countries.

5.4. Official or Not-official

BW: Felt there was a general consensus that people were happier with the new results and proposed that these results be made official pending the new run for Limousine next week.

EV: No new French data has been submitted for 2013. Hence full publication in France will be held until a new data call and evaluation has been completed. This run should be used for consultation for the industry ahead of the new run.

BW: Summarised the plan for the next period as:

- 1) **Proceed with making the results of the planned re-run for Limousin, and any re-run needed for Charolais based on investigations of feedback provided during the meeting, as official for the purpose of Service Users discussing the results with their respective industries. The goal is to have these results in early December.**
- 2) **Conduct a call for new data, and run a full re-estimation of variance components and genetic evaluations for Limousin, and Charolais adjusted weaning weights including the new countries who are ready. Provide pre-release evaluations to**

Service Users and after a defined period for feedback proceed to provision of official evaluations that Service Users will “publish” to their respective breeding industries and farmers. The goal is to have these evaluations available early (January / February) in 2014.

Kaisa Sirkko (KS), Finland (through webex) had a question regarding the publishable file (605 file) which countries sent to Interbeef.

Laurent Griffon (LG): Discussion on publication of cow proofs. France sent no cows in the 605 file yet they received cows back in the publishable file. These looked like cows with >25 embryo transfer calves.

BW: Each country has decision on what to publish regarding own animals.

TS: Proposal to only publish bulls for the moment.

After discussion it was agreed to proceed on the basis of this plan (1 and 2 above). ITBC (JD) to liaise with the WG Chairperson (BW) on details of the timetable.

5.5. Research Report – Calving Traits

ZV gave a progress report (copy on website) for the work being conducted by the Czech group. Current focus is variance component estimation. Input and contributions from the ICBF team was acknowledged. The work is expected to be completed by May 2014.

5.6. Research Report – ICBF Use of Cross-bred Data

TP: Research update from ICBF on Adjusted weaning weight. Next phase involves the inclusion of crossbred data from Ireland into the parameter estimation. Inclusion of crossbreds will necessitate the calculation of heterosis and recombination and breed groups in the pedigree file. ICBF have worked with Interbull to come up with a solution which involves modifying the ITB pedigree file to allow the calculation of the heterosis and recombination and create breed groups. This will involve the creation of FAKE/Phantom/Dummy parents for crossbred founder animals. TP has tested this and found that it should work.

JD: Presented the plan for dealing with accounting for cross breeding in the pedigree file by the introduction of FAKE parents where foundation parents of other breeds were unknown but their breed was known (copy proposal on website for the meeting).

It was agreed that the proposal should proceed with further research and evaluation involving ICBF and ITBC.

5.7. Research Report – SRUC Carcass Traits

Kirsty Moore SRUC (KM): Carcass trait proposal (copy on website for meeting). Initial work will involve a survey regarding what people are recording, what traits etc. This survey should go out in December. Will report back to next meeting (May 2014, in Berlin).

JD: Recommended KM to use the Interbull survey process as it worked well for the genetic parameter survey carried out earlier in the year. KM agreed that this would be best.

5.8. Research Report – Female Fertility

BW: Update on the status of female fertility research. CD had been given responsibility for this research but access to funding and time has been problematic. Friedrich Reinhardt (FR) representing VIT has agreed to take the lead on this project. He outlined several potential

traits but also stated that it may be best to concentrate on certain traits like calving intervals initially. The traits he listed that could be investigated were:

Age 1st Calving

Calving to 1st service

Non return rate

Conception rate

First to last conception

Days open

EV: Based on French experience fertility traits will take a lot of work.

Ross Evans - ICBF (RE) outlined the importance in Ireland of evaluation calving interval and survival together. The traits have a strong genetic link in both beef and dairy herds.

Jean Francois Hocquette (INRA) (webex): Offered to help in establishing trait definitions around female fertility.

FR will report back on progress to next meeting in Berlin (May 2014).

6. Finances

6.1. Fees 2013

BW: Request in from the Nordic countries of Sweden, Finland and Denmark to be considered as one entity regarding Interbeef fees. This would also mean the 3 countries being treated as a single population/environment for the genetic evaluations.

Funds committed for 2013 total €98,742. **BW to write to Spanish Service User explaining that results from future runs will not be provided until outstanding fees have been addressed. Invoicing for all others to proceed.**

6.2. Data from Other Countries

France wishes to discuss participation in Interbeef with the countries whom they include in the French evaluation. **It was agreed that these discussions should now proceed and that the Chairperson (BW) would develop an extension to the funding model to accommodate these possibilities and report back to the next meeting.**

7. Priorities

New Breeds:

BW has had discussions with the European Simmental/Fleckvieh Association. More than half of the European Simmental/Fleckvieh cattle are already serviced by Interbeef Service Users. They have expressed a definite interest in joining Interbeef as a breed.

A discussion was had around whether Interbeef should take on a new breed or should concentrate on new traits in the existing breeds.

JD: INTERBULL have strong associations with the Simmental on the dairy side so this may help to establish co-operation on the beef side also.

JD: New breeds are in the plan but priority for the research partners must stay focused on the new trait complexes i.e. calving, carcass and female fertility.

FR: The nature of the Limousine and Charolais populations where France are the pivot will not be the case for the Simmental. Germany and Austria have a lot of Simmental data.

KM: Simmental also has a significant population in the UK but they are evaluated by Breedplan who currently are not engaging with INTERBEEF. She highlighted that each individual organisation who contract Breedplan have the power to decide whether they want to get involved with Interbeef or not.

RE: indicated that Simmental is an important breed in Ireland.

TP: Ireland has good recent links with UK regarding Simmental and some historic links with Austria and Germany so it would be important to have the UK Simmental on board.

TS: Looking for a definite decision on the Simmental to take back to his own organisation.

BW: Needs to approach the European and World Simmental/Fleckvie Association to get a more definite agreement.

JD: Need to formulate a work plan regarding the Simmental by sitting down with the interested parties.

PB: Concerning the beef Simmental, the Czech Republic is very interested to participate in Interbeef with beef Simmental. It was approved by Czech Beef Breeders Association. This breed has in the Czech Republic the same traits as Limousine and Charolaise, the same system of performance recording and the same principle of breeding value estimation. I think that it is feasible for beef Simmental. It is a good target for the future.

Concerning the dual purpose Fleckvieh. During our discussion, we should distinguish between beef Simmental and dual purpose Fleckvieh, which is different and there is different situation among traits which are used for genetic evaluation and sometimes these traits have different definition. For example, in the Czech Republic, we have separate genetic evaluation for beef Simmental and dual purpose Fleckvieh. In dual purpose Fleckvieh, one can also find traits which are connected with milk production: milk yield production, somatic cell counts, male and female fertility, calving traits, milkability, longevity and conformation with different traits than in beef cattle. Concerning the meat performance: net daily gain, EUROP classes, meat percentage and the dressing percentage used for genetic evaluation. In case of dual purpose Fleckvieh, the three most important population are in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. There is joint genetic evaluation for these three countries along with other countries with small populations for meat performance, conformation and other traits which are planned for the future. In this case, for dual purpose Fleckvieh (the term used is Simmental) the situation is uncertain and it should be discussed also with local organisations responsible for this dual purpose Fleckvieh.

It was agreed that Interbeef (BW) should now approach the World Simmental / Fleckvieh Association to develop a work plan for the future.

8. Future Meetings

BW: A technical workshop meeting may be arranged after the release of the January/February AWW proof run. BW and JD to decide on this.

Definite 2014 Meetings: Berlin as part of the ICAR/Interbull meeting. On 19th May (pm) for the Technical group and on 20th May (pm) for the Working Group.

Also a consensus that there should be some presentations and scientific material available at the WCGALP in Vancouver in August 2014. Chairperson (BW) and ITBC (JD) to explore

possibility of a presence of Interbeef to promote services. In any case, it was agreed that printed material should be prepared for use at future events to promote the services of Interbeef.

A meeting of the WG will be schedule in 2014 late in the year (Oct/Nov). Chairperson (BW) and ITBC (JD) to explore options which avoid conflicts with other ITBC activities and report back with a proposed meeting date and venue.

TS: proposal for a meeting on 1st week of November.

9. Guidelines

Issues raised over whether guidelines need to be changed or not. It was agreed that the guidelines should be reviewed and BW requested that he be advised the name of a suitable person to conduct a quick review of the existing guidelines and to identify the scope of any review that should be conducted.

2 issues have been raised in previous meetings:

- 1) Sale information displayed
- 2) Adoption of new technology. Laser beam photography for the prediction of liveweight

10. AOB

10.1. Technical Workshop – early 2014

EV: Group is growing. Would be helpful to have presentations from new members on their evaluation systems and structures similar to the Working Group meeting in Paris in 2007. The GE forms on the website also need to be revisited and updated.

JD: ITBC are working on preparing electronic forms for GE details.

EV: Need to revisit duplicates in the pedigree file to help with cross-country connections.

It was agreed that a Technical Workshop would be scheduled to follow the pre-release of evaluations early in 2014 as the basis for collating feedback and agreeing to first official publication. Details of timing, venue and agenda to be developed and communicated by ITBC (JD).

11. Close of Meeting

BW: Huge thanks to Pavel Bucek and his team and the Moravian breeders Association for the exceptional welcome and hospitality

BW: Meeting closed.

12. Meeting Participants

Last Name	First Name	E-mail	Prague Meeting
Aufdermauer	Tony	tony.aufdermauer@mutterkuh.ch	yes
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DRAFT Minutes of Interbeef WG Meeting – Thursday 21st November 2013.
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