



ICAR NEWSLETTER

Focus on New positions, News from SC's WG's and TF, Sousse 34th ICAR Session

1. New Positions

Jean Boyazoglu resigned from the position of member and Secretary of the ICAR Board and was replaced by Andrea Rosati. In view of his nomination for the post of the Secretary General, Mr. Rosati resigned from the post of Vice-President and Chairman of the Sub-committee Meters and Jars. Jarmo Juga was nominated Vice-President for technical affairs.

Uffe Lauritsen was nominated new Chairman of the Sub-Committee of Meters and Jars. As Chairman of a Sub-Committee, Mr. Lauritsen will be member of the ICAR Board.

Paul Miller resigned from the ICAR Board as a representative of North America. Neil Petreny will serve the remaining part of the term. Manfred Hammel will be a member of the Sub-committee Meters and Jars. It was taken note of the resignation of Mr. Ab Groen from the post of the Chairman of the Working Group Functional Traits.

Erling Strandberg ensured his interest in taking up post of the Chairman of the said Working Group. All proposals were submitted and approved by the General Assembly.

2. Administration

Statement of Accounts of ICAR for 2002 shows a positive result of about € 20.000. The total income compared with the 2001 declined by 30% due to new activities charged to SERVICE-ICAR Srl. Expenses decreased by some 30%. Expenditures for the secretarial services remained at the same level, while consultants' costs decreased by 30%. Expenditures for seminars and travel were three times higher compared with 2001 due to the organisation of the seminar in Interlaken, that were covered by FAO. Balance for 2002 showed the total income of € 172.206, total expenses of € 149.104 and profit of € 21.102. Short-term funds were sufficient for the current operations.

The Auditors, informed that all accounts were kept in accordance with good accounting practices, so that they recommended accounts to be approved. The General Assembly approved the statement of accounts and auditors' report for 2002 and approved the management of the Association in 2002. The General Assembly also approved the final budget for 2004 and the provisional budget for 2005.

The General Assembly took note of activities of SERVICE-ICAR Srl. It noted that the accounts were audited by Mr. Jean Stoll, and approved by the ICAR Executive Board functioning as a Board of the SERVICE-ICAR Srl.

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Other decisions taken for the administrative matters were:

- a) receipts for the current year from Member Organisations with outstanding debts should be accounted for covering of the outstanding debts; and
- b) the membership of ICAR of newly admitted members become effective after the payment of the first membership fee.

3. Legal Matters

The number of member organisations operating without financial support from the state is continuously increasing. The establishment of SERVICE-ICAR Srl was a step towards meeting needs and requirements of member organizations separating social functions - development of guidelines, standards and norms - from purely economic operations. For the future, there is a need to develop a new philosophy for both ICAR and SERVICE-ICAR Srl so as to meet new needs and requirements of Member Organisations.

The relevant issues to relations between ICAR and SERVICE-ICAR Srl were developed and debated, as well as relations with test centres and SERVICE-ICAR Srl and risks associated with ICAR activities. The Board endorsed the progress made in preparing contracts between stakeholders in ICAR and SERVICE-ICAR Srl activities. It agreed that the existing form of contract with ISPRA for testing of identification devices should be retained.

Lloyds of London have been contacted for the insurance of risks associated with activities of SERVICE-ICAR Srl and ICAR Sub-Committees. The Board encouraged the continuation of contacts with Lloyds of London.

The Board approved the Guidelines and checklist for the organisation of ICAR biennial sessions and requested the Secretariat to place it on the ICAR web site for the use by the potential hosts of the ICAR Biennial sessions. The Board endorsed the idea of a binding agreement between organisations hosting the biennial sessions and ICAR. The existing draft will be finalised and then sent to members of the Board for the approval.

The ICAR name and logo have been registered and protected in most countries.

4. New Members

Meat New Zealand submitted a request for the associate membership of ICAR. The request was supported by the LIC - the ICAR full member in New Zealand. Meat New Zealand was welcomed as associated member of ICAR.

The Secretariat received the request from the Greek Holstein Association for the associate membership of ICAR. The Board expressed the appreciation for the interest of the GHA for ICAR membership and requested the Secretariat to seek the advice of the Greek member in compliance with Article 4.3 of the ICAR Statutes.

The Board expressed the appreciation of the interest of the Association of Dairy Livestock Owners of Ukraine to become an ICAR member and decided to investigate the situation in the country.

5. Sousse, 34th ICAR Session

The proposal made by the Executive Board regarding invited speakers, agenda and timetable for the 34th ICAR Biennial Session in 2004 were approved and delivered by the Tunisian organization. They are also visible in the relative web site (www.icar.org/tunisia2004).

Mustapha Guellouz informed on the past and on-going actions undertaken by the Organising Committee. The Organising Committee nominated the Tunisian counter-parts of chairpersons of plenary and parallel sessions. Their task would be to help the review of papers and the organization of the technical session. The programme of the FAO/ICAR workshop on Camelides has been agreed upon.

It was noted that the draft Guidelines and the Checklist for the Organisation of ICAR Biennial Sessions have already been used by the Tunisian Organising Committee demonstrating that the Guidelines were a useful tool for planning and control of all relevant actions in the preparation of sessions.

6. Report of the meeting of the ICAR Board with Chairperson Activities of the SC's, WG's and TF

The meeting of the ICAR Board with Chairperson was held in Paris, France, on 24th May 2003. Frank Armitage, Jean-Michel Astruc, Robert Banks, David Hewitt, Mark Jeffries, Jarmo Juga, Drago Kompan, Uffe Lauritsen, Alain Malafosse, Filippo Miglior, Jean-Claude Mocquot, Olivier Leray, Reinhard Pauw, Neil Petreny, Erik Rehben, Andrea Rosati, Hans Schild, Tiina Vares were present. A. Aumaitre, U. Emanuelson, M. Guellouz, B. Russel and J. Stoll were also present. The main discussed items were:

The meeting recommended the publication of ICAR Guidelines on disk. Among the future orientation of ICAR there should be the monitoring of developments in DNA and other new technologies and studies on the possible applications of these in recording and evaluation.

6.1 Sub-committee INTERBULL

The major improvement was in the introduction of new procedure for checking the incoming data for evaluation. Routine evaluations have been performed as scheduled. Japan joined the test-runs. Conformation traits for Holstein and Jersey breeds was performed as scheduled. Evaluation of Guernsey was introduced in November 2002, while tests for Brown Swiss were expanded to include overall conformation, overall udder and overall feet and legs. The area of health testing is in the constant expansion. The SC arranged a joint symposium during the 7th World Congress on Applied Genetics. In March 2003, a technical workshop was held in Beltsville, USA, focusing on functional traits and improved methods of international evaluation. The INTERBULL Steering Committee established a Technical Committee to identify technical issues relevant to high quality services to countries participating in evaluation of all traits. It also established a Scientific Advisory Committee to deal with scientific issues related to the strategic direction and long-term progress of the INTERBULL services. A new contract between North America Consortium and Interbull Centre was signed in January 2003. The Interbull Centre now serves as a repository for breed codes defined by the ICAR WG on AI and approved by the ICAR Board. The Centre published one number of newsletter. With regard to new technologies, he considered that the marker assisted selection would be of an increasing importance in the near future. It was noted that more and more bulls were tested on genetic abnormalities and there is a need to harmonise the exchange of information on findings and outcome of tests.

6.2 Sub-committee Meters and Jars

Sub-committee Meters and Jars met once after the Interlaken meeting. The meeting discussed the impact of automated milking, transfer of data from milk meter, collection of data from milk meters, recording devices for developing countries, developments in on farm/on-line instruments. It also held a meeting with manufacturers, mainly from North America. The decision taken by the Sub-committee included the approval of adding the name Fulwood

Dataflow to SAE AFIKIM already approved Afiflo 2000; granted a provisional approval to Afilite milk meter, TruTest electronic meter, MetatronP21/S21 and DeLaval Autosampler. The Italian test centre led by Franco Sangiorgi resigned from being an ICAR laboratory to test milk meters. Manfred Hammel succeeded Heiko Jurgens who resigned from membership. Uffe Lauritsen was proposed by the Executive Board to replace Andrea Rosati as a chairman of the Sub-committee.

6.3 Sub-committee on Animal Identification

Sub-committee on Animal Identification held two meetings, one of them being the open one with manufacturers. Mr. Hammerschmitt from USA left the Sub-committee and North American Member organisations were invited to nominate a new member of the Sub-committee. The chairman attended meetings of the ISO working group on standardisation of electronic devices. The meeting of the ISO working group held in Leyden dealt with identification of sheep and goats and the relevant EU regulations, which are under preparation. In the preparation of testing of ID devices - conformance and performance - the Sub-committee produced seven guidelines. Each manufacturer receives a special code under which testing and approval of devices are carried out. The next test run for conventional eartags will be undertaken by the end of the year. The first reader was tested at the end of 2002 and it is expected that other manufacturers would submit their products for testing and the ICAR approval. The Sub-committee prepared a questionnaire on animal identification in ICAR Member countries and up to May 2003 it received over 30 answers.

6.4 Working Group on Beef Recording

Working Group on Beef Recording is still working on Guidelines, mainly due to difficulties in reconciling the European and North American standards. The first problem is in animal identification - BIF is not applying the unique ID number. The situation seems to be changed after the first case of BSE in Canada, which leads towards the application of the unique ID for each animal so as to ensure the traceabilities. Another difference in slaughter tests which can not be compared. The Working Group held one meeting after the Interlaken. The inquiry on beef recording has been completed and published by ICAR.

6.5 Working Group Quality Assurance

Working Group Quality Assurance produced recommendations on quality assurance which were placed on the web site together with some examples of organisations having an effective system of quality management. The WG would continue to function until the Sousse session. It produced recommendations regarding the information needed for the assessment of quality assurance. These recommendations will have to be discussed with other WGs. Proposals for internal auditing and benchmarking to be carried out by ICAR, as proposed in the new strategic plan, would certainly contribute to improved quality of services provided by ICAR MO.

6.6 Working Group on Lactation Calculation Methods

Working Group on Lactation Calculation Methods met during the Interlaken session and worked on preliminary guidelines for calculation in robotic herds, which were approved by the General Assembly. The research work is carried out up-dating guidelines for robotic herds and for electronic lactometers - transfer of data to recording organisations, analytical model for daily milk recording. Results from these studies will be used for lactation computation, quality control data, management purposes and identification of sick cows. An American project up-dating rules for detection and adjustment of abnormal test day yields has been completed. The future work will focus on somatic cell count and milk recording in automatic milking systems and on automatic sampling devices for on-line fat and protein recording.

6.7 Working Group on Milk Recording in Sheep

Working Group on Milk Recording in Sheep is composed of members basically from Mediterranean countries. In the future, more members should come from Central Eastern European countries. The Group work on Guidelines included the introduction of the method "D" and its approval by the ICAR Board (included in the publication) and the work on method "E" (proposal sent to the ICAR Secretariat), systematisation of the classification of methods, clarification of milk yield (milking from lambing and milking after the suckling) and definition of the minimum daily milk yield (200 ml or 200 g). The WG utilises the ICAR web site and co-operates with SC Meters and Jars and the ICAR Reference Laboratory Network. With regard to the electronic identification, more collaboration will have to be developed with SC Animal Identification. The future work will be presented in Sousse, namely, the 7th biennial survey containing the standard questions to allow for comparison and introducing new issues, such as breeding schemes and the use of molecular genetics in dairy sheep. The Greek member of the WG is to be replaced during the current year. The WG collaborates with CIHEAM, IDF and other international organisations involved in the dairy sheep development.

6.8 Working Group on Sheep Meat, Fibre and Fertility

Working Group on Sheep Meat, Fibre and Fertility prepared a draft survey of recording of meat, fibre and fertility to be sent to potentially interested organisations. Survey will include information on research and development activities in participating countries. Developments in the application of new technologies include the on-line measuring of wool diameter, new methods in carcass evaluation, introduction of gene markers for eating quality and feed conversion, on-line breeding programme, as well as steps towards electronic identification of sheep. The specificity of sheep production - the lack of governmental support, low prices of sheep and sheep products, differences in production systems, etc. should be taken into account. It was agreed that the main task of the WG should be to develop standards and guidelines for performance recording.

6.9 Working Group on Functional Traits

Working Group on Functional Traits completed the work about guidelines for mastitis recording. Ab Groen left the position of the chairman, and the ICAR Board agreed that in view of importance of this WG, a new chairman should be appointed before the Sousse session. Erling Strandberg was invited to take the chairmanship of the group.

6.10 Working Group on Animal Recording Data

Working Group on Animal Recording Data was established to develop industry standard data model for animal recording, establish and implement protocols for the transfer of animal and farm data between recording computer centres nationally and internationally, develop guidelines for data validation criteria which should be applied in computer systems. The Group established good co-operation with World Holstein Friesian Association. The chairman has undertaken negotiations with the ISO regarding the participation of the WG in an ISO project Network Livestock Farming composed of representatives of European and North American countries as well of manufacturers. The WG has also sought an official recognition of ISO as a partner to other ISO WGs. The ISO data dictionary will be publicised through ICAR.

6.11 Working Group on Milk Testing Laboratories

Working Group on Milk Testing Laboratories held two meetings after the Interlaken session (Palencia, Spain, October 2002 and Holsterbro, Denmark, May 2003). The WG utilises the ICAR web site for providing information on ICAR country laboratories. It prepared a Guide for Quality Assurance and the protocol for the evaluation of milk analysers and official approval by ICAR, which was circulated to member organisations. It was approved by 16 organisations in 12 countries. Answers to questionnaire on analytical quality assurance were presented in

Interlaken. The Group will continue to monitor implication of on-farm/on-line milk recording analysis on analytical quality assurance. The standardisation work is carried out in close co-operation with ISO and IDF. The first meeting of the International DHI reference Laboratory Network was held in Interlaken. Two series of trials were carried out in cow milk analysis. Trials in the sheep and goat milk analyses were undertaken in autumn 2002. The Group undertook new work in harmonisation of bottles, racks and containers for milk sample handling. The meeting agreed that this work should be co-ordinated with the Sub-committee on Meters and Jars and completed at the Sousse session.

6.12 Working Group on Milk Recording in Buffaloes

Working Group on Milk Recording in Buffaloes produced Guidelines for Buffalo Milk Recording (published in the ICAR Guidelines in 2003) and thus completed positively its work. Monitoring of the implementation of guidelines and developments in the buffalo sector should be carried out through exchange information and the use of the ICAR web site. Possibility of entrusting to the Task Force Development Fund to carry out some technical work in buffalo milk recording will be discussed in the future. The meeting agreed to close the Working Group on Milk Recording in Buffaloes.

6.13 Working Group on Artificial Insemination and Relevant Technologies

Working Group on Artificial Insemination and Relevant Technologies produced a contribution to ICAR Guidelines on the non-return rate (now Section 6 of Guidelines) and is about to finalise the work on recording and validation of bovine AI data. The document will be presented to the ICAR Board in 2004 and proposed for the adoption as a part of the ICAR Guidelines. This part of Guidelines will represent a strong support to the work on parentage recording, which has to be undertaken by another group of experts (WG on AI, INTERBULL, ID Sub-Committee and WG on DNA). However, the recommended approach could be applied only in countries with an organised AI service. In countries where AI data are considered as a secret, information will have to be collected from farmers. Group plans to develop a similar system for embryo transfer. In its present composition, the WG has no expertise for bar code straw identification. In addition, it noted that an increasing international semen exchange required continuous updating of the breed code list managed by the INTERBULL. It also was of the view that INTERBULL should be in charge of evaluating marker assisted selection.

6.14 Working Group on Conformation Recording

Working Group on Conformation Recording as a new WG produced Guidelines based on WGHF approach. It concentrated on presenting ICAR work to other breed federations and Guernsey and Jersey associations approved the same basic approach. Diagrams on specific traits will be posted to the web site, as agreed at the Interlaken meeting. The Group is planning to improve definition on ways in which traits are collected so as to avoid misleading conclusions in view of the influence of the environment on some traits (e.g. feet). The Group is planning to organise an open workshop in order to promote a standardised system and to produce a training module for recording of conformation. The Group is primarily oriented to dairy herds, and it should be enlarged to cover linear traits of beef cattle.

6.15 Working Group on Milk Recording in Goats

Working Group on Milk Recording in Goats held a meeting in Interlaken, attended also by J.M. Astruc from the WG Sheep Milk Recording. A member from Croatia joined the Group, but the participation of members from Greece and Spain is still unresolved. A questionnaire was sent and 22 countries sent replies regarding breeds of goats and recording methods (mostly AT, A4, AC, A6 and B). For the milk yield, the standard A4 method is being more and more replaced by to simplified designs (AT or AC) approved by the ICAR. The Group completed the revision of the ICAR Guidelines. The WG was frozen for some years in view of the lack of interest, but it is expected to produce good results up to the Sousse session.

7. Strategic Plan

The draft of Strategic Plan prepared by A. Rosati and M. Jeffries was extensively debated. The purpose of the new draft was to present elements relevant to the adjustments of ICAR services and activities to correspond to changing needs of member organisations. The basic purpose of the new strategic plan should be diversification of services to member organisation in accordance with their needs. It should contain a definition of funding sources and development of new services. Proposals include a list of issues such as benchmarking in terms of business efficiency and some other parameters, what our Member Organizations are looking to do in providing services to farmers in area of farm sustainability and are there business opportunity for all. It was also important to highlight some gaps and some potential that have not been identified so far. Other issues are the special stamp and the principles of the continuation of the system, as well as the possible membership of the manufacturers and the breeds societies on one side and the herd improvement organisations around the world on the other.

The Executive Board agreed to undertake a review of environment and needs, to collect views of Member Organisations, and to submit a new document to the General Assembly in Sousse, Tunisia, in May 2004. It selected two pilot actions of the draft Strategic Plan: i) workshops to be held during the biennial session in Sousse (addressing the decline in reproductive performance, manufacturers forum showcase) and ii) benchmarking.

With regard to the **Special Stamp**, its use had some implication on quality of data and that it represented a marketing tool showing that data we collect are official. However, the lack of an auditing of procedure for bearers, made the process of approval somehow unfair to new claimants. Clients expect quality of services, and the quality certification protects farmers, increases their confidence in member organizations and reduces incidence of miscommunication and ignorance about ICAR. The future of the Special Stamp was considered as an important element of the new strategy of ICAR.

The ICAR member organisations share experience through ICAR Sessions and participation in working bodies. However, the comparison of various parameters through a benchmarking exercise can contribute to an increased efficiency of MO. Benchmarking could include costs of services (in milk or meat), time between recording and reporting, gross margin analysis etc. The idea of benchmarking was met with a general support at the Board and at the General Assembly. It was underlined that the state support to recording and genetic evaluation was declining in almost all countries, and the quality of services together with costs involved have become a key issues for the success. In a year time, a pilot project on benchmarking would be undertaken and experience would be used for the future work in this field.

The possible changes in the **membership** of ICAR was also discussed. In addition to membership of individual DHI, options regarding membership of breed societies and manufacturers, such as attendance at biennial sessions, were also discussed. The revision of membership was a stepwise process to be initiated in the near future. The General Assembly discussed in details the place of manufacturers (ID and recording devices, AI centres, marketers) and other subjects involved in the animal recording and genetic evaluation in the ICAR system as well as possibilities of closer co-operation with them. It was underlined that in all form of co-operation, including their general or specific membership in ICAR, the interest of ICAR member organizations as farmers' associations should not be neglected. The introduction of manufacturers' forum in the ICAR Sessions could be the good step towards better co-operation.

The ICAR orientation towards enlarging animal recording to more species and more traits resulted in the establishment of the Task Force **Development Fund** for developing countries. Further activities in developing countries should be co-ordinated with FAO and other international technical organisations involved in the livestock development. Communication with developing countries should be improved. ICAR should find the way to provide support to those countries in their efforts to ensure sound sanitary situation and to find their place in international markets. In this respect, animal identification and traceability of products play the

major role. In addition to importance attached to developing countries in ICAR Strategic Plan, they represent a large area of economic co-operation and business opportunities for developed market economies.

The meeting noted with the great interest **services for farm sustainability** in Luxembourg presented by Mr. Jean Stoll. They included performance recording, genetic evaluation, herd book keeping and the advisory services on EU policies (environment, food safety, traceability, animal welfare and farm income). These advisory services complement the performance recording, particularly in view of the fact that only 10% of culled cows were culled for the reason of low performance. The services include soil analyses and other support of food safety and improved image of animal products.

The expectations and requests of **North American farmers** were also discussed. The interest is for services that reduce costs and increase profits. The main purpose of recording is to facilitate farm management. The shrinking number of farmers is becoming more demanding: which service to choose depends on costs. They give priority to new equipment, standards, adaptation to new technologies. For this reason, testing process must be faster. ICAR role in the North America is to provide for sharing of information (primarily among MO - not individual farmers) on relevant issues such as lactation calculation, technological norms, measures and standards adapted to new technologies. ICAR must adapt its norms to diversity of its membership and find the right proportion between accuracy and usefulness on farm.

The Strategic Plan was also discussed with the Chairperson of the Sub-Committees and Working groups with the main purpose to provide the Secretariat and the Executive Board with some of the concerns or suggestions that Chairpersons might have regarding the future orientation of ICAR and its Member Organisations.

8. New activity reports of the ICAR Sub Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces (by Jarmo Juga)

There have been few changes in the chairmen of the groups since the last biennial conference in Interlaken 2002 as elsewhere reported in details. Andrea Rosati resigned from the post of the chairman of the sub-committee Meters and Jars due to his nomination for the post of the Secretary General in ICAR and EAAP. The board nominated Uffe Lauritsen from Denmark a new chairman of the sub-committee. Ab Groen resigned from the post of the chairman of the working group Functional Traits due to his new position at the University of Wageningen. Erling Strandberg from Sweden has kindly promised to continue the work as a new chairman in the working group and he will be nominated to the post in the next board meeting in Tunis in May 2004. I would like to acknowledge the great work done by both resigned chairmen and thank them for their contribution for the benefit of ICAR members. I am very pleased to welcome the new chairmen to the team and I wish them all the success in their demanding work.

The sub-committees, working groups and task forces have continued their valuable work after our last meeting. The work for improving and harmonising the recording and evaluation practices is a time consuming process and very often there is not much to report in between the biennial meetings, but all groups are preparing material for the next meeting in Tunis.

The sub-committee Meters and Jars has been very active as usual in revising guidelines. They have also carried out a survey of standardisation of vials. Please have a look at the report by Uffe Lauritsen on this news letter.

Working group of Milk testing Laboratories has also carried out a questionnaire of milk bottles for sampling milk and worked actively on reference laboratory network. There is also a special report by Olivier Leray of the activities of Milk testing Laboratories else where in the newsletter.

The working group on AI and other relevant technologies had its last meeting in Rome on the 31st of August 2003. The chairman of the group Alain Malafosse reported following topics of the activities:

- ❖ The group has adopted two papers:
 - The "Survey on recording and validation of bovine A.I. data among some ICAR member countries" and
 - the draft on "Recommendation and validation of AI data". This draft will be presented to ICAR board next year in order to become a new guideline.
- ❖ The group decided to process in the same way as was done with AI data to deal with the "other relevant technologies" and at this present time to focus its activities only on **embryo transfer** with a special regard on **embryos traceability** (identification of containers) an **recording the data necessary to get a good accuracy of parentage for calves born out of embryo transfer**. A survey will be circulating among the countries of the group members in order to produce guidelines "on recording and validation of embryo production and transfer".
- ❖ During the meeting the group stated that a major improvement in genetic evaluations could be done in **improving accuracy of parentage** of top animals or of progeny of bulls which records are used in evaluations. It suggested to the ICAR board to set up a special group with the expertise of people of breeding organisations to tackle this issue, to take advantage of the work done for AI& ET recording and validation Other expertness are required for this topic, be cause natural services registration and birth recording have to be taken into account to cover all the scope.
- ❖ It was decided in BLED to entitle INTERBULL with the management of the breed code list. The intention was to cover most of the world semen trade. After the meeting a draft to lay down the procedures was written by U. Emanuelson and the chairman of the group. This paper will circulate among the group and then presented to the ICAR board.

As a new Vice-President of ICAR responsible for technical matters I would like to express my sincere thanks to all members of sub-committees, working groups and task forces for their valuable contribution to the work of ICAR for the benefit of all members. The executive board will discuss in its meetings how to help the chairmen in their work load. All the work in different groups is on voluntary basis, of which we should also thank the employers of the group members. The ICAR office does the best it can to help the groups with its limited resources. The executive board needs to look for alternatives, especially on the services which will be provided under Service ICAR on a more commercial basis.

9. Activity report of the Sub-Committee Identification (by Reinhard Pauw)

Since 1995 ICAR is successfully participating in the process of setting up guidelines for testing of devices used in animal identification. Under the guidance of the Sub-Committee on Animal Identification and in close co-operation with the responsible ISO-Working Group 3 a lot of tests for RFID transponders (Injectable, Bolus, Eartag and Eartag attachment) have been conducted in ICAR approved test centres.

Up to now the following number of transponders has been approved as ISO-compliant.

| Device type | No. of devices tested | No. of manufacturers |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Injectable | 30 | 28 |
| Bolus | 12 | 11 |
| Eartag | 29 | 18 |
| Eartag attachment | 7 | 6 |

9.1 First RFID-Reader tested

Meanwhile ICAR has extended the scope of devices tested also to RFID readers (transceivers). One manufacturer (NEDAP Agri B.V., The Netherlands) has submitted its reader "Nedap ID-Stick transceiver" for an ISO compliance test. The test finished with a successful result. More information on results of device testing for transponders and readers is available on www.icar.org.

9.2 Test of conventional plastic eartags

In addition, ICAR will provide a further service to interested parties. In October, after having been finally decided during a Sub-Committee meeting in September, the first test run for conventional eartags is supposed to begin. The respective guideline will be published on ICAR's web page in due course.

Erling Strandberg has informed that the working group of Functional Traits hope to initiate guidelines for two more traits before the next ICAR conference. The working group Quality Assurance together with other working groups are trying to list the useful quality information to be published by member organisations about their recording and evaluation practices. One development relating to quality control is the benchmarking service introduced by the president Mr Mark Jeffries at the board meeting with chairmen and in the general assembly in Paris in May 2003 as a strategic service for members to evaluate their activities. The executive board will develop the idea further together with ICAR office.

I would like to remind all the readers of this newsletter to seek for more information on the ICAR web-site at www.icar.org and also for information of very active and busy sub-committee INTERBULL on its web-site at www-interbull.slu.se.

10. Activity report of the Sub-Committee Meters & Jars (by Uffe Lauritsen)

SC Meters & Jars is composed by the following members:

| Name | E-mail address |
|--|------------------------------|
| Uffe Lauritsen <i>Chairman</i> (Denmark) | ufl@landscentret.dk |
| Michel Blanchard (France) | tomacel.blanchard@wanadoo.fr |
| Manfed Hammel (Germany) | dr.hammel@lkvbb.de |
| Stephen Mihina (Slovakia) | mihina@vuzv.sk |
| Dusan Nosal (Switzerland) | Dusan.Nosal@fat.admin.ch |

The Sub-Committee had a meeting in September 2003 held in Berlin, Germany and the main topics discussed were:

❖ **Updating list of approved equipment**

The list of approved meters is updated according to older and new tests.

❖ **Revising the guidelines, section 11**

The guidelines, section 11, are revised. After final comments from SC members and manufacturers, the guidelines will be published later this year. Pierre Billon, France, Kees de Koning, The Netherlands, Manfred Hammel, Germany, and Uffe Lauritsen, Denmark have done the revising. The revising has mainly been in the fields wording, references and a few misprints. The basic content has not been touched.

SC Meters & jars are much aware of the contact to the manufacturer, and to keep the information between the parties fast, relevant and actual. Main topic here is to ensure manufacturers answer from test labs faster than it used to be.

❖ **Guidelines, milk recording with buckets**

Some of our members not using pipeline milking asked for guidelines for simpler systems. During the Berlin meeting it was decided to come up with guidelines for member organisations serving farmers in countries with smaller herds. The guidelines will be incorporated in the updated version mentioned above.

❖ **Milk meters, enquiry**

SC meters & Jars plan to send out an enquiry regarding the different tests done on milk meters. The background is a documented difference between countries.

❖ **Data exchange**

SC Meters & Jars will take further contact to WG Animal Recording Data Working Group concerning the lack of uniform data standards for data exchange.

❖ **Standardisation of vials**

Standardisation of vials has been up as a general topic since Interlaken sessions. WG Milk Testing Laboratories and SC Meters & Jars has carried out a survey of the used vials in the member countries. The board of ICAR on its meeting in May 2003 decided that the 2 groups in co-operation prepares a main paper including a proposal for a standard for vials. The paper will be presented at the congress in Tunisia 2004.

❖ **New developments in the field of milk recording**

SC Meters & Jars has discussed some future items for the work in the member countries.

New technology makes it possible to catch and store every single milking of the cow. The SC has discussed the subject at the last two meetings, and concluded to hand over to the Board to decide further steps. The reason is that we need some indications of the value of storing that many data.

The SC also had an open discussion of new technologies in the field of in-line / on-farm analyse of milk, and how it will affect the traditional way of sampling. The item must be seen in a much wider aspect, and include all sides of dairy production.

We decided to continue the discussion on the coming meetings, and invite others to give input, and/or participate in activities in other relevant ICAR groups.

There is no doubt that we will have to look on milk recording with different eyes in the coming years. SC M&J invite anyone to give input to any natural point on the recording agenda.

❖ **Any other business**

SC Meters & Jars regularly discuss and treat a lot of different items, of which quite a few are not visible to the public, but is a natural part of the job.

10.1 APPROVED JARS (September 2003)

| Jars | Manufacturer |
|--|-------------------------|
| Model 8300719-07 | DeLaval Agri AB, Sweden |
| Model 8301064-01 | DeLaval Agri AB, Sweden |
| Model 8301064-02 | DeLaval Agri AB, Sweden |
| | Milkrite |
| Model 25177 Kimax or Pyrex | Surge |
| Model 25799 Kimax or Pyrex | Surge |
| Model 7009-2862-220 | Westfalia Systemat |
| AccuWeigh Computerized Milk Recording System | Germany |

10.2 APPROVED METERS (September 2003)

| Meters | Manufacturer |
|--|---|
| Afikim (Fullflow) | SAE Afikim Israel |
| Afifflo 2000 | SAE Afikim Israel |
| Afifflo 9000 | SAE Afikim Israel |
| Bou-Matic Perfection 3000 | Bou-Matic USA |
| Dairy-Manager | Surge Babson Bros Co. USA |
| Dairy Master Weighall | E.P. Harty and Co.Ltd Ireland |
| Favorit International | Agro-Vertriebsgesellschaft GmbH, Germany |
| Flomaster 2000 / Alpro Flomaster Pro | Alfa Laval Agri AB Sweden |
| Free-Flow | SCR Engineers Ltd. Israel |
| JM 100 | Alfa Laval Agri AB Sweden |
| Lactocorder | Werkzeug- und Maschinenbau Berneck AG., Switzerland |
| Lely Shuttle (Sampler for automatic milking systems) | Lely Industries, The Netherlands |
| Level Milk Meter | Nedap Agri BV. The Netherlands |
| Manuflow 2 and Manuflow 21 | AB Manus Sweden |
| Meltec (Memolac 2) | Westfalia Separator Ag. Germany (Nedap Agri BV. The Netherlands) |
| Metatron | Westfalia Separator Ag. Germany |
| Milko-Scope MKII | Alfa Laval Agri AB, Sweden |
| MR 2000 (Combina 2000) | Gascoigne Melotte. The Netherlands |
| Pulsameter 2 | Labor-und Messgeräte GmbH Germany |
| Tru-Test Auto sampler | Tru-Test Ltd. New Zealand |
| Tru-Test F | Tru-Test Ltd. New Zealand |
| Tru-Test HI | Tru-Test Ltd. New Zealand |
| Tru-Test WB Ezi-Test | Tru-Test Ltd. New Zealand |
| Tru-Test HI Fast Empty | Tru-Test Ltd. New Zealand |
| Tru-Test WB | Tru-Test Ltd. New Zealand |
| Waikato MK5 | Inter Ag, New Zealand |

10.3 PROVISIONAL APPROVED METERS (September 2003)

| Meters | Manufacturer |
|--|--|
| Afilite | SAE Afikim, Israel |
| Bou-Matic M + | Bou-Matic Dairy Equipment Division of DEC International, USA |
| AccuWeigh Computerised System | Germania Ltd., USA |
| DeLaval Autosampler (Sampler for automatic milking system) | DeLaval, Sweden |
| Tru Test Electronic | Tru-Test Ltd., New Zealand |
| Metatron P21/S21 | Westfalia Surge, Germany |

10.4 METERS UNDER TEST (September 2003)

| Meter | Manufacturer |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| GM Zenith Automatic sampler | Gascoigne Melotte, The Netherlands |
| SCR Free Flow SG (modified meter) | SCR Engineers Ltd, Israel |
| Elimeter | Radio Pacific |
| Tru Test WB (modified meter) | Tru-Test Ltd., New Zealand |
| MEL 900 | Milkline |

11. Report on the Activities of Milk Testing Laboratories Working Group (by Olivier Leray)

A meeting was held during the IDF/ISO/AOAC Analytical Week in Holstebro (DK) on May 19th 2003. The next planned meetings will be held on April 19th 2004, during the IDF Analytical Week 2004 in Parma-Italy (19-24 April) and on May 31st 2004, during the 34th Biennial Session of ICAR in Sousse-Tunisia.

The composition of the working group is: Olivier Leray (FR, chairman), Ugo Paggi (IT), Christian Baumgartner (DE), George Psathas (CY), Harrie van den Bijgaart (NL), John Rhoads (USA), Egil Brenne (NO). The nomination of a representative from Oceania is awaited since the resignation of Des Johnston (New Zealand) from the group.

The web space dedicated to MTL WG in ICAR website at the place "Milk Laboratories" has progressively been filled in. As much as possible information is provided so as to make it a practical and useful source to ICAR country laboratories. Last updates were made in August 2003.

The current activities of the working group are:

- ❖ **Protocol for the evaluation of milk analyzers and official approval by ICAR:** the document has found approval and is considered ready-to-use. The document describes the steps for the evaluation and the technical objectives to meet. This should provide a guarantee to ICAR with regard to a minimum accuracy for milk recording analytical data. It constitutes a guide for instrument manufacturers and national organizations who evaluate milk analyzers. It is intended to test its applicability with a manufacturer to identify possible weaknesses or incompleteness and consequently to seek improvement.
A procedure has been defined that describes the steps for an approval request, the evaluation result examination for the conformity versus the requirements stated in the protocol and bringing subsequent conclusions for the approval delivery.
It is now expected that ICAR adopts the principle of an international approval delivery for milk analyzers used in the field of official milk recording. It constitutes a practical standardized way aiming for better efficiency and economy in evaluation efforts for new instruments. As a standard procedure it enables valid comparison of instruments on the basis of results. The protocol, although being ancient in its principle, is in line with the criteria approach newly promoted by the Codex Alimentarius. It is noted that nationally approved instruments, which are already in routine use, are not invalidated with the launching of this protocol. It is intended to gradually replace the system with approvals on a national scale.
- ❖ **Questionnaire of milk bottles for sampling and racks for automated analysis within ICAR:** a questionnaire was carried out through a joint action of MTL WG and SC MJ to collect information on the current situation within ICAR. A report was produced in 2003 and is available on the web space dedicated to MTL WG.
- ❖ **Standardization:** members of MTL WG will participate as experts in IDF/ISO/AOAC Analytical Week in Parma in Italy (May 10-14, 2004). Items of interest are the revision and extension of standardized analytical methodology for determination of fat, protein, lactose, SCC, urea, and casein in milk as well as Analytical Quality Assurance. Special attention is given to sheep and goat milk analysis (fat, protein, somatic cells count, freezing point).
- ❖ **International DHI Reference Laboratory Network:**
Composition: at the present time, 37 laboratories have been nominated by 31 National Committees. In 2002, the network extended its interest to sheep and goat milk analysis. At the present time, there are 11 members designated as reference laboratory for sheep milk and 12 for goat milk in addition to their former reference status for cow. The list of members

was updated and circulated lastly in August 2003 to Network members and NCs. The list is available on the ICAR website.

Network meeting: a first meeting of the network participants was organized on 27th of May 2002 during the 33rd Biennial Session of ICAR in Interlaken. It was the occasion of various technical presentations (workshop) and fruitful discussions. It was decided to renew this event at the 34th ICAR Session in Sousse-Tunisia. The network meeting has been scheduled for Monday 31st May 2004 in the morning. It will be followed by MTL Working Group's meeting in the afternoon. The tentative program will be circulated in autumn.

❖ **ICAR International Interlaboratory Studies:**

Year 2003: for each of the three species cow (C), sheep (S) and goat (G), there were two series of trials scheduled in 2003. The first rounds [January (S), February (G) and March (C)] have been completed and the second rounds are either underway [September (C)] or to be performed [October (S), November (G)]. The criteria concerned are fat, protein, lactose, urea and somatic cell counting.

Organizers are CECALAIT (FR) for cow milk and AIA-LSL (IT) for sheep and goat milk

Year 2004: the yearly information letter will be dispatched in December 2003 with the annual announcement for interlaboratory proficiency study programmes of 2004 for the three species cow, sheep and goat. There will be no changes in the organization except for adjustments of dates.

The annual letters are available on the ICAR website and can be used for registration to trials.

❖ **New works:**

Harmonization of bottles, racks and containers for milk sample handling: discussion for such a harmonization was initiated by milk recording organizations in North Western Europe. ICAR was felt the appropriate body to deal with the subject, jointly in SC Meters and Jars and MTL WG. Information was collected through a questionnaire (see "Information to ICAR"). Further initiatives are underway, including the preparation of a paper (H. van den Bijgaart, U. Lauritsen) for the ICAR Sessions in Sousse-Tunisia.

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12. Next ICAR Session and Interbull Meeting (4-10 June 2006)

The 35th ICAR session and Interbull meeting will be held in Kuopio, Finland, the 4th to 10th of June, 2006. Kuopio is a lively city in the midst of the beautiful Eastern Finnish lakes and the centre of the most significant dairy area. Special focus of the session will be on health and functional traits. The organising committee wishes you all welcome! More information at the 34th session in Sousse and from the organisers (Juho Kyntäjä, tel. + 358 20 7472 454)

Request

Please let us know what you would like to be covered in future issues of the Newsletter or suggestions to improve its content.