



ICAR Newsletter

December 2007

**International Committee
for Animal Recording**



**Via G. Tomassetti 3, 1/A
00161 Rome, Italy**

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Contact info:
 ICAR Secretariat
 Via Giuseppe Tomassetti 3, 1/A
 00161 Rome, Italy
 E-mail: icar@icar.org

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT: TOWARDS THE 36TH ICAR BIENNIAL SESSION

A few months from now many of our readers – farmers, managers of our Member Organisations, professionals, researchers – will meet in Niagara Falls, New York, USA on the occasion of the 36th ICAR Biennial Session, 16 – 20 June 2008. The Session includes the INTERBULL Meeting, Manufacturers' Showcase, meetings of other ICAR Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces, a seminar of Sub-Committee Milk Analysis, social events, mid-conference and post conference tours. The General Assembly will review activities of ICAR and its technical bodies in the period between the Kuopio and Niagara Falls sessions, approve the financial statement for the past year and the budget for 2009. The Board will present an up-dated strategic plan aimed at meeting new challenges and dynamic changes in the social and economic environment in which ICAR operates. The constant adjustments of ICAR to better meet the needs of its Members and an effort to increase ICAR's efficiency will be also reflected in the Board's proposal for some changes in the ICAR Statutes. For this reason, we will also convene the Extraordinary General Assembly.

The ICAR Board has reviewed the Session programme and the schedule of events. Three plenary sessions will deal with improving the health traits by recording and evaluation, reproduction and impact of new technologies on performance recording and evaluation. The Manufacturers' Showcase provides an opportunity for presenting new technologies in the world of animal recording, identification and information management.

Participants from overseas countries coming to Niagara Falls will meet professionals and managers from North America. Both will benefit from the information to be presented and the exchange of experiences. In addition, mid-conference and the post-conference agricultural tour provides another outstanding opportunity for non-American participants to get knowledge about US farming, technology applications and management methods.

This third issue of the new series of the ICAR NEWSLETTER includes information on activities since the June 2007 session of the General Assembly held in Verona (Italy) including the recent ICAR Board meeting as well as details related to 36th Biennial Session. As this issue appears at the end of December 2007, I wish to take this opportunity to express my best wishes and Season's Greetings to all our members.

FROM THE MESSAGE OF MARK ADAM, PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL DAIRY HERD INFORMATION ASSOCIATION

“Come join us in Niagara Falls, New York State, 16-20 June, for a memorable and educational experience. Let Falls mesmerize you and let the speakers stimulate your problem-solving and management skills. I'm confident you'll find this event a worthwhile experience”.

Animal production in USA

USA is one of the largest producers of animals and animal products in the world. As the second largest global producer, it produces some 38 million tons of meat and meat products or 15% of the world production and some 90 million tons of milk or 21% of the world production. There are 61 500 dairy farms. The average dairy herd in USA has 147 cows with a rolling herd average of nearly 9.000 kg. The average size of herds varies between 88 (Northeast) and 627 cows (West). Productivity per cow varies between 7.149 kg of milk (Southeast) and 9 759 kg of milk (West). Holstein dominates the U.S dairy herd, accounting for 91% of the population. (Sources: FAOStat, Preliminary Programme, 36th ICAR Biennial Session)

NEWS FROM THE ICAR BOARD, SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS AND TASK FORCES

Approval of new recording devices

At its last meeting, the ICAR Board officially approved the Dematron 70 milk meter from WestfaliaSurge and gave the provisional approval to the Afifree milk meter for sheep from SAE Afikim and the Lactocorder for goats from WMB AG.

Use of ICAR name and logo from 2009 on

The Board at its meeting in May 2007 approved the right of ICAR Members and Associate Members to use the ICAR logo starting in 2009. The Secretary General of ICAR has sent a letter to all ICAR Members and Associate Members informing them on this Board decision. More details will be provided to members in the future.

New service for manufacturers - ICAR tags for approved recording devices

On the initiative of the Recording Devices Sub-Committee, ICAR is investigating a new service for manufacturers of milk recording devices. It has launched a tagging project consisting of the application of tags with the ICAR certification on the new milk recording devices to be produced from 1st January 2008. The ICAR Secretariat has invited all manufacturers to send information regarding each of approved milk recording devices, such as the name of the device, year of approval and specific indication (cow/sheep/buffalo milk).



Figure 1. Tag example.

Recording Devices Chapter of ICAR Guidelines will be revised

An action team to update the current ICAR guidelines on testing and approval of recording

devices, which was established by the ICAR Sub-Committee Recording Devices, came to the conclusion that the new developments in recording technology and new milk recording procedures require a more radical approach leading to the development of the new text. The Sub-Committee approved the structure of the guidelines, which include definitions, requirements for jars, milk meters and samplers, procedure for approval, approval tests and installation and maintenance tests. The ICAR Board agreed on the procedure for the revision as proposed by the Sub-Committee and the structure of the new Chapter 11 of Guidelines. It requested Mr. U. Lauritsen Vice-President of ICAR to coordinate the work.

Benchmarking service

For the third time, the service has been launched in 2007. Seventeen national organisations from five countries join the initiative. The results have already been processed and the reports will be distributed by January 2008. This service has been much appreciated from our associations and the number of participants is gradually increasing, demonstrating the interest for this service.

New ICAR Guidelines on performance evaluation of identification devices

The ICAR Board adopted the text of new ICAR Guidelines on performance evaluation of identification devices, as proposed by the Identification Sub-Committee. The Section 10 of the ICAR Guidelines "Performance evaluation and approval of official permanent identification devices, Part 1. "Conventional plastic eartags (with or without machine readable printing)" and Part 2. "Electronic permanent devices (with and without machine readable printing)" will be submitted for the approval by the General Assembly in 2008. For more details see www.icar.org/pages/recording_guidelines.htm

ICAR's Approval Criteria for Laboratories Testing Conformance and Performance of Transponders and Transceivers as Defined in ISO Standard 24631

The agreement between the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) on the appointment of ICAR as Registration Authority for the International Standards ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 states that ICAR has among other tasks to specify the conditions for the accreditation of test laboratories and to accept the certificates of all laboratories satisfying the specified conditions. ISO standard 24631 states that test centres shall be approved by the Registration Authority. There may be other approval criteria beside accreditation. The ICAR Board approved the criteria for ICAR approval of test laboratories. The criteria include general requirements, such as that the laboratory is ISO 17025 certified for the said test procedures and ISO 17011 accredited. A number of specific criteria include relations between test laboratories and ICAR, modalities of communication with manufacturers, format of reports and regulations regarding costs of tests and payment of services. For more details see: www.icar.org/pages/manufacture_codes.htm

New fee structure

The Board is reviewing the membership fee structure to ensure that fees best reflect the changing membership and scope of ICAR activities.

Welcome to New Associate Members of ICAR

The ICAR Board is pleased to announce the approval of applications by DeLaval International AB, Sweden and Finnzymes OY, Finland, to the ICAR membership as Associate Members. The membership will be asked to support the new member applications at the General Assembly in June 2008.

DeLaval International AB, Sweden is an important supplier of milk machines and herd management systems including milk meters and animal identification systems

Finnzymes OY is a service laboratory performing DNA analysis, parentage recording and identification of farm and companion animals. It also produces kits for identification of animal pathogens.

On-farm milk analysis

The Working Party on on-farm milk analysis under the direction Chair of the Sub-Committee Milk Analysis met in Rome on 27 November. The Working Party is comprised of chairpersons of Sub-Committees on Milk Analysis and Recording Devices and of Working Groups Milk Recording in Sheep, Lactation Calculation Methods and Animal Recording Data as well as Task Force Milk Recording Practices. Participants reviewed the existing devices and developments and consequences for milk recording. They identified securing milk recording through and appropriate "Analytical Quality Assurance" (AQA) framework and guidelines as objective of ICAR in this field.

New Working Group and nomination

The ICAR Board has appointed Mr. Brian Wickham (Ireland) as the Chairperson of the new Interbeef Working Group. The group will continue the work of the Interbeef Task Force.

The ICAR Board has appointed Mr. L. Journaux (France) Chairperson of the Working Group on Artificial Insemination and other relevant technologies.

Mr. Folkert Onken (Germany) was nominated new member of the Sub-Committee Animal Identification.

ICAR test protocols and conformance tests are becoming ISO standards

In accordance with the decision of ISO to nominate ICAR as Registration Authority for identification devices and in agreement with relevant technical bodies, four ICAR test protocols would in future be ISO standards 24631, parts 1-4. Cooperation with ISO continues in transforming ICAR's conformance test for non-synchronising transceivers for reading ISO 11784/11785 transponders into an ISO standard. This is result of long-standing cooperation between ISO and ICAR.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

ICAR at the International conference on farm animal genetic resources (Interlaken, Switzerland, 01-07 September 2007)

The Conference was organized by FAO in cooperation with the Government of Switzerland. Representatives of 109 States, and the European Community and 42 Organizations adopted Interlaken Declaration, the report on The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. Participants acknowledged that maintaining the diversity of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture is essential to enable farmers, pastoralists and animal breeders to meet current and future production challenges resulting from changes in the environment, including climate change; to enhance resistance to disease and parasites; and to respond to changes in consumer demand for animal products.

The Global Report on the state of AnGR was prepared on the basis of 168 country reports as the first comprehensive worldwide assessment of the state of animal genetic resources.

The Global Plan of Action contains four priority areas: Characterization, inventory and monitoring of trends and associated risks, Sustainable use and development, Conservation and Policies, institutions and capacity building.

A representative of ICAR presented a paper upon the role of ICAR and underlined the importance of animal identification, recording and evaluation in characterization and inventory, sustainable use and conservation of farm animal genetic resources. Active participation of experts from developing countries in ICAR work guarantees that ICAR rules, standards and guidelines are also applicable in low to medium input production systems, but that they need to be further improved in accordance with specific needs of developing countries.

ICAR at the Workshop on Animal Identification and Traceability in Asia and Pacific (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2-4 July 2007)

FAO and OIE (inter-governmental organisation for animal health) organised a workshop on animal identification and traceability in Asia and Pacific. The workshop recognized that in many countries, the legislative framework (laws and regulations) for identification and traceability is lacking or in need of amendment and updating to create a legal environment conducive to the implementation of effective identification and traceability schemes. Mr. Ole Klejs Hansen, Chairman of the Identification Sub-Committee of ICAR, informed on standardized animal identification systems using special plastic ear tags with a bar code developed by ICAR. The meeting was informed of the range of possibilities for animal identification, and felt that RFID technology, at the present moment, may not be feasible in many countries due to costs; data reading, recording and handling requirements and the livestock industry structure with many small farmers. The meeting therefore recommended the use of visual identifiers with the possibility of upgrading to machine readable technologies at a later stage (e.g. RFID or datamatrix coding).

Support for animal registration and recording in developing countries

The ICAR Board is in the process of signing a Letter of Agreement with FAO to address animal registration and recording in developing countries. Under the terms of this agreement, ICAR and the FAO Animal Production Division will jointly undertake the following activities:

- A review among the ICAR developing country members and organize a specialist meeting to prepare guidelines for animal registration and recording systems which would be recognizable for ICAR and FAO.
- Contribution to the FAO guidelines on formulation of breeding policies and strategies in low input systems by developing the financial requirements for their implementation.
- Assistance in the formulation of the breeding policy and strategy in Armenia.

Under the terms of the agreement, FAO will support activities of the ICAR Task Force Developing countries. The TF Developing Countries will be in charge of coordination of the work of other ICAR technical bodies in the implementing of this agreement.

OIE – important international partner of ICAR

Following a number of contacts between officials of OIE – Office International pour les Epizooties – and ICAR as a result of the OIE to FAO/ICAR workshop on animal identification in transition countries (Kuopio, June 2006), Mr. O.K. Hansen, Chairman of the ICAR Identification Sub-Committee met with Mr. Oswaldo Barcos at the FAO workshop on animal identification in Asia and Pacific. Taking into account that animal identification and registration are important for farm and herd management, animal recording, breeding and animal health and disease surveillance and mandates of the two organizations – OIE is an inter-governmental organization in charge of animal health, ICAR an NGO with the mission to promote and standardize animal identification, recording and evaluation - they agreed on the need to further develop cooperation between the two organisations. The ICAR Board has endorsed this initiative.

Is there a need for ICAR expertise in the global trade negotiations?

Mr. Frank Armitage, Vice-President of ICAR, visited World Trade Organization (WTO) headquarters in Geneva and discussed possibilities for the use of ICAR services and expertise by country delegations in trade negotiations. There was appreciation of ICAR's expertise and it was noted that negotiating parties may rely on ICAR's expertise and work in fields of standardization of identification and recording devices and methods. The ICAR Secretariat will undertake to inform country delegations accredited to WTO on ICAR experiences and expertise.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 36TH BIENNIAL SESSION

Preliminary programme

The National Organizing Committee in November 2007 published the Preliminary Programme of the 36th Biennial Session and distributed it to all Members and Associate Members. The Programme is also available at www.2008icar.org

On-line registration

Participants will register through the on-line registration system. It will also include reservation of hotel accommodations by using www.crownplaza.com/niagarafalls and www.fourpoints.com/niagarafalls

Session themes of the 36th Biennial Session

For up-dating on the sessions please refer to the website at: www.icar.org/pages/2008_biannual_meeting.htm