



ICAR Newsletter

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International Committee
for Animal Recording



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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is the second of a new series of ICAR Newsletters and follows our General Assembly and Technical Workshop in Verona, Italy. Although all major documents and decisions of the General Assembly as well as all presentations submitted at the Technical Workshop will be available on the ICAR web site, the Board considered that providing leadership to our Members as well as the broad public – our web site has an average of about 300 visits per day! - with quick information on activities of ICAR contributes to the better visibility of our Association and to transparency of ICAR operations.

In this issue of the Newsletter we present summaries of decisions of the General Assembly, main messages contained in presentations of invited speakers at the Technical Workshop and information on the current activities of the ICAR Board and of some Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces.

ICAR GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007

The ICAR General Assembly was held in Verona, Italy on the 31st of May 2007. Thirty-five delegates representing the quorum of ICAR voting Members, approved the Statement of Accounts for 2006 and the budget for 2008, received the President's and the Treasurer's reports, elected a new Board member, approved the Certificate of Quality for two Members and the Special Stamp for three Members, and approved five new Members and seven Associate Members.

The full text of the President's Report is available on the ICAR website at: www.icar.org/pages/2007_annual_meeting.htm.

ICAR remains financially sound with a € 53.131 surplus for the year ended (December 2006). No fee changes are planned for 2008 and the balanced budget for 2008 was approved by the members.

More ICAR Members...

In the year period since our last General Assembly, twelve organizations applied for ICAR membership – five for Full Member and seven for Associate Member. All applications were approved by the General Assembly.

Some our new members come from regions in which there are not current ICAR members, other new members are manufacturers of recording and identification devices and one is a provider of IT services. This proves that the interest to ICAR services and network is expanding not only geographically, but also as fields of interest.



The ICAR President, Neil Petreny, chairing a session during the Verona Technical Meeting.

More traits and species...

The establishment of Interbeef (an international genetic evaluation of beef cattle under the chairmanship of Brian Wickham, Ireland), the establishment of the Task Forces on Pig recording (lead by Milena Kovac, Slovenia), Animal fibers (lead by Marco Antonini, Italy), Parentage recording (lead by Dick Koorn, The Netherlands) and Milk recording practices (lead by Reinhard Pauw, Germany) represent important steps towards the implementation of our strategic objective regarding the coverage of more species and more traits by ICAR.

PROVISION OF BENEFITS TO ICAR MEMBERS

The International Agreement of Recording Practices and the ICAR Guidelines approved by the Kuopio General Assembly and subsequently technically cleared by respective technical bodies have been published and distributed to our Members. This is the third edition in four years!

Benchmarking has entered into the third year of operation. The final report of the third round will be available soon.

The web site of the *Patent Sentinel and Action Service* contains updated information on the current situation with regard to patenting in animal science and research and the very useful interactive section "ask PSAS" with replies of experts, by purpose appointed by ICAR, in this field.

NEWS ON CORNELL PATENT

On June 19, the Board of Appeal of the European Patent Office has dismissed the appeal T0365/05 of Cornell Research Foundation in the matter of patent 0637200 with the title "Method of bovine herd management".

The detailed reasons will be given later in written form, but the board followed in general the arguments of the opposition division from 2005. The board especially found that the patent did not contain an inventive step. The joint approach, initiated by the German Cattle Breeders Organisations and supported by all European ICAR-member-states, was therefore very successful. The result means that the matter is settled once and for all and European computing centres are free to use test-day models in genetic evaluation and for other purposes.

With the support of several countries it was possible to find relevant publications from the 1970s and 1980s, to demonstrate that the problem was not new and innovative. Gottfried Averdunk (ADR, Germany) did a great job in searching and preparing the relevant documents, communicating with the attorneys etc. and we all are very grateful to him. Reinhard Reents (as INTERBULL Chairman and ICAR secretary) was part of the German team of ADR that worked for this successful result.

More details will be released by ADR as soon as the minutes of the proceedings will be available.

Background information on the Cornell patent can be found on the PSAS website, at: www.psas-web.net/specific_cases.htm#The_Cornell_patenting_case

ICAR RECENT PUBLICATIONS

In the last 12 months intensive activities in the field of collection and distribution of information were realised including:

- € Collection of data on cow and sheep milk recording from 46 countries made available on the ICAR website (www.icar.org/pages/yearly_enquiry.htm).
- € Publication of Proceedings of the Kuopio session in the EAAP Scientific Series.
- € Publication of the Technical Series book no. 12 (freely available at: www.icar.org/pages/Publications/technical_series.htm) dealing with the issues of animal identification in Eastern Europe, and containing also the translation into Russian of four contributions.
- € A new brochure of ICAR and of the first issue of new series of the ICAR Newsletter.

BADI BESBES IS A NEW MEMBER OF THE ICAR BOARD

Mr. Badi Besbes (Tunisia) from the Animal Health and Production Division of FAO was elected new member of the Board. He will be in charge of ICAR activities in developing countries and in low to medium input production systems.

CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

Holstein UK and NRS Netherlands were the first ICAR Members that received the ICAR Certificate of Quality.

Neil Petreny, President of ICAR, handed over Certificates to Messrs. David Hewitt (Holstein, UK) for dairy cattle identification and Dick Koorn (NRS, The Netherlands) for dairy and beef identification, dairy production recording and dairy genetic evaluations.

SPECIAL STAMP

The General Assembly of ICAR granted to the Agricultural Research Council – Livestock Business Division of South Africa, to the South African Stud Book and Animal Improvement Association and to the Lithuanian Animal Recording and Evaluation Service the right to use the ICAR Special Stamp.

AWARDS

At the General Assembly, the President of ICAR presented the "President's Award" to Jean Stoll (former Inspector in ICAR) for his active participations in the Executive Board and contributions of ideas and initiatives that allow the Committee to get positive results.



Neil Petreny handed over the first ICAR Certificates of Quality to David Hewitt (Holstein, UK) for dairy cattle identification (above) and Dick Koorn (NRS, The Netherlands) (below)

The "Distinguished Service Award" was delivered to David Hewitt (outgoing Chairman of the Conformation Recording WG) and Hans Wilmink (outgoing Chairman of the Parentage Recording WG).

ICAR NEW MEMBERS

ICAR has 71 members – below is the list of the new members ratified by the General Assembly in Verona.

Full member

1. State Enterprise Agency for Animal Identification and Registration, Ukraine
2. Quality Milk Management Service, UK
3. AgSource Cooperative Service, USA
4. Scottish Agricultural College, UK
5. Polish Federation of Cattle Breeders and Dairy Farmers, Poland

Associate Member

1. Kyiv Poligraphic Factory Zorya, Ukraine
2. SAE Afikim, Israel
3. Caisley International GmbH, Germany
4. SUM-IT Computer Systems, UK
5. Foss Analytical A/S, Denmark
6. Fusion Electronics V.B., The Netherlands
7. Associazione Italiana Liberi Allevatori, Italy



Neil Petreny awarding with the "President Award" to Jean Stoll



Neil Petreny awarding with the "Distinguished Service Award" to David Hewitt and Hans Wilmink (for the last one the Award was collected by Dick Koorn here in the middle).

2007 TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

(www.icar.org/pages/2007_annual_meeting.htm)

More than one hundred high level technicians and managers of animal recording and genetic evaluation organizations and of related manufacturers from 29 countries participated at the 2007 Technical Workshop. Traditionally, ICAR General Assemblies held in the odd years (between the two ICAR Biennial Sessions) had purely administrative character. This was the first time that the session of the General Assembly was accompanied by a workshop aimed at providing the opportunity for managers and high level technicians from the ICAR member

organizations to meet and to exchange experiences in practical application of new technologies and the management of recording business. Manufacturers of recording and analytical devices had the opportunity to present their new products and to speak on their plans in developing new technologies to meet the growing demand for more efficient and economically acceptable animal recording as a base for the herd management and genetic improvement. The workshop was structured in four sessions:

1. Presentations from manufacturers.
2. Benchmarking.
3. Managing competition.
4. Training technicians and technology on farm.

The sessions were chaired by Frank Armitage, Reinhard Reents and Uffe Lauritsen.

The Workshop was sponsored by SAE Afikim, Caisley International GmbH and Foss Analytical A/S.

We are sure that those that were not able to attend the workshop wish to know more about the presentations that were given, for this reason in this Newsletter we present summaries and main messages from all papers presented at the workshop. All presentations can be found in the ICAR website at: http://www.icar.org/pages/2007_annual_meeting.htm. Moreover, we believe that this could be very useful, as a remind, even for those who attended the workshop.

Presentations from manufacturers

Caisley International GmbH – Henrik Winkeler

Modular system for tissue sampling facilitates parentage recording, determination of genetic defects, genotyping and diagnoses.

DeLaval International AB - Ole Lind - Ola Markusson

"...We can offer full automatic online cell counter for the use on every cow at every milking without cumbersome manual work as cost effective way of udder health monitoring and of findings problems before they spread..."



The Ukrainian Delegates, Sergiy Volkov (State Enterprise) and Maksym Bykhovtsov (JSC Zorya), with Neil Petreny and Andrea Rosati

afimilk™
The Heart of the Dairy Farm

Caisley International GmbH

FOSS

The Sponsors for Verona meeting who are kindly acknowledged



Henrik Winkeler from Caisley International GmbH

Foss A/S - Steen Kold-Christensen

"... HerdNavigator is a new system offering on farm management solutions optimizing control of reproduction (oestrus, pregnancy, disorders), mastitis and nutrition (protein, energy – ketosis)".



Steen Kold-Christensen
from Foss A/S

SAE Afikim - Gil Katz

"... AFILAB allows for the free flow non-interfering measurement and continuous real time acquisition of milk components (fat, lactose, blood, urea, SCC) during milking for the individual cow".



Gil Katz from SAE
Afikim

Benchmarking

Richard Cantin (CanWest DHI - Canada)

Key efficiency factors are: "... for profit" culture, revenues and expenses model, CRS (field technicians) compensation model. Service mix, laboratory operations, record processing, travel costs, partnership".

Uffe Lauritsen (Danish Cattle Federation - Denmark)

"... Recording is the basis for herd management, staff management, advisory service, veterinary services (national health schemes– Johne's, Salmonella Dublin), budget and planning, production documentation (financial institutions, insurance, national benchmarking) and breeding".



Mark Adam from
NorthStar
Cooperative, Inc.
(USA)

Mark Adam (NorthStar Cooperative, Inc., USA)

"... ICAR benchmarking is an easy and timely way to compare yourself to other business entities in turnover and time, samples per employee, and employee training".

Managing competition

David Hewitt (Holstein, UK)

"... Customer requirements and flexible and comprehensive data collection are paramount for success in milk recording in a competitive market".

Peter Giacomini (AgSource, USA)

"... View competition as an opportunity – there is nothing that inspires improvement more than a rival. Compete on the basis of VALUE – do not allow your product or service to become a commodity. More choices must be offered".



Peter Giacomini from
AgSource (USA)

Dick Koorn (NRS, The Netherlands)

"... In addition to farmers' demand for production and type, there is a growing demand for longevity, health and trouble-free milking. Consumers demand healthy and long living cows".



Dick Koorn from
NRS
(The Netherlands)

Training technicians: technology on farm

Suzanne Harding (Holstein UK, UK)

"... Will we need recorders (field technicians) in the future? Yes, where farmers need additional help inputting management data and analysing milk etc. due to lack of resource on farm. There is an increasingly important role for independent on-farm data collection, but some farmers will insist on a true "do it yourself" system benefits including costs and convenience".



Suzanne Harding
from Holstein UK
(UK)

Mauro Fioretti (Italy)

"... Around 80% of udder health and hygienic problems come out from bad milking routine. The milking machines control is just a part of milking activity, i.e. all that happens from animal entering to parlor to milk loaded in tank truck".

Juho Kyntaja (Finland)

"... Quality checks and supervision are ensured through instructions by e-mail, personal training and additional test milking by specialised advisors).



Martin Burke
from ICBF
(Ireland)

Martin Burke (Ireland)

"... Electronic "do it yourself" recording system requires adequate training of field technicians (metering and systems, laboratory, computers and practical work with a supervisor) and farmers (one day training, delivery of leaflets with clear and simple instructions)".

Terry Hopper, (the presentation was made by Jay Mattison, USA)

"... If you choose to invest in new technology, then you need to invest in training your technicians how to use it - only then will everyone benefit".

Technical visit

SAE AFIKIM sponsored the technical visit at the experimental farm of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Bologna University. The objective was to show the new device for in-line milk analyzers "AFILAB". There were about 60 participants to the technical visit. The personnel of SAE AFIKIM and of the University presented the new device and all the attendee were able to see the new device working in real time.

FROM THE ICAR GOVERNING AND TECHNICAL BODIES

The ICAR Board at its meeting held on 30 May and 1 June 2007 in Verona agreed to recommend t the General Assembly the transfer of seat from Paris to Rome in 2008 (administrative savings) and reviewed the planning cycle for 2007 and 2008. An ongoing planning cycle will be a part of the routine Board activities. A new strategic plan will be presented to the 2008 General Assembly for approval.

The meeting of the Board and chairpersons of Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces reviewed activities of ICAR technical bodies. While underlying the usefulness of such meetings of the exchange of experience, the ICAR Board agreed that the technical bodies should submit activity reports to the biennial sessions of the General Assembly, while meetings of chairpersons with the Board should focus on specific problems and issues related to the methods of work.

Sub-Committee INTERBULL (R. Reents, Germany) monitors and guides activities in the field of the international genetic evaluation of dairy bulls. INTERBULL Centre in Uppsala, Sweden, carried out four routine runs, two test runs and the first routine evaluation for female fertility. The Center is in the position to carry out evaluation of production, conformation, udder, longevity, calving and female fertility. Many organizations participating in the



Jay Mattison presenting the paper on behalf of Terry Hopper (USA)



Technical visit at the experimental farm of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Bologna University

international genetic evaluation have started to use the verification software prior to the submission of data for evaluation. Following the workshop on beef evaluation held in Paris in March 2007 and the finalization of agreements between members of Inter-Beef, the Center has started a three year project that aims for aroutine genetic evaluation of beef bulls at the end of this period during the current year. More details on www.interbull.slu.se.

Sub-Committee on Identification (O. K. Hansen, Denmark) started performance test of conventional plastic ear tags in April this year and the four tag types passing the preliminary assessments are on their way to the laboratory test. Tags passing the lab test will be placed in preliminary field tests of three months.

Following the agreement between ISO and ICAR on the tasks of ICAR in approving RFID devices, the platform of the ICAR test protocol will be changed so as to become an ISO standard by July 2007.

Working group on DNA Analysis (P. Ajmone Marsan, Italy) certified 12 laboratories for the DNA analysis for parenthood recording and registration. The Group is planning to send the new improved questionnaire in 2008 and to develop a proposal for the ring test. Tasks of the Group include also the preparation of Guidelines on Genetic Diseases.

Working Group on Sheep Milk Recording (J. M. Astruc, France) at two meetings held in 2006 reviewed its past activities and the situation in the sheep milk sector. In 2006 the first on farm electronic milk meter was approved. The on-line inquiry has shown its advantages, but more work is required to stimulate the participation of all sheep milk recording organizations. The Group plans to develop a glossary of terms used in sheep milk recording.

Task Force on Animal Fibre (M. Antonini, Italy) established in Kuopio in 2006 approved its Terms of Reference which include a review of current procedure for measuring animal fibre and possible development of alternatives for the different types of recording. The Task Force planned to initiate its activity with analyzing the measuring systems of alpaca and llama fibre production.

Task Force on Recording Practices (R. Pauw, Germany) plans to carry out a survey of the existing practices and to propose the system of registration and recognition of recording procedures. The Task Force will merge its activities with the WG Lactation Calculation after the Niagara Falls Biennial Session in 2008. Its results are expected to facilitate procedures for the approval of the Certificate of Quality and to contribute to the quality of data for the international genetic evaluation of dairy bulls.

Task Force on Parentage Recording (D. Koorn, The Netherlands) established in Kuopio in 2006 approved its Terms of Reference which include a review of current procedure for parentage recording, development of possible alternatives for optima recording and tools for measuring the quality of recording.

36th ICAR BIENNIAL SESSION AND INTERBULL MEETING

Participants at the 2007 Technical Workshop and General Assembly welcomed the progress report on the preparation for the 36 ICAR Biennial Session to be held in Niagara Falls, USA, in 2008 (16-21 June) submitted by Jay Mattison. More on www.2008icar.org.

The Board also decided to hold the 2009 ICAR General Assembly and Technical Workshop in Porec, Croatia, in May 2009.



Neil Petreny and Milan Zjalic with the Croatian Delegates that attended the ICAR Technical Meeting. Croatia will host in 2009 the next ICAR technical workshop