



ICAR Newsletter

May 2009

International Committee
for Animal Recording



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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Developments in animal industry worldwide have confirmed the relevance and importance of themes and discussions we had at the Niagara Falls Biennial session last summer. Decisions of our technical and governing bodies taken at the session will help our members address the challenges arising from technology developments related to animal recording and genetic evaluation services and the volatile costs of animal production. The current economic and financial crisis has affected all sectors of global economy, including the animal industry. It particularly affected new production entities and farms, which are burdened with debt servicing on one hand and the rapid decline of farm gate prices of animal products on the other. In countries where governments are involved in supporting animal recording and genetic evaluation there are signs of partial or total withdrawal of governments from providing financial support. Our affected members will be required to utilize all of their available resources and management skills to cope with these new conditions.

The next General Assembly and the Workshop on "The Management of New Recording Technologies" is scheduled for May 12-14th in Porec, Croatia (more details available at www.icar.org). The two day workshop will be an opportunity for our Members and Associate Members to meet and exchange views and experiences on how to manage the new global and local challenges our industry faces. The Workshop will also explore opportunities on how to improve services for our customers. I would encourage members to take advantage of the resources by attending the Workshop or reviewing presentation materials on our web site following the meeting.

Since our session in Niagara Falls, USA last June, we have been pleased to welcome five new members to ICAR. Growing global membership is one of goals set in our Strategy (see more details below) and meeting the diverse and dynamic needs of our global members is an ongoing challenge for your organization and technical committees as a result of our global mandate. The Board and Secretariat look forward to working with the many world-wide expert volunteers that participate and contribute to the development of international standards and guidelines through the ICAR partnership.

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2009

As part of the annual planning process, the Board establishes short and long-term goals. These goals provide a clear direction for the Secretariat and our members.

Our long-term objectives are:

- Grow membership to 100 by 2012.
- Grow the number of countries represented by members to 60 countries by 2012.
- Grow the number of active Certificate of Quality assessments to 30 organizations by 2012.
- Introduce routine InterBeef evaluation services by 2011.

Consistent with our long-term objectives we establish annual goals. For 2009 our major goals include:

- Grow membership to 85.
- Complete 20 Certificate of Quality assessments.
- Approve standards for on-farm analysis devices.
- Develop a genomic strategy.

In addition to the above key objectives for the year, the ICAR Secretariate will undertake a number of other initiatives including the enhancement of the Benchmark Service and the development of materials to promote member benefits and services.

NEW ICAR MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome five new ICAR members. The Animal Breeding Center and Improvement of Animal Production from Iran (**ABCIAP**), Cooperativa Regional de Inseminación (**COOPRINSEM**) from Chile and Associação para o Apoio à Bovinicultura Leiteira do Norte (**ANABLE**) from Portugal are welcomed as regular Members and **Royal Tag** and **Seidic** from Switzerland are welcomed as Associate Members. With the addition of these five new members, ICAR membership has now reached a total of 83 regular and associate members.

NEW PROCEDURE FOR THE APPROVAL OF ICAR GUIDELINES

The ICAR Board has prepared revised Bylaws on the procedure for the approval of amendments and changes in the International agreement on recording practices and ICAR standards, rules and guidelines. The purpose of the proposed changes is to facilitate full participation of Members and Associate Members in the process of defining and setting ICAR standards and guidelines. According to this proposal, amendments and changes made by ICAR technical bodies during ICAR sessions may be provisionally approved by the General Assembly. Members will be invited to communicate their views regarding the proposals for 60 days after the session. If the proposal is supported by a majority of Members, the proposal shall be approved. This proposal will be discussed further at the next session to be held in Porec meeting, May 2009.

GENOMIC EVALUATION OF BREEDING VALUES OF BULLS

INTERBULL Workshop

The use of genomic information in animal breeding has become a matter of great interest among those working with cattle selection schemes worldwide. Some countries have already incorporated genomic information in their genetic evaluations, and genomic breeding values are already in use for both young sire selection and semen marketing. Following discussion at the Niagara Falls Biennial Session and the decision of the General Assembly on this issue on the need for more in depth analysis of the implication of genomic information on international genetic evaluations, Interbull Center carried out an international workshop in Uppsala, Sweden, January 27 and 28, 2009. The main objectives of the workshop were to set the scientific framework for the use of genomic data in national and international genetic evaluations and to promote the idea and benefits of international collaboration, under the auspices of Interbull Sub-Committee with regards to genomic evaluation and selection. A total of 101 people from 26 countries participated in the workshop, which was limited to representatives from Interbull customers and working groups.



INTERBULL steering committee

The Interbull Steering Committee at its ordinary meeting held in Uppsala under the leadership of its chairman, Reinhard Reents agreed that Interbull shall take proactive steps to incorporate this new technique in its portfolio. Interbull must not risk its excellent reputation as provider of unbiased comparisons of genetic evaluations across countries and therefore any recommendation of use of genomic breeding values (GEVBs) or direct genomic values (DGVs) can only be given after validation test for unbiased predictions and unbiased reliabilities are in place. It is realistic that an acceptable validation procedure can be developed by the August 2009 meeting in Barcelona and can be approved at same time. A stepwise implementation is envisioned, starting with the use of conversion formulas (August 2009), continuing with development and implementation of GMACE (early 2010) and finally integrating prediction equations.

INTERBULL STRATEGIC PLAN

Following a decision made at the Niagara Falls meeting, Interbull Steering Committee started the process of strategic planning to prepare for the rapid changes in the breeding industry. The Steering Committee invited the Interbull Scientific Advisory Committee and some members of the ICAR Board to participate in a strategic planning session held at the end of January. The session involved the development of a vision statement, key success factors and draft short and long term objectives for Interbull. A summary document will be reviewed by the Steering Committee in May 2009 and the strategic plan will be presented and discussed at the business meeting at the August 2009 Interbull Meeting, in Barcelona

For more details see INTERBULL Bulletin available at: www.interbull.org.

SUB-COMMITTEE FOR RECORDING DEVICES

The Sub-Committee for Recording Devices met March 25th and 26th in Holstebro, Denmark. Members of the Sub-Committee taking into account the fact that the knowledge in the field of devices and equipment for animal recording, and particularly for milk recording, is spread among experts connected with ICAR, International Standardization Organization and International Dairy Federation, agreed on the need for closer cooperation and contacts both among individual experts and organizations. The meeting noted that the major part of the Section 11 of the ICAR Guidelines have been rewritten in 2008. The remaining guideline sections on buffalo and small ruminants milk recording will be revised during the current year. It agreed that the visual presentation of approved recording devices on the ICAR website should be completed with some additional information.

SUB-COMMITTEE FOR ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

Meeting in Buenos Aires

The Identification Sub-Committee held its March 2009 meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, at the offices of the Holstein Association of Argentina. A study tour organized by Ms. Liliانا Chazo from the Association included visits to several milk and meat production units near Buenos Aires. Members of the Sub-Committee had the opportunity to see how the livestock industry operates in the country where it represents an important component of the national economy.

The Sub-Committee agreed on the commencement of field tests of conventional eartags, electronic performance criteria for transponders and transceivers, electronic performance criteria for transponders and transceivers, ICAR's function as ISO Registration Authority and on its program for 2009 and 2010. Andrea Rosati, Secretary General of ICAR confirmed that the European Union has accepted the ICAR testing procedure and approval of animal identification devices. This acceptance will streamline the process and bring benefits to all EU countries.

Participation at the OIE conference

Ole Klejs Hansen, chairman, and Ken Evers, a member of the Identification Sub-Committee, participated at the Conference of the International animal Health Organization (OIE) held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in conjunction with the Sub-Committee's meeting. ICAR presented a poster with information on its activities in the field of animal identification as an ISO Registration Authority for ID devices and on ICAR standards and testing procedures. In addition, O.K. Hansen presented a paper on pig identification in which he covered all methods of pig identification and



Uffe Lauritsen
Chairman of the
Recording Devices
Sub-Committee

ICAR standards and procedure for testing of identification devices. 250 copies of an ICAR brochure on our activities were distributed to participants at the Conference.

Meeting of the ISO Working Group 3

The ICAR Secretariat hosted a meeting of the ISO Working Group 3 last September in Rome office. The meeting was successful in finding a mutually acceptable working procedure for testing and approval of animal identification devices.

Retesting Approved Devices?

Retesting of approved products is an option for the ISO Registration Authority, but until now ICAR has not retested products marketed following approval. However, recent publications from US and alleged EU market concerns with some products has raised awareness of the need for retesting. The first discussions were made at the ISO Technical Working Group meeting in early March 2009. The Sub-Committee will draft a proposal for a retest scheme in which the construction and electronic characteristics of the originally tested transponders will be compared to transponders bought from the market. The proposed retest scheme would describe possible sanctions for manufacturers and products and address how the retest program could be financed

WORKING GROUP FOR GENETIC ANALYSIS

Seven new laboratories have been accredited for genetic analysis and parental recording.

SPECIAL STAMP EXPIRES 30 JUNE 2009

The ICAR Special Stamp expires on June 30th, 2009. The Special Stamp is being replaced by the Certificate of Quality, which was introduced in 2008. The Certificate of Quality involves an independent assessment of the organizations animal improvement activities which is carried out by ICAR approved auditors. Current Special Stamp members who apply for Certificate of Quality by June 30th, 2009 will be able to continue using the Special Stamp until their Certificate of Quality audit is completed. Existing Special Stamp members who do not apply for the Certificate of Quality prior to the deadline must cease the use of the Special Stamp on all documents on June 30th, 2009. For more information, please contact Frank Armitage at the ICAR Secretariat



Ole Klejs Hansen
Chairman of the Animal
Identification Sub-Committee

Genetic analysis and parental recording accreditation

Laboratory name	Country
Certagen GmbH	Germany
Estonia Laboratory of Genetics	Estonia
GeneControl GmbH	Germany
Institute of Veterinary Medicine	Germany
Laboratory of DNA-analyses and Parentage Contro	Denmark
Laboratory for paternity testing and genetical diagnostics	Germany
Maxxam Analytics Inc.	Canada

CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

In January 2009, the Certificate of Quality was granted to Quality Milk Management Services (UK) for production recording in dairy cattle and to Association of ProAgra Centres (Finland) for dairy cattle identification and dairy production recording.

At the time of writing, the Secretariat is working with requests for the ICAR Certificate of Quality from six members: Slovak Breeding Services; Moravian Czech Breeders'; Associazione Italiana Allevatori; Scottish Agricultural College; Estonian Animal Recording Centre.



The logo for the "Certificate of Quality" granted by ICAR

PSAS - PATENT SENTINEL AND ACTION SERVICE

There are two interesting cases currently being discussed involving patents: WO/2008/025093 'Whole genome based genetic evaluation and selection process' and WO/2008/074101 'Artificial selection method and reagents'. The first patent is on the PSAS website and has been analyzed by the PSAS legal expert Erin Ogden of the USA. PSAS and ICAR members have been informed of the information present on the website. The procedure for analysis and placing of the second patent on the PSAS web site will be finalized soon. More information is available at: www.psas-web.net



PSAS homepage (www.psas-web.net)

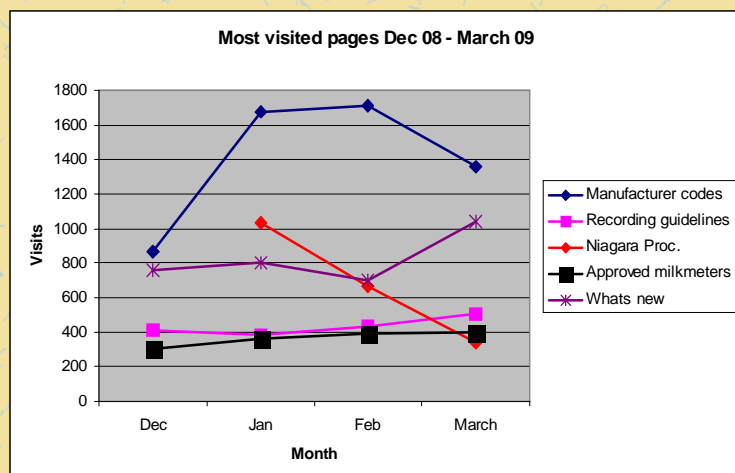
NEWS FROM THE ICAR SECRETARIAT

Proceedings of the Niagara Falls ICAR Session

ICAR has published proceedings from the 34th ICAR Biennial Session held in June 2008 in Niagara Falls, NY, USA. Proceedings have been placed on the ICAR web site (2,200 visits in the last six months) and then published within the ICAR Technical Series. All of 450 participants at the biennial session will receive their copies by mail. Additional copies are available from the ICAR Secretariat. Proceedings also contain the ICAR survey on cow and sheep milk recording for years 2006 and 2007. Data for the survey have been obtained from ICAR members through the ICAR web site. In addition to the printed information contained in Proceedings, member survey data is also available at www.icar.org/pages/Publications/biennial_statistics.htm.

ICAR website - Some statistics

ICAR web site continues to attract numerous visitors on a regular basis. During the year 2008, the most used sections include the Manufacturers' Codes (400 to 800 visits per month), Certificate of Quality (280 visits monthly), Recording Guidelines (250 visits monthly), and Approved milk meters for cattle, sheep and goats (160 visits a month).

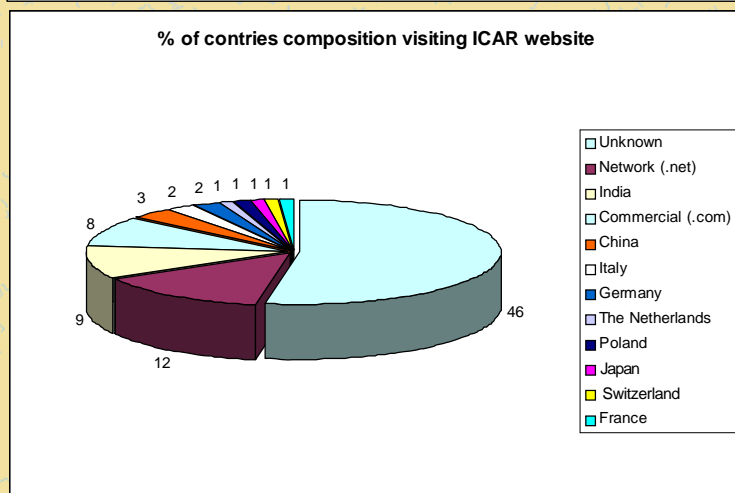
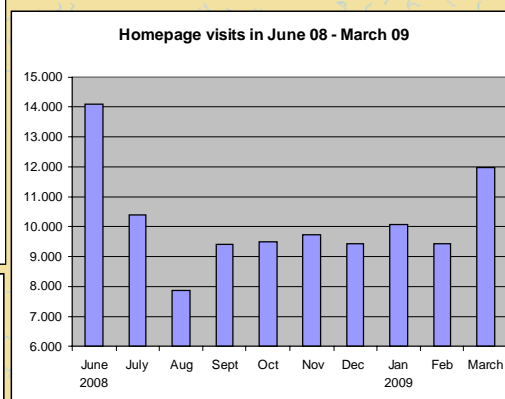
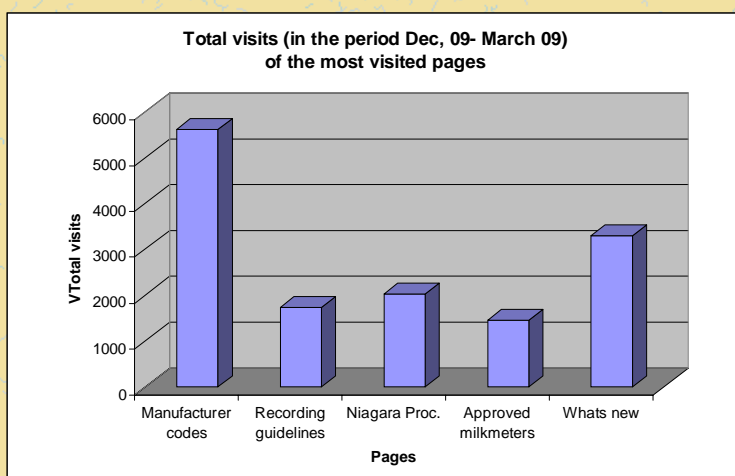


New service: discussion forum

The ICAR Secretariat started to operate a new service for Members and interested experts: the ICAR discussion Forum, which is available on ICAR web site www.service.icar-com/forum.

ICAR 37TH SESSION IN LATVIA

ICAR Secretariat informs that the 37th ICAR Session will be held in Riga (Latvia) from 1 to 4 June 2010. More information will be distributed by allert e-mail messages and on the website as soon as more details will be established. The website of the event is now available at: www ldc.gov.lv/icar2010.



SECRETARIAT'S CONTACTS

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