



# ICAR Newsletter

## March 2012

**International Committee  
for Animal Recording**



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## **A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT**

The period after the Bourg-en-Bresse meeting was rich in events and activities that would certainly have a bearing on the future of our Organization. I refer in the first place to the outcome and the follow-up of our South-American seminar in Santiago de Chile, new memberships and the increased relevance of ICAR mission and activities in this part of the world, the ICAR participation in the EU funded project in Turkey and to the progress in the implementation of genomics in genetic evaluation.

The ICAR Board has launched the new round of updating and revision of ICAR Guidelines and adopted the standardized procedure as a tool that would facilitate the work of our technical bodies in implementing their tasks and terms of reference in this respect. The encouraging signals received from our principal Sub-Committees (Recording Devices, Identification, INTERBULL) indicate that the Board's initiative was timely and to the point.

Preparations for the Cork session are progressing in a manner that promises not only the fruitful exchange of experiences but also a wealth of new ideas and solutions for future challenges encountered by our Members and their clients. Looking forward to see you in Cork!

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE ICAR STATUTES**

The ICAR Board approved draft changes in the ICAR STATUTES that include regulations regarding the role of the President of ICAR as the President of the Executive Board, practice of inspecting of ICAR accounts by inspectors and the right of the Board to determine the terms of reference of Sub-Committees and to appoint the chairperson and members of the Sub-Committee delegated by ICAR Members. It also regulates the use of logos owned by ICAR (ICAR and INTERBULL logos, logo of the Certificate of Quality) and conditions in which ICAR Members are entitled to use these logos. Amendments to the Statutes will be submitted to the Extraordinary General Assembly in Cork for approval.

## **NEW STRATEGIC PLAN**

The ICAR Board approved the first draft strategic plan developed on the basis of analysis of circumstances and environment in which ICAR and its Members operate and of reports on the implementation of the plan 2008 – 2012. The Board will approve the final draft for the submission to the General Assembly in May 2012 and place it on the ICAR web site for comments and suggestions prior to the final endorsement by the General Assembly in Cork.

## **The Standardised Procedure for Development of ICAR Guidelines – A New Tool For ICAR Technical Bodies**

A document on standardized procedure for development of ICAR Guidelines approved by the ICAR Board in February 2012 contains basic principles related to the purpose, content and the form of ICAR rules, standards and guidelines (ICAR Guidelines).

Guidelines should be formulated in a clear and un-ambiguous manner. They should focus on standards, rules and methods of identification, recording and evaluation. The body of ICAR guidelines may be accompanied by annexes and appendices containing necessary technical details and, if required, justifications and narratives. Scientifically sound optional methods of animal identifications, recording and evaluation adjusted to specific production systems should be also included in guidelines.

## **New “fees structure”**

The new structure of membership fees approved by the Board is based on costs of ICAR services provided

to Members and on the size and volume of services provided to their costumers reflected in fixed and variable parts of membership fees. The new fee structure will be implemented after discussion and eventual approval by the General Assembly from January 2013.

## **FROM ICAR SUBCOMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

### **Recording Devices and Animal Identification**

Both subcommittees had their meetings held in February this year. The Recording Devices SC met in Switzerland at Tänekon Research Centre 6-9 February and the Animal ID SC met in Paris 28-29 February where they were hosted by Institute de l'Elevage. The main agenda item in both meetings was to finalize the revisions of the respective Guideline sections for presentation to the General Assembly approval of the ICAR annual meeting in Cork.

### **INTERBULL Technical Workshop**

79 representatives from 25 countries gathered on 2 and 3 February 2012 at the Centro Congressi Europa - Veronafiere, in Verona, Italy, to discuss the methods for international comparisons of genomic evaluations, as well as the logistics of the collaboration hosted by Interbull around this topic. The workshop focused on two main themes, international genomic evaluations and validation of genomically enhanced breeding values (GEBVs).. The final session was dedicated to understand the changes expected from the introduction of a sire-dam pedigree structure in the computation of MACE EBVs. As usual in Interbull events, both the Interbull Technical Committee (ITC) and the Interbull Steering Committee (SC) had their ordinary meetings before and after the workshop. The Interbull expresses a very special thanks to the Veronafiere and the Associazione Nazionale Allevatori Razza Bruna Italiana (ANARB) for the excellent organization and impeccable support!

### **The GEBV validation test**

On the basis of information collected and views of representatives of participating institutions and organizations, the INTERBULL Sub-Committee decided that countries that want to validate national GEBVs need to participate in the GEBV validation test starting on April 12, 2012, for all production traits (milk, fat and protein yields). All countries participating in the GMACE pilot were requested to participate in the April 12, 2012, GEBV validation test also for somatic cell score, direct longevity, stature and cow conception rate (CC1). Results would be reviewed by the ITC at the Cork meeting in connection with the GMACE pilot results. The participation in the planned GMACE test run in September 2012 will require validation for the same traits as for the conventional MACE run.

### **New INTERBULL Guidelines**

The INTERBULL Sub-Committee established a working group to review the Interbull Guidelines, which are outdated. Members of the group are: Brian Van Doormaal, Raphael Mrode and João Dürr. The goal is to have a new text by the end of 2012.

### **The use of SNP data for parentage verification**

The ICAR working group for parentage recording undertook measures to introduce the use of SNP data for parentage verification. As Suzanne Harding, the chair of the WG informed participants at the INTERBULL Technical Workshop, the use of SNP data for parentage verification was in its final stages of testing and standardization, in a joint effort between ISAG and ICAR. The transition from the micro satellites method needs to be gradual and ways of integrating both methods are being investigated. Creation of an international SNP data repository for parentage verification purposes at INTERBULL was considered highly desirable.



Participants to the “International Farm Advisory Systems and Dairy Farm Management Congress”

The ICAR Board requested Working Groups on parentage recording and on DNA techniques to prepare reports for the approval in Cork and the clear message to Member Organizations regarding the use of SNPs in parentage recording.

## **ICAR IN THE EU PROJECT IN TURKEY**

### **International Farm Advisory Systems and Dairy Farm Management Congress**

The congress on farm advisory systems and dairy farm management was held 15-16 March 2012 in Kusadasi (Aydın, Turkey). The congress was organized by the Cattle Breeders' Association of Aydın within the EU funded project on development of dairy farm advisory system in the province of Aydın. Over 370 participants – Turkish dairy farmers, representatives of producers associations, academic community, Turkish state authorities and international participants – reviewed the state and perspectives of the dairy sector and needs for improvement in support services for dairy farmers. Participants from several European countries (France, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Croatia) presented dairy farm advisory systems in their respective countries. Sergio Pavon from the DG SANCO of the EU presented EU policies in this sector with particular emphasis on animal identification as the tool in control of animal health and in farm management. ICAR as the project partner supported the organization of and actively participated in the congress. ICAR was represented by Uffe Lauritsen, Andrea Rosati, Pierre-Louis Gastinel and Milan Zjalic. In addition to their roles of invited speakers and moderators of panels, members of the ICAR team had intensive contacts with representatives of our ICAR Member - the Cattle Breeders' Association of Turkey and with the local association of dairy farmers. Visits to dairy farms and discussions with farmers contributed to the better understanding of the state of dairy production in Turkey and on the development potential of this sector.

A handbook for dairy farm advisors prepared by a group of Turkish and international experts was published within the project and presented at the congress. English version of the handbook and presentations submitted at the congress will be placed on the ICAR web site.

## **ICAR SERVICES**

### **Benchmarking**

The ICAR secretariat initiated the new run of benchmarking that took place in the second half of the 2011. 27 organizations participated in the benchmarking. The ICAR Board invited representatives of organizations that participated to send their comments and suggestions for improvement.

### **Certificate of Quality**

#### **National Milk Record (NMR) – the ICAR Member informs its customers on the Certificate of Quality**

NMR customers can rest assured that their milk records are meeting the toughest quality scrutiny of any worldwide milk recording organisation. The company has recently been awarded the ICAR Certificate of Quality for Dairy Cattle Production Recording for the second time, which is unique in Europe. This involved a comprehensive independent audit that scrutinised NMR's recording process from collecting samples to delivering results. ICAR quality certificates are issued every three years and the procedure might alternate between a completed questionnaire evaluated by an independent external auditor and an on-site audit, again, by an independent foreign auditor. NMR and the Israel Cattle Breeders Association are the first milk recording organisations worldwide to be awarded the quality certificate a second time, following the revised 'higher level' audit.

## **FROM ICAR MEMBERS**

### **Sue Cope – Associate of the Royal Agricultural Societies**

On 25 January 2012, Sue Cope of Cattle Information Services was honoured with the award of Associate of the Royal Agricultural Societies. The editor of the ICAR Newsletter and the staff of the Secretariat extend to Ms Sue Cope their congratulations and best wishes for success in her future work.

### **Four Organisation join ICAR**

In March 2012 four new organisations join ICAR, namely:

- Registros Genealógicos Zootécnicos del Perú , Peru  
(Full Member)
- Consejo Nacional de los Recursos Genéticos Pecuarios A.C. (CONARGEN A.C.), Mexico  
(Full Member)
- Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca - Subsecretaría de Ganadería, Ecuador  
(Full Member)
- Allflex Europe SAS, France  
(Associate Member)

To all these new Members a warm welcome from ICAR.

## LAST NEWS FROM ICAR 38th SESSION, CORK (IRELAND)

Registrations for the ICAR 2012 meeting being held in Cork from 28th May to Friday 1st June are now open and filling quickly with the early bird discount, worth €50 per delegate, due to close at the end of March. Please register as soon as possible and help ensure we can cater for your needs.

Organisers have arranged a full and interesting program for the week confirmed. Every day there are events that will be of interest to breeders, commercial farmers, policy makers, scientists and staff of recording organisations. The program comprises five plenaries, seven technical sessions, two industry days, and some twenty meetings of ICAR Sub-Committees, Working Groups, and Task Forces. The technical tours to dairy, beef or sheep farms will focus on how Irish farmers are capturing the benefits of animal recording. Please visit the website [www.icar2012.ie](http://www.icar2012.ie) to see the outline program and to register.

The organising committee is looking forward to seeing you in Cork.



## NEW INTERBULL BULLETIN

Since its first publication in 1986, the Interbull Bulletin has become a well-known reference for genetic evaluation of bovine cattle worldwide. It contains the state-of-the-art in genetic evaluation methods, as well as the most recent information on national and international implementations. Authors have an ideal forum to discuss new ideas and to challenge current genetic models. Following the Interbull Bulletin over the years presents a rich opportunity to understand how the current models were developed and how new traits were incorporated into genetic evaluations.



Over time, the Bulletin has evolved to become available through Interbull's webpage as well as in print form, and today the vast majority of Bulletin readership is on-line as we move away from print copies.

It is in this spirit of evolution that we announce the next step of the Bulletin's history – its move into the Open Journal System platform.

The Open Journal System is a journal management tool created with the aim of not only increasing access to research but also improving the scholarly and public quality of research. The Open Journal System was developed by the Public Knowledge Project and operates through a partnership between several universities and libraries. If you wish to see more information about the projects please visit their Official Website at; <http://pkp.sfu.ca/>.

Moving the Interbull Bulletin to this new platform will not only allow for every past issue to be easily accessed, ensuring historical information relating to genetic evaluation of bovine cattle remains accessible, but will give the Interbull Bulletin a place in which it can also grow and improve. Authors will have a clear and modern framework to submit their articles, and time between submission and publication will be greatly reduced.

Along with the launch of the Interbull Bulletin on this new platform, we are pleased to announce that two new issues will be available. Proceedings from the Technical Workshop in Guelph (Bulletin 43) and the Interbull Meeting in Stavanger (Bulletin 44), both in 2011, are the first new issues to be launched on the Open Journal System. Additionally, the first 14 issues of the Interbull Bulletin, which were not available online, are now at our readers' disposal.

From now on, Dr. Hossein Jorjani will act as the editor-in-chief of the Interbull Bulletin and he is extremely committed to establish a fruitful interaction with authors and readers.

Finally, the Interbull Centre expresses its sincere gratitude to our colleague Fernanda Amaral, who has made this achievement possible through her unconditional dedication.

Now take your time and visit the new Interbull Bulletin at:

[www-interbull.slu.se/ojs/index.php/ib/index](http://www-interbull.slu.se/ojs/index.php/ib/index)

Enjoy!



## **FRANK ARMITAGE ELECTED FELLOW OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES**

ICAR Secretariat is pleased to communicate that Frank Armitage has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies. Frank is well known to all ICAR Members and professionals involved in ICAR activities not only as the former Vice-President and organizer of Manufacturers' Showcase and technical workshops but also as an active member of the ICAR Secretariat in charge of Certificate of Quality and of providing service to ICAR Sub-Committees and Working Groups. Congratulations to Frank and best wishes for his future work!



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