



ICAR NEWSLETTER

MAY 2015

A word from the President

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A word from the President

In November 2014 the ICAR Board adopted a list of priority actions to be undertaken in the implementation on the Future ICAR Strategy. The list included the organisation of two important events – African Symposium on animal identification and recording in South Africa and the ICAR Technical Meeting in Krakow, Poland. It is my pleasure to communicate that the first event - African Symposium – was a big success thanks to efforts of the local organisers, our international partners and the ICAR executive team. The Pretoria Declaration as the final act of the Symposium will serve as a policy orientation for ICAR and all stakeholders in the region, including public institutions and authorities and the private breeders and producers.

Preparations for the second event – Krakow Technical Meeting – are well advanced. The program of the Meeting has already attracted over 200 participants and I hope that their number will increase during the coming weeks. The Board has finalized basic documents for the General Assembly to be held on the 10th June 2015 in Krakow.

In this Newsletter we present a shortened version of the Pretoria Declaration and activities of the INTERBULL Sub-Committee and of the Animal Data Exchange and Dairy Cattle Recording Working Groups. Concluding this short introduction, I wish to extend my congratulations to United States of America National DHIA on the occasion of their 50th anniversary and appreciation of the ICAR family for their contribution to the attainment of ICAR objectives.

United States of America National DHIA's 50th Anniversary

Our new CE Martin Burke was delighted to participate in the USA's National Dairy Herd Information Association's (DHIA) Annual meeting held in Columbus, Ohio from March 08th – 11th. This was a milestone year for the Association as it was celebrating its 50th year anniversary. The mission statement of the DHIA is "To serve National DHIA members and the dairy industry in advancing dairy information services." Since 1965 the National DHIA has successfully provided its USA dairy farmers with quality assured data and herd information. The DHIA has been the cornerstone on which the USA's dairy sector's success was built.

Martin presented to the DHIA's Field Services Managers meeting on March 09th where he summarised how ICAR has three main roles in helping support National Organisations like the DHIA ;

- Providing Information and Services to Organisations to Develop, Operate and Manage their Business
- Providing Guidelines, Standards and Rules for Identification, Performance Recording in Production & Evaluation of farm animals
- Providing a networking and exchange platform - a forum for exchange of experience, information and joint work

Borrowing the Olympic logo to make the point, our CE stressed that ICAR wants to truly be a global organisation with world-wide membership. Conscious perhaps that it was once perceived as too EU centric, ICAR recognises and acknowledges the active role USA's National DHIA members have



played in promoting standard recording practices in the region. Especially so in the last decade with US members now playing key roles within ICAR, both on our Board as well as participating in many of the various working groups/committees – helping shape ICAR's future.

We look forward to continued collaboration and wish all our friends in the National DHIA a further 50 years of success to come.

AIR in Africa

Animal ID and performance recording in Africa

Animal identification and traceability (AIT) play a key role in animal health and disease control. AIT systems help countries to put in place measures such as surveillance, early detection and notification of disease outbreaks, rapid response, control of animal movements, and zoning or compartmentalization. In Africa, some countries (e.g. Namibia and Swaziland) have developed traceability systems to enable them to comply with international standards, and others (e.g. the United Republic of Tanzania) are in the process of doing so. These developments are also driven by increasingly stringent requirements in domestic markets, notably with regard to food safety.

Animal identification and performance recording (PR) are key to genetic improvement and to better herd and flock management, and thus to increased productivity. In Africa, this has been amply demonstrated in South Africa, where decades of performance recording have resulted in remarkable improvements in animal performance in the commercial sector. The experience of the South African Stud Book and Livestock Improvement Association – an ICAR Member – could play a key role in support of establishment of animal identification and recording adapted to the local production systems and the social environment.

FAO-ICAR Symposium on AIR

African Symposium on “Animal identification and recording (AIR) systems for traceability and livestock development in sub-Saharan Africa”

Around 130 participants from 30 countries met in Pretoria, South Africa, on 14-16 April 2015, at the occasion of the international Symposium jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR), the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Stud Book and Animal Improvement Association and the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa, the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, and their public and private sector partners from Africa and beyond.

The high-level delegates included permanent secretaries of ministries of agriculture, heads of animal production departments and chief veterinary officers, representatives of the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, the World Animal Health Organization, the International Livestock Research Institute and regional research centers, from farmers associations, development agencies, service providers and breed societies. The Symposium was opened by the Minister of the South African Department of Agriculture,



Martin Burke, CE ICAR and the Minister of Agriculture of South Africa the Hon. Mr. Senzeni Zokwana

Pretoria Declaration

Forestry and Fisheries, Mr. Senzeni Zokwana.

This Symposium, the first one ever of this kind to take place in Africa, was very timely and offered a unique opportunity for all partners and stakeholders to share and openly discuss experiences on past and ongoing animal identification and recording programmes.

Pretoria Declaration

The participants approved the Pretoria Declaration on Animal Identification and Recording (AIR). They recognised animal identification and recording (AIR) as both public and private goods that can be delivered through public or private sector initiatives. It can contribute to improved breeding and farm management, increases in animal production and productivity, enhanced market access and competitiveness. Therefore, public-private partnerships are critical elements in the development and operation of AIR systems. It is also a base for control of infectious diseases, animal traceability, promotion of food safety, and improved livestock data quality and use. The public and private nature of AIR systems calls for participatory and inclusive approaches.

Any system must be adapted to socio-economic conditions, production environments, livestock service provisions and veterinary institutions, varying levels of capability within both farmers and officials, limited communication networks and limited availability of resources (both in terms of manpower and finance).

The development of an AIR system should be undertaken in a phased manner; it should be extended progress. Countries should follow international standards and quality protocols and use certified products to ensure quality. The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Articles 4.1 and 4.2) and the ICAR international guidelines and standards serve as references. International standards also allow for interoperability at regional or international levels, as certain aspects of the systems, for example theft control or breeding, require regional collaboration.



Some of the sponsors of the FAO-ICAR Symposium on AIR

ICAR Member

New ICAR Member

The ICAR Board accepted Dairymaster from Ireland as a new Associate Member of ICAR. Dairymaster is a manufacturer of dairy farm equipment including milking, feeding, milk cooling, manure handling and health and fertility monitoring equipment. By joining the ICAR family, Dairymaster expects to provide more effective support of ICAR activities in standardisation, communication and furtherance of common goals. They expect that their membership in ICAR would contribute to an increased international awareness of their innovative product range.



ICAR Board

Meeting of the ICAR Board

The ICAR Board at its conference call meeting of 31st March 2015 approved the draft Agenda for the ICAR General Assembly (GA) and the Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) to be held on 10th June 2015 in Krakow, Poland. It also approved documents for submission to the GA – draft amendments to the Statutes and Bylaws and the Income Statement and the Balance Sheet for 2014. The Board reviewed the state of the implementation of priority actions for 2015, preparations for the Pretoria symposium on ID and recording in Africa and for the ICAR Technical Meeting.

News from ICAR Groups

INTERBULL and GENOEX

From ICAR Sub-Committees and Working Groups

INTERBULL is launching GENOEX-PSE

Extensive genotyping of single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) in cattle populations is revolutionizing parentage verification and determination. At the same time, establishing new rules and regulation creates new challenges as well. One of the most important challenges of using SNPs for parentage is related to the large amount of data that need to be exchanged among users of such data. To facilitate the parentage SNP exchange, ICAR has decided to appoint a Task Force to suggest the business rules for a database for SNP data within an initiative called Genotype Exchange: Parentage SNP Exchange (GENOEX – PSE) to be hosted at the Interbull Centre.

The Task Force (with the participation of representatives from several ICAR working groups and the Interbull permanent sub-committee) started its work during fall of 2014. The final proposal of the Task Force recommends a gradual introduction of several parentage related services for ICAR member organisations. The starting point will be the exchange of the SNPs recommended by ISAG to be used for parentage. Extension to larger number of SNPs and other services is possible if there is enough request and support for them. In accord with the general practice at the ICAR, this will be a non-profit service with a fair and flat fee for the basic and essential functions of the database. Technical and scientific solutions will be offered under auspices of an ICAR appointed GENOEX-PSE Expert Group. The GENOEX-PSE is expected to be launched in early July 2015 at the Interbull Annual Meeting which this year will be held in conjunction with the Joint Animal Meeting in Orlando, Florida.



Uppsala University, seat of the ICAR INTERBULL Centre

Animal Data

Animal Data Exchange Working Group

The goal of our work is to establish data exchange between central data bases and the on-farm devices that is: permanent, reliable, low cost, easy to implement and easy to maintain. By doing this, on an international basis, we aim to benefit: farmers, recording organisations and on-farm device manufacturers. Past experience demonstrated that a standard is not enough. Implementation should be certified. Our objective is to achieve widespread adoption of the standards and certification so that on-farm device providers have a strong incentive to invest in certification.

In 2012 the first business requirements for the exchange of milking results were published and these were followed by the technical specifications in June 2014. They are based on a comprehensive use of standards from Web (XML, TCP/IP, HTTP), ISO and UNCEFACT. Pilot implementations are ongoing in some countries with some manufacturers. The design of a first fully operational version was launched in February 2015, and it was expanded to cover exchange of data for reproduction events (insemination, pregnancy check, calving, heat...), animal movements (arrival and departure) and laboratory milk analysis. The different types of animal identifiers as well as the national code lists and specific national data are considered by these specifications.

The design of the certification process as well as that for the standard maintenance are ongoing. Options for funding are being considered. In parallel, provisions will be taken to foster the establishment of a group of early adopters comprising of some recording organizations and device providers. Our aim is to provide the early adopter group with the required resources to allow them to start investing from the beginning of 2016.

Dairy Cattle

Dairy Cattle Milk Recording Working Group – Current Activities

The Dairy Cattle Milk Recording Working Group is responsible for all aspects of dairy cattle recording, from systems used on farms to lactation calculations – both now and in the future. This ensures that ICAR members use the most appropriate guidelines to safeguard best practice for their respective users. This responsibility mostly covers Section 2.1 - ICAR RULES, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING MILK AND MILK CONSTITUENTS.

In August 2014, Pavel Bucek from the Czech Republic became the new Chairperson of the Dairy Cattle Milk Recording Group, replacing Hans Wilmink, who was elected the new ICAR President. Currently,

the core activity of the group is to revise and update section 2.1 of the ICAR Guidelines. It plans to finish this activity before the next edition, most probably before ICAR's meeting in Chile. The new version of this section is designed as a document for standard operating procedures (SOP) for all users and as a practical handbook that covers all relevant processes. Some parts are being revised and new parts are being added.

The Dairy Cattle Milk Recording Working Group deals with the following issues: sampling, milk-recording identification of animals and samples, lactation calculation, 24-hour calculation including new methods, supervision and quality management, technician training, transport of samples, data storage including plausibility checks, information for farmers, full automatic recording systems, use of data collected by milk meters and types of recorded traits.

The group regards monitoring the development of milk-recording in cattle a very important issue for ICAR and non-ICAR members. Under the leadership of the Dairy Cattle Milk Recording Working Group, a project survey was established dealing with the following three topics: Worldwide Trends in Milk-Recording Management



and Organisation, Worldwide Trends in Milk-Recording in Cattle and Worldwide Trends in Milk Recording: Milk Recording and New Technologies. An online questionnaire with 106 questions was used for data capture. Forty-six organisations completed the survey, of which 27.3% represent umbrella organisations. The survey covers 287 recording organisations, 169 laboratories and 21,486,116 cows in total from all of the relevant continents and territories, including ICAR member and non-member organisations. The group is very grateful for the input of all organisations involved in the project, as well as for their support and kind interest.

The main benefits of the project are: monitoring the current situation in milk recording and the organisation of milk recording and trends including the methodology and management in use by milk-recording organisations, improving the ICAR Guidelines and strengthening communication with ICAR members in order to receive useful comparisons of methodology, conditions and practice. We consider the project to be of value for participants, for their practice, and a platform that will provide inspiration for the work of milk-recording organisations. Three papers on the basis of this project were approved for oral presentation for the ICAR meeting in Poland in 2015. The group is also planning an overall overview of the project. The papers will be translated into Arabic and Russian to improve communication with territories where these languages are used.

The Dairy Cattle Milk Recording Working Group is responsible for Session 3 of the ICAR meeting in Poland.

Animal Fibre

ICAR Animal Fibre Working Group

After the release of the new ICAR Guidelines on the identification and production of cashmere goats, the Animal Fibre Working Group (AFWG) proposed to test the Guideline in the Hebukesaiier Xinjiang Station for Cashmere Goat selection. The Centre is in the Mongol autonomous county of the Xinjiang Province – Ta Chen banner, near the Kazakhstan border, and is managed by a new Chinese member: Dr. Zheng Wen Xin of the Xinjiang Academy of Animal Science. The activities are a part of a project designed to improve cashmere production which is funded by Loro Piana SpA, an Italian company who is a leader in the textile luxury clothing, coordinated by ENEA and University of Camerino from Italy.

The activities will be supported by the Ministry of agriculture sheep and goat, wool and cashmere quality supervision, under the direction of Dr. Zheng Wen Xin. Dr. Zheng's Laboratory tests wool, camel hair, yak hair and cashmere from the 13 provinces, every year. The Xinjiang Academy began to manage new superfine cashmere goats since 2005 in order to produce cashmere below 14 μm . In the territory an Association for the development of Xinjiang cashmere goat was formed and at present the Association has 430 farm members.

DESCO, our Peruvian ICAR member, follows the Alpaca improving program (PROMEGE - Programa de Mejoramiento Genético en Alpacas) in the CEDAT (Centro de Desarrollo Alpaquero de TOCCRA). The CEDAT is in the Yanque District, Caylloma Province – AREQUIPA. All the animals under selection are identified by an alphanumeric code and recorded according to the guidelines in the PROMEGE plan. The objectives of selection are: 1) Fibre diameter, 2) Its Coefficient of Variation and 3) Fleece weight. The animals are evaluated under selection index at first shearing. At the moment 1,430 Alpaca have been recorded, of which 782 are indexed according to the PROMEGE program.



Pictures taken at the Alpaca Genetic Improvement Station (CEDAT) in Peru

Presenting FAO

Presenting our international partners: FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations –

FAO is a specialized agency within the UN system. Its mission is the sustainable development of agriculture, forestry and fisheries at the global level and the eradication of famine, malnutrition and poverty. The FAO Global Agenda for Sustainable livestock aims at catalysing multi-stakeholder action to improve the sector's use of natural resources whilst ensuring its contribution to food security and livelihoods. The Agenda includes also the Global Plan of Action for conservation and sustainable utilization of farm animal genetic resources (AnGR), protection of the environment (N and GHG pollutions and overgrazing). FAO promotes animal identification and recording as an integral part of phenotype characterization of local breeds and of their sustainable utilization for an increase in animal production.



Cooperation with FAO has been mainly carried out by ID Sub-Committee and the Developing Countries Working Group. FAO provides technical support of ICAR Working Group Developing Countries chaired by Badi Besbes, Senior Officer, Animal Production and Health Division, and the member of the ICAR Board. FAO supports professionals from developing countries to participate in ICAR activities, such as a workshop on animal identification and recording in developing countries held on the occasion of the Porec Technical Workshop 2009.

FAO and the ICAR have organized several regional workshops on identification, traceability and performance recording. These workshops took place in India (1997), Poland (1998), Slovenia (2000), Switzerland (2002), Tunisia (2004), Finland (2006), Chile (2011) and RSA (2015).

ICAR has the observer status as an International Non-Governmental Organization and receives invitations to send representatives at meetings of FAO governing bodies – General Assembly, Council and Committee on Agriculture. FAO through its DAD-IS information system regularly transmits news and information from the ICAR web site. Cooperation also includes occasional co-financing of publications.

Service-ICAR

Service-ICAR News

Certificates for ID device

ICAR Certificates for Identification Devices – Proof of Quality and Reliability

Service-ICAR organises testing and carries out certification of ID and recording devices.

In recent years, the demand for traceability of animals for reasons ranging from animal health and welfare to food product safety has highlighted two imperative necessities:

1. For animal identification devices to be of a global uniform high quality in both composition and performance to facilitate movement of identified animals across national borders and participation and integration in multiple animal identification databases;
2. The evolution of animal identification responsibilities is moving into the hands of governmental competent authorities for animal identification and registration.

In the field of the ID devices, ICAR operates in conjunction with ISO/TC23/SC19/WG3 and its technical Working Group to monitor, maintain and continue the development of the respective ISO standards. Since 2007, ICAR has served as the Registration Authority for International Standards Organisation (ISO) in specific respect to Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) devices conforming to ISO Standards 11784 and 11785. ICAR and ISO have developed independent test

procedures, protocols and guidelines through which compliance of RFID systems with the aforementioned ISO standards can be verified.

ICAR certification and testing procedures carried out by independent testing laboratories guarantee that devices selected for the identification of animals meet necessary and relevant standards which include criteria such as animal welfare, product composition, transponder performance. These are the reasons why the great majority of competent authorities for animal identification worldwide accept only ICAR certified ID devices for official identification of farm animals

Krakow News

Krakow Technical Workshop

Join us for our ICAR Technical Workshop in Krakow, in June !

Almost 200 of your current / future colleagues have already registered for the meeting!

The deadline for the regular registration is the 30th April, after this date registration will cost you more! For more details on the registration, please check the page at www.icar2015.pl/registration

37 interesting topics which will be presented by specialists in animal production from around the world.

Additional small groups meetings with their reports during Joint session:

- Reference Laboratory Network meeting.
- FIL/IDF Standing Committee on Animal Health and Welfare meeting.
- Satellite workshop on cows' metabolic disorders monitoring

The meeting is financially supported by 12 sponsors and 10 exhibitors involved in animal production.

The ICAR Technical Workshop in Krakow is a perfect occasion to meet people who want to meet you, share your opinions and cooperate for a common benefit.

Throughout the meeting the Polish Organiser will provide you with a unique possibility to taste Polish dairy products and dishes which can be made of dairy products – look for the degustation stand next to the conference hall

During the meeting you will get the possibility to learn more about Poland in a formal and a bit less formal way



See you in Krakow!