



REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT

ICAR GENERAL ASSEMBLY – MAY 31, 2007 VERONA, ITALY

NEIL PETRENY - PRESIDENT

Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the ICAR General Assembly. Twelve months have passed since our last General Assembly session in Kuopio, Finland, and the past year should be remembered as one of continued evolution of our technical and governing bodies. Some of the results achieved could be considered as being of crucial importance for the future of our association as well as for the future of animal identification, recording and evaluation – both at the level of our individual members and on the global level.

In my report today, I will highlight some of the achievements of the past year and some of the changes that we have planned for the governance and management of ICAR in the future.

ICAR Membership

At last year's General Assembly the membership voted to support a change designed to expand ICAR membership. Since that decision, we have had eleven organizations apply for ICAR membership. Four (4) of these as Members and 7 as Associate Members. The Board will be recommending the approval of membership of all applicants later in this session and, subject to the General Assembly approval, by the end of the current session we shall have 63 full and 7 associate members. I would like to highlight two points related our new member applicants: two are from a region in which there are no current ICAR members and five are manufacturers or service suppliers to our members.

One of the expected implications of our changes to the statutes last year was more active involvement of manufacturers and service suppliers. We are pleased with the willingness of our industry partners to work within the ICAR structure and we are confident that our new members will bring a wealth of new ideas and experiences for the benefit of our complete membership. Their knowledge and participation within our technical programs and activities is expected to enhance dialogue with end users and to contribute to development of advanced techniques in line with requirements and needs of our clients – farmers of the world. As much as we focus on new and evolving technologies, we must ensure that we maintain parallel

efforts with low cost technologies which are more aptly suited to low and medium input production systems. This is an area of growing global importance that we must balance.

The recent developments in the ICAR membership clearly indicate that:

- a) Firstly, the ICAR's position as the global leader in the field of animal identification, recording and genetic evaluation has been further strengthened, and
- b) Secondly, that the changes of the ICAR Statutes and decision of the General Assembly in Kuopio regarding the criteria for ICAR membership are quickly demonstrating success.

Expanding Responsibilities and Expertise

As mentioned earlier in my presentation, there was considerable activity in the committees involving a broad range of areas. I wish to note a few highlights of the activities that are broadening the ICAR perspective.

The establishment and initiation of InterBeef - an international genetic evaluation of beef cattle under the chairmanship of Brian Wickham

The establishment of the Task Forces on Pig Recording lead by Ms. Milena Kovac

The establishment of the Task Force on Animal fibers lead by Marco Antonini

The establishment of the Task Force on Parentage Recording lead initially by Hans Wilmink and now by Dick Korn

The establishment of the Task Force on Milk Recording Practices lead by Reinhard Pauw

Each of these new activities represents an important step towards the implementation of our strategic objectives regarding the coverage of more species and more traits by ICAR. The existing technical bodies continue to contribute to the success of our organization. For example, Sub-Committee INTEBULL continues to be strongly oriented towards the enlargement of traits and breeds under the international genetic evaluation.

The name of the Working Group on Milk Testing Laboratories has been changed into Sub-Committee for Milk Analysis. This is not the simple change of the terminology and the appreciation of the work done by professionals volunteering in this Working Group, but also reflects the ongoing nature of their efforts towards the standardization of methods of milk analyses through testing and approval of analytical devices. Analysis is an integral part of animal recording and evaluation activities.

Increasingly, ICAR is receiving requests for technical information from institutions from a number of countries (ie: China, Iran, Pakistan, India) indicates the great potential for new members and for sharing ICAR's expertise. Professionals from these countries will certainly bring new experiences, but also they will benefit from historical experience accumulated in ICAR during its history. It would be the task of researchers and experts from new members to develop, on the basis of ICAR principles, standards, rules and guidelines for animal recording in their specific conditions.

ICAR has also been invited to participate in research projects funded by the European Union. These research projects have great potential for development of new techniques in the field of animal recording and evaluation. Further, the invitation extended to ICAR to participate in these projects further supports the growing reputation of ICAR in countries where we have our members, but also, strengthened recognition by regional and multi-national organizations.

ICAR Member Benefits

The key of every successful organization is the ability to provide value for its members. I will touch on some of the activities which are provided by ICAR and provide value for our members.

The basic activity of ICAR – which is to develop standards and guidelines - has continued since last year's session in Kuopio through final editing and technical revisions done by respective Sub-Committees and Working Groups. It is my pleasure to inform you that 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 prepared for printing – the third edition in four years! The new edition contains necessary adjustments to new Statutes as well as changes in presentation (ie: more precise distinction between rules guidelines).

There are currently 19 different ICAR Sub Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces working under the ICAR umbrella. Each of these groups involves some of the leading experts in their field from around the world. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of each member as they and their organizations unselfishly provide leadership in a volunteer capacity to improve our industry. Not only do our members benefit from the global expertise to address international issues, but each organization which chooses to provide resources for various

ICAR activities is each able to interact and benefit from these international contacts. A winning combination for both the organization and the individuals.

Our Sub Committees have been very active. In June 2006, the ICAR Board approved three recording devices and issued the provisional approvals for four additional devices. Since then, ICAR has received requests for approval of three devices. Activities related to testing, control and approval of recording devices have been greatly facilitated after the establishment of **SERVICE-ICAR S.r.l.** as a special entity in charge of handling all administrative and financial operations. For agencies involved in herd recording, the addition of the device images on the ICAR website has been a very valuable addition.

The ID Sub Committee has also been active with the management of 32 new requests for testing and approval. A total of 154 successfully tested devices available on the website. Additionally, the SC has initiated the first round of performance testing as part of their expanded ability to provide comprehensive tests with world-wide standards. The benefits for our members include the ability to avoid duplicate and costly testing in multiple regions for the same product. This effort, combined with their leadership in this field being recognized by ISO is to be commended.

Benchmarking has entered into the third year of operation. The final report of the third round will be available soon. This relatively new tool provides the ability for our members to enhance the operating efficiencies by identifying areas where opportunities exist. You will hear more about this in our workshop program starting later today.

Patenting in the animal sector is an issue for all organizations involved in the sectors of animal recording and genetic evaluation. The latest developments in this field and the future prospects are causing increasing concern among industrialists and breeders, thus stressing the need for continuous updating on the progress of animal patenting issues worldwide. Early awareness is necessary to allow professionals the possibility to take action to protect their professional interests. The **Patent Sentinel and Action Service** is based on an international network for the exchange of information. ICAR has the task of collecting all information and placing it on this website. Its website contains information on the current situation with regard to patenting in the world with particular emphasis on the developed regions, such as North America and Europe, news, presentation of specific cases and “ask PSAS”. It is worthwhile to note that the professionals involved in the use of specific biotechnologies in animal recording

and evaluation have shown great interest for the last section – “ask PSAS” – because of its interactive character and high relevance of replies.

Additional activities related to the **collection and distribution of information** included:

The collection of cow and sheep milk recording data from 46 countries

The publication of proceedings of the Kuopio session

The publication of Technical Series No. 12 on animal identification in Eastern Europe

The development of a new brochure of ICAR, and

The first issue of new series of the ICAR Newsletter and communication tools

Our plan is to increase participation of Members in provision of information for the Newsletter to increase the interactive nature of the publication. Additionally, technical papers contained in Technical Series No. 12 have been translated into Russian and placed on the ICAR website.

ICAR website has been constantly updated. During the past year alone there were more than 62,000 visits seeking information. And for the first time last year, all presentations from the biennial session were made available on our website, with plans to repeat this again this year following the new workshop format.

Activities related to **the Special Stamp and the Certificate of Quality** were overlapping during the past year as the Certificate of Quality is introduced to replace the Special Stamp. The last visits for the Special Stamp for members who applied prior to the Kuopio session (South Africa and Lithuania) coincide with the first missions to members which applied for the Certificate of Quality. We will be increasing our efforts to raise awareness of the new Certificate of Quality and expect that many Members with the Special Stamp will be the first to apply for the Certificate of Quality.

ICAR Operations & Governance

ICAR remains financially sound due to the timely payment of membership fees and the sound financial management by the Secretariat. I wish to thank our members for their timely attention to this matter. Activities of ICAR depend primarily on voluntary work of hundreds of field experts and professionals who participate in ICAR sessions, workshops, seminars, who work in our technical bodies, produce standards, rules and guidelines and on the awareness of management of our Members regarding benefits stemming from working together under the ICAR umbrella.

As a result of the new structure of ICAR membership and the introduction of the Certificate of Quality, the Board will undertake a review of the ICAR fee structure during the next year to ensure that such changes are considered for the future. You will hear more about this at next year's session once our review is complete.

ICAR is currently registered in France as an international, non-governmental and non-profit organization. However, having the legal seat in France and the secretariat (and all operations) in Rome has meant less efficiency in management and increased costs both for ICAR and for our host in France - Institut de l'Elevage. For this reason the Board has initiated the exploration of modalities and technical and financial aspects of transferring the seat from Paris to Rome. The Board will be timely informed on the outcome of our contacts with the Italian Ministry of Agriculture. Based on the information so far, we would expect to propose a formal move at next year's General Assembly. Such a change will have no impact on our operations.

There are currently two vacant posts on the ICAR Board. Later in the program we will propose a new member of the Board for one of the vacancies. With regards to the final vacancy, we are seeking a representative from either the Asia or Latin American regions to expand the ICAR presence and invite you to assist in identifying the most suitable candidate for this post.

Planning

Planning for the future is a basic responsibility of every organization. The ICAR Board has adopted the principle of continuous planning and the establishment of defining goals and objectives. The Board is currently in the process of revising its strategic plan. We are planning to present the next long-term plan at the 2008 session, and it will build on the foundation of our current four-year strategic plan. We must ensure that our direction and goals will continue to provide the focus and direction for our organization consistent with our objectives. We will seek to build on the recent changes in our bylaws to enhance ICAR's ability to involve industry and contribute to overall advancement of recording, identification and genetic evaluation around the world.

Acknowledgements

Many challenges and opportunities lie ahead of our respective organizations. We must plan and prepare to meet these challenges with the right people and the right tools. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the ICAR Board, the Chairpersons and each member of the SC, WG and TF's for their contribution. It is with your contribution and expertise that we have

successfully built the solid foundation of today's successful industry. It is through your continued contributions that together we will ensure a strong future.

Later in the agenda we will introduce the Chairpersons, and as I conclude I would like to introduce the members of the Board to provide you with the opportunity to recognize those individuals working on your behalf.

The current ICAR Board members are:

Daniel Abernethy – Australia
Frank Armitage – United Kingdom VP
Pierre-Louis Gatinel – France
Ole Klejs Hansen – Denmark
Uffe Lauritsen – Denmark VP
Rienhard Reents – Germany SEC
Dainis Rungulis – Latvia
Guido Ungaro – Italy

Kaivo Ilves (Inspector) – Estonia
Jay Mattison (Inspector) – United States