

JOINT MEETING OF THE ICAR WORKING GROUPS ON PERFORMANCE RECORDING OF DAIRY SHEEP & GOATS PERFORMANCE RECORDING

9th June 2015, Krakow, Poland

Draft minutes

Attendants : Jean-Michel Astruc (France), Zdravko Barač (Croatia), Mauro Fioretti (Italy), Charl Hunlun (South Africa) –representing Pierre Van Rooyen-, Agnès Piacère (France)

As in Berlin last year, the meeting was a joint meeting of both small ruminants working groups (goats and dairy sheep), given the similarity of the concerns and issues of both groups.

The meeting which was held from 14.00 to 16.00, was chaired by Zdravko Barač (chairman of the goat performance recording WG) and Jean-Michel Astruc (chairman of the performance recording of dairy sheep WG).
The agenda (see below) was adopted.

Agenda

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1-Constitution of the WGs

The working group on performance recording of dairy sheep includes 8 members from 6 countries:

Jean-Michel ASTRUC (France)
Zdravko BARAĆ (Croatia)
Francis BARILLET (France)
Antonello CARTA (Italy)
Elisha GOOTWINE (Israel)
Drago KOMPAN (Slovenia)
Franz-Josef ROMBERG (Germany)
Alessia TONDO (Italy)
Eva UGARTE (Spain)

Francis Barillet who stopped his ICAR activity last year has not yet be replaced.

The working group on goat performance recording includes 7 members:

Zdravko BARAĆ, Croatian Agricultural Agency (Croatia)
Jean-Michel ASTRUC, INRA Toulouse, (France)
Joanne CONINGTON, Scottish Agricultural College (UK)
Silverio GRANDE, Italian Breeders' Association (Italy)
Pierre van ROOYEN, South African Stud Book and Livestock Improvement Association (South Africa)
Juan Manuel SERRADILLA MANRIQUE, University of Cordoba (Spain),
Drago KOMPAN, University of Ljubljana, (Slovenia)

2-Agnes Piacère's presentation on the organization of milk recording in goats in France

The chairmen proposed that Agnès Piacère, who were to give a presentation about milk recording in goats during the technical session IV (milk recording in cattle, meat and fiber performance in sheep, goats and beef cattle), also presents her paper during the WG meeting, for further discussion.

The paper is "Organization of milk recording in goats in France" and deals with the assessment of the Liu's method in goats in France, as a possible new method (so far the methods used are A, AT, AZ, CZ). The advantage is that there is no need of alternate records and the method allows more flexibility in the organization. Even though the loss of accuracy on lactation performance is quite the same as with other simplified methods, there is a better estimation of daily performances, which are important for herd management.

This new recording method will be proposed in France in a near future. Therefore, it should be useful to propose it for an agreement in ICAR guidelines.

3-Changes in the guidelines for goat milk recording

Guidelines on goat recording have been discussed during previous meetings, especially in Berlin. Main reasons for guideline revision were: (i) guidelines are contradictory in some parts and should be clarified; (ii) some parts are repeated : in general, guidelines have a part of the text that is repeated causing misunderstanding of the recording principles due to some differences on the same topic.

Editing and changes of the document were disseminated among group members prior to the meeting in Berlin and after that discussed during the meeting in Berlin. It was concluded to disseminate final guidelines text to the WG member and to sheep WG members with revision and clean text for easier follow up. After final comments, the material was sent to ICAR Secretariat for further procedure, and after that it was adopted.

Adopted changes of the Guidelines are briefly presented at this meeting.

4-Milk recording devices: follow-up of last meeting

The background is the more and more important use of on-farm electronic milk meters in sheep and in goats in milk recording. There is a real interest for breeder, as well as for the milk recording organization to use the measures for recording.

In Berlin, various experience feedback were presented by Institut de l'Elevage (France) and AIA (Italy) on measured carried out in flocks with ICAR-approved milk meters and which showed under certain circumstances a lack of accuracy, especially in high line installations.

A note for the SC Recording Devices was produced, which made some suggestions.

→ Regarding already approved milk meters :

- It is up to the local organizations to discuss with manufacturers
- ICAR could precise the type of installation in which the field tests have been conducted during the approval procedure

→ Regarding future meters to be tested :

- Field tests in at least 2 if not 3 configurations (low line, high line, medium line)
- **Or** : approve the device only for the installations where the field tests were conducted (the manufacturer chooses the configuration(s))

After discussion with Martin Burke, it appeared that the issue also existed in cattle.

A meeting was organized by the Sub-Committee in September 2014 with the manufacturer. The meeting was constructive and the manufacturer proposed to work in dairy sheep farms to solve the problem, especially by improving the software. Results was good in low line, not so good in high line.

The question should arise about reviewing / relaxing the limits for bias in sheep and goats. This question has been already discussed many times. Due to the number of measures which are very low in sheep, given the milking routine and the cost of analysis, the response of the WG (and also of the SC) always was that it was not relevant to relax the requirements.

5-Short information on the results of the on-line enquiries (sheep and goats)

The on-line surveys (cattle, goats and sheep) will be redesign, by ICAR secretariat, in a new software, more flexible and easier to maintain. It is an opportunity to simplify some tables and avoid multiple rows of header, but also to introduce new tables (such as the tables which had been discussed in Berlin on automated milk meters and on milk quality).

The proposals of evolution are the following:

-table 1 must be split in 3 tables:

-table 1a: “number of goats in milk recording” (goats) / “number of ewes in milk recording” (sheep).

-table 1b: “management of the lactation in recorded herds” (goats) / “management of the lactation in recorded flocks” (sheep).

-table 1c: “method of milk recording” (goats & sheep).

-table 2 must be split in 2 tables:

-table 2a: “milk yield: type of lactation calculation” (goats & sheep).

-table 2b: “milk yield: results” (goats & sheep).

-table3: column 7 “milk analysis in laboratory ...” must be split in 4 new columns: “fat” / “protein” / “SCC” / “lactose” (goats & sheep).

-table 4: only one cell in the header + suppression of the column “Use in selection”. New title is: “other traits: reproductive traits, weights & growths, udder score, longevity” (goats & sheep).

-table 5: Only one cell in the header. For that, instead of having 2 parts (one for jars & one for meters), insertion of a new column (“indicate jars/meters”) to indicate whether the device is a jar or a meter (goats & sheep).

-table 6: only 1 cell in the header. The columns become: “number of AI in fresh semen”, “number of AI in frozen semen” (goats & sheep).

-table 7: column “number of analysis, number of flocks involved” split in 2 columns: “number of flocks involved” & “number of analysis”.

New tables on automated milk meters and on milk quality will also be proposed.

6-Any other business

61. Meat traits

There is a growing demand to introduce meat traits in the guidelines for goats and sheep. The demand emerged first in goats a few years ago and a survey had been presented in Cork in 2012. In particular, in developing countries, there are a lot of small stocks in extensive systems. The question is: which type of records can be done.

The question of writing guidelines on meat trait also arises in sheep. This is in full agreement of one point of the ICAR strategy which is to extend the scope of ICAR in more species and more production. Until Chile 2016, we must think of that and see if it is up to the sheep WG (which so far concerns dairy sheep) to tackle the elaboration of guidelines for meat sheep or not.

62. Conformation traits

The participants are invited to participate to the meeting of the conformation WG, chaired by Gerben de Jong and whose agenda is to discuss conformation traits in goats.

7-Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be a joint meeting of the dairy sheep and goats working group and will be held in October 2016 in Chile, probably on Tuesday 25th in the afternoon.

For those who might have problem to attend the meeting in Chile, a skype meeting could be arrange.