



# Terms of Reference for the ICAR Functional Traits Working Group

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## 1 Background

The following are the Terms of Reference for an ICAR Group established in 2013. The Group is known as the Functional Traits Working Group (FT-WG).

The changes to these ToR over time are summarized in Table 1:



Table 1. Change summary.

| Date of Change | Nature of Change   |
|----------------|--|
| March 2013     | First version adopted by ICAR Board at its meeting in March 2013.<br>The FT-WG evolved from the GIFT (genetic improvement for functional traits) WG.   |
| May 2018       | Reformatted to comply with ICAR branding guidelines.<br>Amended to avoid conflicts of interest by clarifying voting rights of members. Refer to 4 Governance.<br>Amended to include a section giving context. Refer to 2 Context.<br>Amended to include a section dealing with relationships with other ICAR Groups. Refer to 7 Relationships with Other ICAR Groups.<br>Include updated priorities from Feb. 2018 report to ICAR Board. |
| June 2018      | Acceptance notified by chair of FT-WG, Christa Egger-Danner.<br>Definition of functional traits modified (in chapter 2) to exclude feed intake and green-house gases.  |
| August 2018    | Prepared for consideration by ICAR Board.  |
| September 2018 | Approved by ICAR Board.  |

The following sections cover the key elements of the Terms of Reference for the FT-WG.

## 2 Context

The FT-WG is one element of ICAR's Group structure as elaborated [here](#) on the ICAR website. As a working group:

- a. It is a permanent,
- b. Its chair is appointed by the Board of ICAR,
- c. Its members are appointed by the Chief Executive of ICAR,
- d. It is responsible for policy relating to services to members.

The main purpose of the FT-WG is to achieve a number of objectives related specifically to functional traits.

Functional traits are all traits, except milk production, conformation, feed intake and green-house gases, which affect the ability of an animal to perform the functions required



for it in a profitable farming enterprise. The trait areas to be considered as Functional Traits are:

- a. general health
- b. udder health
- c. female and male fertility
- d. calving ease and stillbirth
- e. feet and legs problems
- f. workability
- g. survival
- h. metabolic stress
- i. welfare related traits

### 3 Objectives of the FT-WG

The objectives of the FTWG are to:

- a. **Provide a forum** for members of ICAR to collaborate, exchange information and learn from each other on all aspects of the recording of Functional Traits.
- b. Maintain, update, promote and extend universal **guidelines** for the recording of Functional Traits in dairy cattle, world-wide.
- c. Conduct and report the results of periodic international **surveys** on Functional Traits in dairy cattle, world-wide.
- d. Develop, provide and promote a system and standards for functional trait (services) which will form the basis of the service that ICAR will provide to members of ICAR on a user-pays basis.
- e. Facilitate and co-ordinate international **collaboration in research and development** on the recording and genetic improvement of Functional Traits.

### 4 Governance

The ICAR FT-WG will comprise a Chairperson appointed by the ICAR Board and members appointed by the ICAR Chief Executive. The term of membership and voting rights of members will be determined at the time of appointment and may be reviewed from time to time. In principle, members can only vote on those issues for which they or their employers do not have a conflict of interest.



The FT-WG will comprise members who cover some or all, depending on the level of interest and participation in ICAR activities, of the following interests:

- a. **Geographical regions:** Europe (West and East), North America, South & Central America, Asia, Africa & Oceania.
- b. **Technical expertise:** animal recording, genetics, animal health, animal nutrition, animal reproduction, and animal physiology.
- c. **Supporters of ICAR Participation in Functional Traits:** Recording Organisations, Breed Associations, Breeding Organisations and Research Organisations.

The Committee, may from time to time, create advisory committees to provide specialist and expert advice on topics of relevance to achieving the objectives of the Group.

## 5 Secretariat

Role of ICAR Secretariat in providing support for the FT-WG:

- a. **Group Meetings** - agree dates and venues in consultation with Chairperson, provide notice of meetings to members, agree agenda with Chairperson, distribute agenda, agree minutes with Chairperson, and distribute minutes.
- b. **Group Composition** - maintain list of Group members with up-to-date contact details, in consultation with Chairperson and ICAR Board ensure membership is comprised of interested and enthusiastic members representing active stakeholders.
- c. **Website** - maintain website and forum ensuring contents are up-to-date and relevant according to the ToR and priorities agreed by the FT-WG.

## 6 Communications with the ICAR Board

- a. Annual report of the FT-WG Chairperson to the Board.
- b. The ICAR Staff support person as identified from time to time by the ICAR Chief Executive. All communications for the Group are to be copied to this person.
- c. Participation of the Chairperson in meetings with the Board, normally on an annual basis coinciding with the ICAR Annual Meetings.

## 7 Relationships with Other ICAR Groups

Relationships between FT-WG and other ICAR Groups are as summarised in Table 2.



**Table 2. Relationship with other ICAR Groups.**

| Group   | Purpose of Relationship   | Method of maintaining relationship   |
|---|---|--|
| Interbull Sub Committee (IB-SC)                             | For all matters related to genetic evaluations for which Interbull has the overriding responsibility  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing leadership for functional trait recording.</li> <li>• Overlapping membership.</li> <li>• Joint expert advisory group(s) as required.</li> </ul>  |
| Interbeef Working Group (Interbeef-WG)                      | For possible future collaboration in covering Functional Traits relevant to Beef breeds.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing leadership for functional trait recording.</li> <li>• Overlapping membership.</li> <li>• Joint expert advisory group(s) as required.</li> </ul>  |
| Conformation Recording Working Group (CR-WG)                | To ensure no overlap in traits and a consistent and complementary approach to trait definitions, recording guidelines and determining importance in breeding objectives & selection criteria. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing leadership for functional trait recording.</li> <li>• Overlapping membership.</li> <li>• Joint expert advisory group(s) as required.</li> </ul>  |
| Artificial insemination and related technologies (AI&RT-WG) | To ensure guidelines for recording inseminations, for which the A&RT-WG has responsibility, are consistent with the data required for assessing functional traits.                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing leadership for functional trait recording.</li> <li>• Overlapping membership.</li> <li>• Joint expert advisory group(s) as required.</li> </ul>  |
| Others  | Ensure any other standards, guidelines and services involving a recording or sampling device are developed using a shared ICAR philosophy.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communication of plans and progress.</li> <li>• Overlapping membership as needed.</li> <li>• Joint expert advisory group(s) as required.</li> </ul> |



## 8 Priorities

Priorities are to be established by the FT-WG taking account of its terms of reference and any requests from the ICAR Board.

Priorities are to:

- a. Finish guidelines in work (claw health, udder health).
- b. Cooperation with IDF on welfare.
- c. Update of existing guidelines.
- d. *Monitoring of recent developments and screening of material related to functional traits in the context of automation and advanced laboratory analyses (sensor, milk MIR spectral data,...).*
- e. Guideline on metabolic disorders.

REFERENCE: /USERS/BWW/DATA/WICKHAM LTD/CUSTOMERS/ICAR/ICAR SC WG  
TF/GROUPS/TOR/REVISIONS/2018/GROUPS/FT-WG/TOR FUNCTIONAL TRAITS WG V18.01.DOCX

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