

The WHFF Council last met by Zoom on 13th March 2024.

This newsletter focuses on WHFF involvement at the recent ICAR Conference in Bled, Slovenia from May 19th to 24th 2024.

The 2024 ICAR Conference was hosted in Bled, Slovenia by Marija Klopčič, who is the CEO for the Slovenian Holstein Association.

The theme for the Conference was **“Sustainable Livestock Production Systems in a New Era”**



There were many representatives present from WHFF member organisations, both attending the Conference and as participants in Working Groups.

During the Conference László Bognár and Suzanne Harding had meetings with ICAR about the role of the WHFF Monogenetic Trait Working Group and the ICAR DNA Working Group. There is an overlap in the work of these two groups, so the meeting was to discuss ways of co-operating on the processes of mapping, naming and classifying genetic conditions.

At the INTERBULL Business meeting Toine Roosen, CEO of SLU, spoke about the importance of the Genetic Trait data exchange. This process was developed by WHFF under Jos Buiting in cooperation with INTERBULL and it is hoped that

many more countries will sign up for this important service. You can view the brochure that contains further details on this new service by pasting this link into your browser. <https://whff.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/WHFF-Interbull-WHFF-Genetic-Traits-Brochure.pdf>. The Interbull Centre's database (IDEA) for the collection of animal trait information ('AnimInfo') has been expanded to facilitate the collection of the WHFF genetic trait information. Although the genetic traits information may originate within WHFF member organisations, this information will be uploaded to AnimInfo by Interbull Service Users/National Genetic Evaluation Centres used by the WHFF membership. It is not uploaded directly by WHFF members. If you wish to participate in this important exchange of data, please contact your National Genetic Evaluation Centres to discuss this new service. They will contact INTERBULL and set up the exchange.

At the ICAR General Assembly, WHFF member the Polish Federation of Cattle Breeders and Dairy Farmers received the ICAR Certificate of Quality. In the picture below President of ICAR, Daniel LeFevre presents the certificate to President of the Polish Federation of Cattle Breeders and Dairy Leszek Hądzlik.



In addition, the Agnculvran Data Centre in Latvia, who supply services to the WHFF member Animal Breeders Association of Latvia, received an ICAR Certificate of Quality.

At the ICAR Council elections, the new CEO of Czech Holstein Cattle Breeders Association, Stanislav Jas, was elected as a new member to the ICAR Council.

The Conference content was interesting, with many excellent speakers across the two days. There were parallel sessions, so I can only report on the sessions I attended.

The Plenary Session began with co-hosts Ana Granados Chapatte (EFFAB) and Harald Sverdrup asking the question **Sustainability breeding strategies; what does it mean?** They went on to speak about the principles of sustainability, how it is linked to the food chain and to the economics of farm production, and how it can influence and be influenced by carbon emissions and sequestering.

There is a new ICAR service to standardise Bovine Semen Quality Assessment. This joins the current services for certification of applying DNA based technologies, standardising milk devices and many more.

The Session on Data Collection for Beef on Dairy, had presentations covering the benefits and challenges of developing new breeding values in Nordic Countries, the experience of using beef Semen in Italy, how the use of Beef semen is evolving in Ireland, and the changes some farmers in the US are finding when using Beef on Dairy.

Decision support Tools of the Future - promoting sustainability farm management covered forecasting future heifer replacement strategies, using culling data, sexed and beef semen in mating program, an analytical tool for assessing genetic progress, a Dairy farm management monitor and an introduction into the EU funded Digitized data sharing strategy. This last topic was interesting as it dealt with the changes in the EU data act enabling farmers to have the right to any data they collect.

Factors affecting the accuracy of the recording day was a session describing the practical issues and challenges affecting carry-over, milk sampling and estimation.

The final session I sat in was Genomics impact on Livestock sustainability. This session had an interesting presentation from Ireland detailing the Irish National Genotyping Program in the Cattle Herd. It explained how they are increasing the

number of genotyped animals by obtaining funding for genotyping from the Irish Dept of Agriculture. They currently have over four (4) million genotypes in the ICBF database, and 35% of the national dairy herd is genotyped.

To view any presentation in full, please visit www.ICAR.org.

The WHFF Council have a meeting in September, so please let me know if you have any topics you would like discussed.

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Dates for your Diary:

The following date is planned:

2028	WHFF Conference and General Assembly, Australia
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WHFF Web Site

Please remember to send in your news stories, show details, and pictures of your Holstein Champions for the website: www.whff.info

