

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat

Twenty-sixth session Geneva,

6 November 2017

Item 4 of the Provisional agenda

Eating Quality

International Meat Research 3G Foundation Report

This following report was submitted by the working Group on eating quality to provide information on the International Meat Research 3G Foundation, a not-for-profit organization.

The UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat is advised that the International Meat Research 3G Foundation, a not for profit organisation established under Polish law, has been registered. The Foundation is proposed as a collaborative, independent, not-for-profit international eating quality research platform linked to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Specialized Section on Meat.

UNECE representation is sought for the management board together with ongoing collaboration and support.

The special working group coordinated by the UNECE secretariat with the participation of Poland as a lead Rapporteur has been considering the requirements to firstly enhance the UNECE Bovine Language to enable common standards to be adopted for meat researchers in measuring and reporting traits that may be used to predict consumer appraised meat eating quality. Recommendations for immediate language additions are presented in a separate document for consideration.

The special working group has also met formally on two occasions, on February 2nd in Milan and on August 10th in Dublin. Both meetings further addressed the terms of reference in regard to facilitating data storage, developing supporting software for research use and considering a framework to coordinate research collaboration and potentially commercial application.

The Milan meeting proposed a not for profit foundation as an appropriate structure to progress the proposal. An offer from the Polish delegates to further examine this possibility was accepted, noting that Polish Government policy strongly supported such an arrangement to foster scientific excellence and associated long term industry benefit. The Polish working group and some UNECE delegates further investigated the legal and practical detail and reported back to the Dublin meeting.

The Dublin meeting was very well attended with working group representatives from Poland, Australia, Ireland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and USA together with interested parties representing the UNECE, The Irish Cattle Breeders Federation (ICBF), AUS-MEAT and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

The meeting strongly endorsed the Foundation proposal and agreed to proceed with the legal registration. The Foundation was formally registered on September 27th, 2017.

It was agreed that all parties involved in research activity utilising common protocols and data would be entitled to membership in the Foundation. A draft Foundation Statute (constitution) was considered and endorsed with further discussion of potential management structures. Similarities with the Foundations objectives and coordination of international groups in data accumulation for animal recording and genetic evaluation were noted with the experience of the ICAR, Interbull, Interbeef and ICBF regarded as highly relevant.

It was agreed that a structure based on the ICAR model of a small council/governing board predominantly comprising leaders of supporting working technical/scientific groups to oversee legal compliance and governance was appropriate. The specialised scientific working groups will be responsible for development of standards and technical policy, with this structure providing for active involvement and input of all participating groups/countries while retaining a small and workable representative board. MLA offered to develop draft legal documentation to define terms of reference and a prospectus. This offer was accepted by consensus.

A paper from MLA reporting on the work to date and timelines is attached. When completed the draft documents will be circulated to all collaborating parties for consideration. A final agreed version will be enacted with a December 2017 objective.

Once the formal arrangements are established, urgent work is envisaged in proceeding with development of data standards and a collaborative “**DATAbank**”. Agreement was reached at the Milan and Dublin meetings that a single **DATAbank** housing all data but with individual “accounts” providing individual security for each data owner was the most efficient structure. It was agreed that data ownership would always remain with the contributing parties who would determine which data would be shared, with who, for what agreed purpose and under what conditions. The scientific working group may convene a specialist IT sub group to define data protocols and alternatives for hosting the **DATAbank** .

Related activity is envisaged in developing and hosting software to facilitate data collection in standard formats to ensure compatibility and encourage widespread use.

The scientific working groups will also define the detailed standards and protocols for measurement, data collection and consumer testing.

It was agreed that developed standards should be housed within the UNECE Specialized Section on Standardization of Meat within or as addendums to the Bovine language as appropriate.

Attachment: MLA information paper (please see document *INF3 - Information_Paper_MLA*)
