



THE GLOBAL STANDARD FOR LIVESTOCK DATA

Place Rome (Italy), Uppsala (Sweden)
Date 28 December 2016
Subject SUPPORTING ACTION FOR INTERBULL CENTRE AS THE 'NEW' EU
REFERENCE CENTRE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL GENETIC EVALUATION OF
CATTLE

Dear ICAR Member Organisation and colleague,

You may be aware that the European Commission (EC) adopted a new Animal Breeding Regulation in June 2016. See the EU Regulation 2016/1012: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.171.01.0066.01.ENG

This Regulation is about:

- a) zootechnical and genealogical rules for trade in breeding animals and their germinal products, and for their entry into the European Union;
- b) rules for the recognition of breed societies and breeding operations and for the approval of their breeding programmes;
- c) the rights and obligations of breeders, breed societies and breeding operations;
- d) rules for the entry of breeding animals in breeding books and breeding registers and for the acceptance for breeding.

One aspect of this regulation is also the designation of EU Reference Centres to assist and/or validate with the harmonisation or the improvement of the methods of performance testing and genetic evaluation of purebred breeding animals.

The Interbull Centre was designated as the EU Reference Body for Zootechnics (Bovine Breeding) in 1996 (Council Decision 96/463/EC: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:31996D0463>).

It should be noted that the EC is implementing new procedures for all 43 EU Reference laboratories. As part of these new procedures, the status of all reference centres will be reviewed on a regular basis. Due to the new animal breeding regulation 2016/1012, the Reference Centre for Zootechnics is the first one whose status is reviewed. The action for repeal on 1st November 2018 and a call for a 'new' EU Reference Centre is hence no reflection on any of the activities carried out by the Interbull Centre.

Call for applications for new EU Reference Body in January 2017

The EC is now planning a call to select a 'new' EURC in line with Article 29 of Animal Breeding Regulation 2016/1012.

Network. Guidelines. Certification.

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A draft of the Terms of Reference for the call to select a 'new' EURC have been made available to EU members states, which states that *'During the Commission Working Group on Zootechnics, which took place on 15 November 2016, experts from the Member States expressed that there is a need to promote the harmonisation and improvement of the methods of performance testing and genetic evaluation of purebred breeding animals of the bovine species used by breed societies or by third parties designated by those breed societies, therefore the public selection to designate the European Union reference centre responsible for the scientific and technical contribution to the harmonisation and improvement of those methods should be launched by the Commission to ensure continuity in this field after 31 October 2018.'*

This draft ToR will be discussed on 9 January 2017 with an intention to launch the call for application with a deadline in February 2017.

The ToR furthermore mentions that National Competent Authorities (NCAs) *"are responsible for submitting the dossiers of the respective applicant centres to the Commission"* and that *"The NCAs shall organise a preselection of candidate centres, on the basis of the eligibility and selection criteria set and submit relevant applications. NCAs shall not submit more than one candidate centre."*

Continuation of Interbull Centre as the EU Reference Centre

ICAR and Interbull Centre are prominently mentioned in the new EU regulation and breed societies/organisations are expected to follow principles agreed by ICAR if rules and standards have not been established by the relevant EU Reference Centre. To ICAR and INTERBULL, the continuation of Interbull Centre as the EU Reference Centre for bovine breeding would be a logical decision. The Interbull Centre:

- Is an internationally recognised institution; It provides genetic information services and applied research for improvement of livestock to a worldwide network
- Fulfils successfully its duties as the EU Reference Body for zootechnics for 20 years;
- Is embedded within the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, and as such is able to deal with topics at the highest scientific level, while also being supported by the Swedish State;
- Is the Operational Unit of ICAR's Sub-Committee INTERBULL, and
- That the Centre and its 9 members of staff fulfil such a central role within the International dairy and beef genetic evaluation services, and performs its services according to ISO 9001:2008 principles with
 - Accurate predictions
 - Independence
 - Timely delivery
 - Documented methods and practices publicly available
 - Unbiased statistics
 - Comprehensive communication



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The above facts on the Interbull Centre support and strengthen ICAR's and INTERBULL's resolve that it wishes for the Interbull Centre to become the 'new' EU Reference Centre for the international genetic evaluation of cattle.

If you have questions please don't hesitate to contact either ICAR or Interbull.

We write to you in order to ask for your support on this issue. This could be done in contacting your national competent authority to explain why your organisation as member of ICAR and customer of Interbull supports the setup described above.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Hans Wilmink
President of ICAR
Rome, Italy

Dr. Reinhard Reents
Chairman of Interbull
Uppsala, Sweden

Please find attached an English version of the call for selection document and URL's that are referred to for your convenience. Additional languages are available for download at the respective URL's:

- EU Regulation 2016/1012: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2016.171.01.0066.01.ENG ; "Animal Breeding Regulation 2016-1012 EN.pdf"
- Council Decision 96/463/EC: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:31996D0463> ; "19960723 Interbull Centre EURLZ designation 96-463-EC.pdf");
- Annex II TOR new EURC on zootechnics 28112016.docx. (File attached)