

# ICAR 2023

TOLEDO **SPAIN**  
22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023



Livestock  
Genetics  
from  
Spain



**“We are what we repeatedly do”**  
The experience of ASSAF BREEDERS ASSOCIATION with ICAR certification of quality  
Fernando Freire . ASSAFE

Breeding for resilience: transitioning diverse livestock farming systems into the future

# Is ICAR Certification really necessary?

# Where do we come from?

**1977- 83** First lot imported from Israel  
(Life animals: 320 Females; 77 males).

**1993** First organized group of ASSAF  
Farmers in Spain - Starts data collection

# OUR 20 YEARS HISTORY



**2002 ASSAFE- Spanish ASSAF Breeders Association** is born

**2003** Breed is recognized by the Spanish government and the beginning of the official Flock book.

**2019** Recognized as an integrated Breed in Spain

## MORPHOLOGY OF THE ASSAF BREED

**Males 100-120kg**



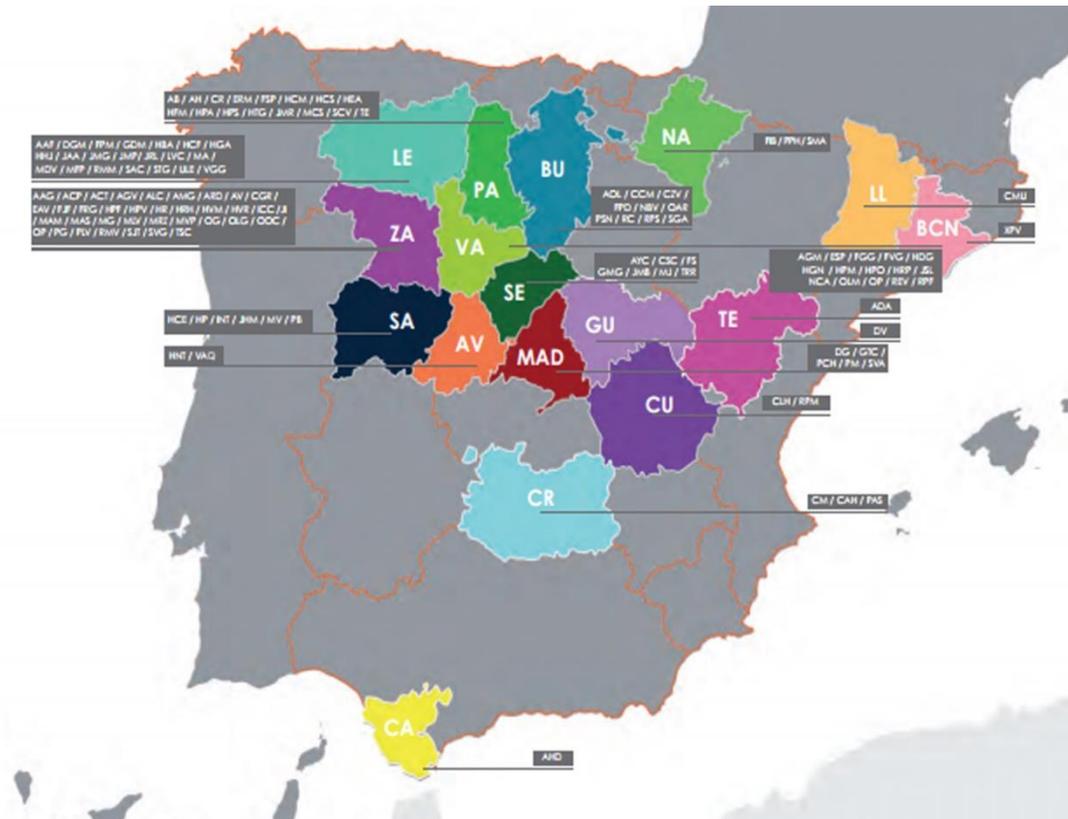
**Females 80-90kg**



Probably the most productive dairy sheep in the world

# ASSAF in Spain

- More than 1 Million ASSAF ewes



## ASSAF Association (ASSAFE)

- ASSAFE's flock book becomes official and it is audited by the Spanish Ministry of agriculture.
- ASSAFE 2023:
  - 120 farmers all over Spain.
  - 131,000 active heads in Flock Book

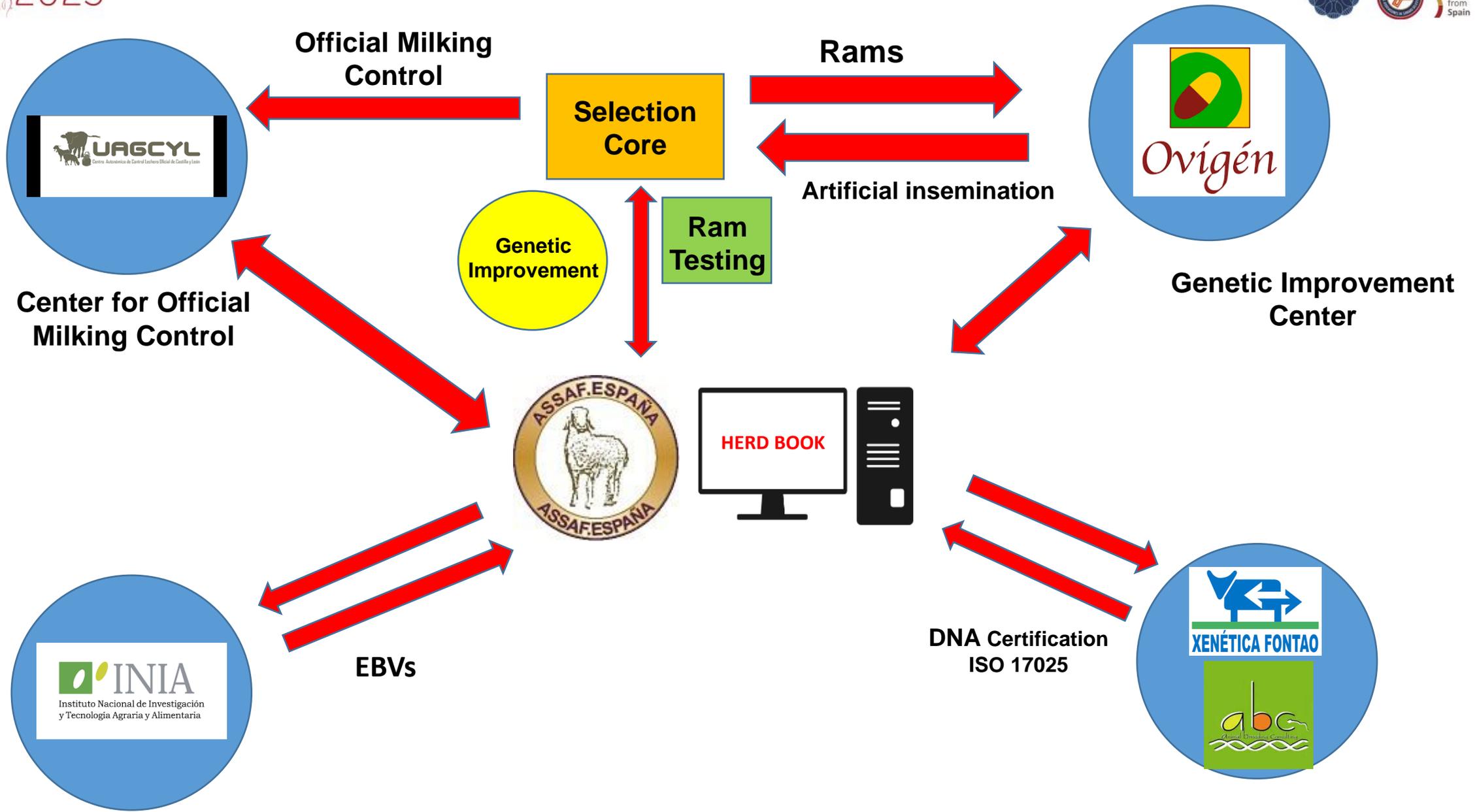
# Assafe national breeders association (ASSAFE)

RULES to be a member of ASSAFE:

- It is mandatory for farmer members to perform DNA testing to the entire replacement.
- It is mandatory to artificially inseminate a minimum of 25% of the flock
- It is mandatory to perform official milking control every single month

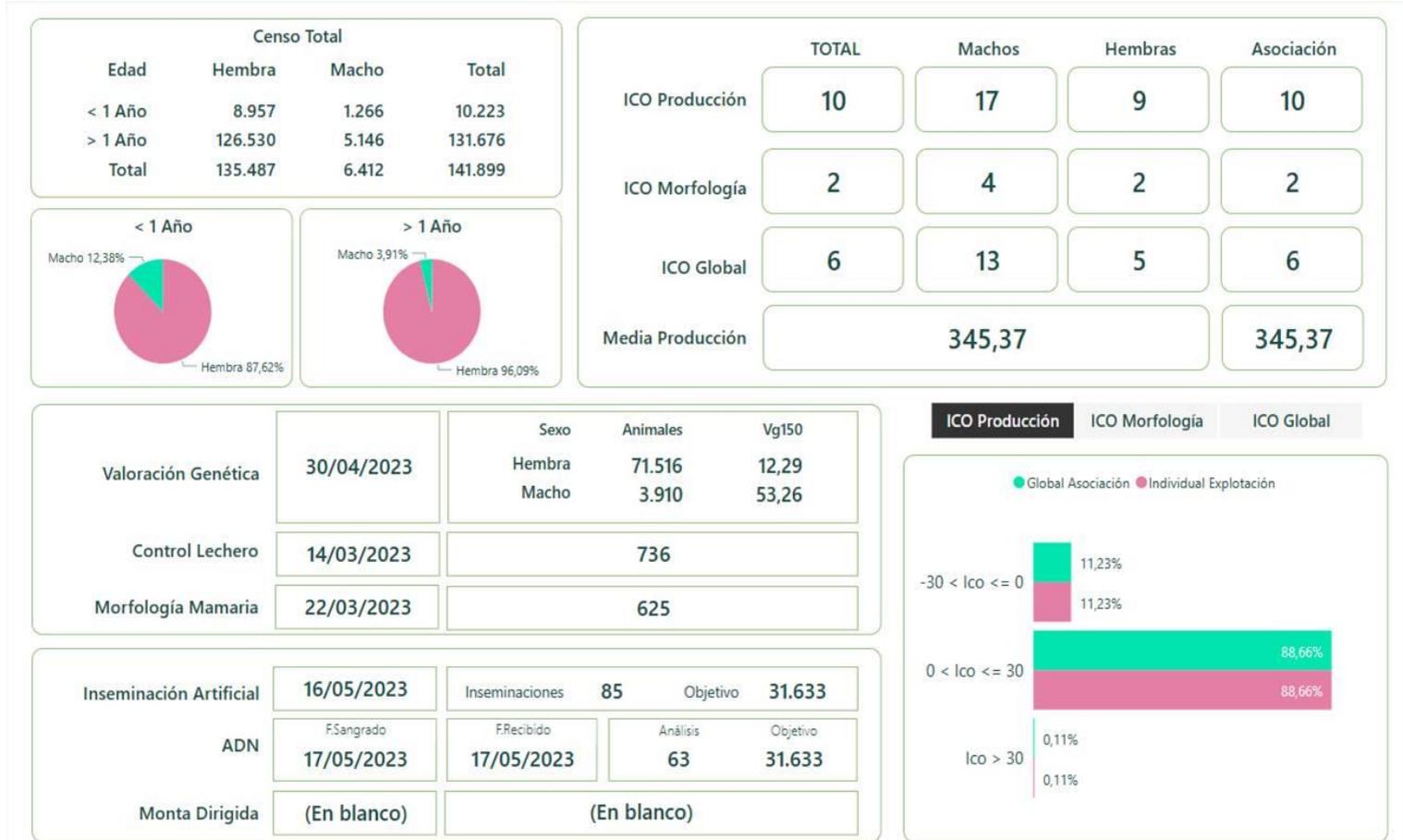
Farmers, in exchange, obtain EBV (using genomics)





# Farmer Central Management System

Every farmer can access the central management system from their farm



# ASSAFE in Figures (1993-2023)

- DNA Tests performed: **530.808** animals
- Milk Production Official Control: **1,145,328** validated lactations (Under ICAR rules)
- Artificial Inseminations : **30,000** per year
- Obtained EBV: females **420.328**
- Obtained EBV: males **21.158**



# ASSAFE's experience with ICAR

- In 2020, INIA (Spanish Institute for Agriculture and Food Research and Technology) asked ASSAFE about our potential interest in certifying our working model.
- In 2020, The Spanish Ministry of Agriculture suggests to the different Spanish breeders associations the use of ICAR audit process.
- ASSAFE's associated farmers approve the proposal.
- Since then, ICAR offers ASSAFE a wide range of benefits

# The Certification Process

1. ICAR questionnaire: including 260 questions about:
  - Identification
  - Genealogic book
  - Milking control
  - Morfology
  - Other fenotypes
  - Genetic evaluation
  - Data process
2. Online meeting between ICAR and Assafe team (Management, geneticists, administration and veterinarians).
3. ICAR visits ASSAFE HQ in October 2020
4. ICAR visits an ASSAFE farm during milking control process

# Benefits of ICAR Certification for ASSAFE

- We have obtained **increased knowledge** of our own work processes
- Has made us better understand the importance of having **quality data**
- It has helped us develop **better control points** to monitor the quality of the data obtained
- It has helped us **improve our processes**
- It has helped us create a **culture of quality** and continuous improvement within ASSAFE (We have started the ISO certification)

# So...Is ICAR Certification really necessary?

- ICAR has certified the quality, reliability and transparency of **our system**
- ICAR has improved **our image** in front of our main stakeholder:
  - National and regional Administration
  - Existing associates
  - Potential Associates and customers
  - Others
- ICAR has improved the **ASSAFE brand**

**In conclusión:**

**It brings sustainability to our project**



# Acknowledgements

- **Ministry of Agriculture:** Fernando Tejerina and team
- **INIA:** Clara Díaz and M. Ángeles Jiménez
- **UAGCYL:** José Antonio Morán

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THE GLOBAL STANDARD  
FOR LIVESTOCK DATA

Arthur van Schendelstraat 650, 3511 MJ Utrecht, Netherlands

# CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

**ASSAFE - Asociación Nacional de Criadores de  
Ganado Ovino de Raza Assaf**

for Identification in dairy sheep; Milk recording in dairy sheep; Herd book recording in dairy sheep; Conformation recording in dairy sheep; Data processing in dairy sheep; Genetic evaluation in dairy sheep

  
Martin Burke  
ICAR CE

**Thank You!!**

Utrecht, 26 January, 2022  
Certificate number: 2022/04B  
Valid up-to: January 2027