

## **Report of the meeting with the Bulgarian stakeholders for the Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform**

Report by Chris Warkup and David Telford, Genesis Faraday

The meeting with the Bulgarian stakeholders of the Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform was held in Sofia on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The venue was the Ministry of Agriculture.

Chris Warkup gave a presentation outlining FABRE-TP. George Dimov and Dimitar Vasillev from the AgroBioInstitute, Sofia acted as the local contacts to organise the meeting, and provided a translation from English to Bulgarian for the attendants.

Representatives of the major Bulgarian animal production industries and breeders organizations, and from the Universities and Research Institutions involved in animal breeding and reproduction, and other relevant organisations like the Ministry of Agriculture, were invited to attend the meeting. A total of 13 people participated in the meeting. Unfortunately, adverse severe stormy weather in the days prior to the meeting caused travel problems which reduced attendance.

Chris Warkup outlined what Technology Platforms are, and why they are important. The presentation was then used to describe why and how FABRE-TP has been established and its activities so far. Following this, the Strategic Research Agenda was explained, with particular focus on the Technology Research Priorities. The participants were also informed of the opportunity to set up a National Mirror Group for Bulgaria. The attendants were then provided with an opportunity to express their views on FABRE-TP in general, and in particular, the Strategic Research Agenda.

These comments were recorded, and then circulated to those who attended the meeting for possible corrections and additions. The final list of significant comments is as follows:

1. Research in Bulgaria is currently led by four organisation types: Universities, Research Institutes, the state breeding agency, and also the breeding associations.
2. The Ministry of Agriculture would like to see the greater involvement of breeding associations in generating breed improvement in different species, but there are problems in implementation. There were comments that this is part of a wider technology transfer gap between research and application to industry that Bulgaria faces and a general feeling that things are now worse than they were some years ago. Training for industry and specific technology transfer projects might be ways to help address this problem, potentially by utilizing Bulgarian EU Structural Funds and Social funds.
3. State performance recording schemes/progeny stations used to exist in the past, but have since declined in recent years, and the industry therefore has structural problems that need to be addressed if existing technologies are to be used effectively.
4. Bee keeping is economically important for Bulgaria and it was therefore important that bees were addressed in FABRE.

5. A comment was made that it would be beneficial if “Code Efabar”, the European farm animal breeders Code of Good Practice (<http://www.code-efabar.org/>) could be established in Bulgaria, and a question was asked if FABRE could assist with adoption. Chris Warkup explained that any breeding organisation could adopt the Code, and in most countries so far, this has been implemented at Industries’ own expense. He also explained that this is also a technology transfer issue which could be addressed by better interaction between the Research community and Industry, possibly with financial assistance provided by Bulgarian Government funding, or European Framework Seven funding. The ‘Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways’ mechanism under FP7- People Marie Curie Actions may be one mechanism to help address this.

6. The summary at the end of the meeting was that, overall, those present considered FABRE a very good idea, but another national stakeholder meeting is needed to feed into the process, with the main issues being i) Bulgarian input to the SRA, ii) improving technology transfer within Bulgaria, and iii) organising a national FABRE mirror group.

7. The Ministry of Agriculture would like to facilitate a further meeting for a wider audience to consider setting up a National Mirror Group/ National Platform for Bulgaria, and to discuss both input into the SRA and how activity might be taken forward within Bulgaria.

8. Chris Warkup explained that this is the start, not the end of the process, and that those involved in animal breeding and reproduction in Bulgaria will have continual opportunities to feed into FABRE, either through a National Mirror group when this is set up, or immediately, via the FABRE website: <http://www.fabretp.org>

#### *Participants*

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