

Report of the meeting with the Danish stakeholders for the Sustainable Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform

Report by Chris Warkup, Genesis Faraday, and Anne-Marie Neeteson, European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders

The meeting with the Danish stakeholders of the Sustainable Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform was held in Copenhagen on 20 September 2007. The meeting was organized by Kåre Fuglsbjerg of the Danish Agricultural Council (www.landbrugsraadet.dk). Representatives of a wide range of Danish animal breeding and production organizations, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Research Council, and from Danish Universities and research institutes were invited to attend the meeting. A total of 18 people participated.

Chair of the afternoon was Ingela Velander of the Danish Meat Council. She welcomed the participants and introduced the first speaker, Lars Johansen, of the Agency for Science and Technology Innovation (www.fi.dk), and involved in the Danish research prioritization for EU (next to L. Munksgaard LMC, O. Olsen Aarhus Un, M. Knudsen DFFE). The Eurocenter is part of this organisation and assists people in finding the right funding, or giving general advice on project proposal preparation. He indicated there is funding available for various activities in this process, e.g. preparatory money for proposals (as from DKK 50,000), research and contract negotiation grants. Furthermore, he alerted the audience there are grants (DKK 200,000 - 2 million) to set up national networks (related to National Technology Platforms). Furthermore, C. Christiansen of DARO is holding office in Brussels and can be of help for people wishing to contact EC people.

Anne-Marie Neeteson outlined what Technology Platforms are, and why they are important. She introduced FABRE TP, explained the process of Vision paper, Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) and Action Plan development. The presentation was then used to describe why and how FABRE TP has been established and its activities so far. The SRA is being discussed throughout Europe. The Danish country discussion is the 21st of 31 country discussions. Furthermore, Chris Warkup explained the research priorities identified in expert groups discussions involving over 500 experts.

The audience was invited to comment on the SRA and indicate specific Danish emphasis.

- The priorities identified, and the EU projects proposed are really the same as in Denmark, especially in relation to reproduction, meat quality.
- The way robustness is defined is not clear. It should not mean one breed fits all, but that animals are well suited to the environments they are kept in.
- An important issue is the definition of the breeding goal. Have we defined the right breeding goals. The balance should be not as much in the technologies, but in the breeding goal.
- In principle, all subjects are included. However, environmental issues are hidden too much throughout the document – the final SRA should focus this more.
- Efficiency has always be an important issue in breeding. Until recently, it was not an issue raising much attention. However, during the last year much has changed.

- Also coping with climate change is an issue coming up quickly.
- Fertility does not only include technologies. There is basic knowledge to be gathered, which is indispensable for understanding and improving reproductive performance.
- The level of research funding could be much higher in Denmark,
 - If there could be general projects defined,
 - If discussion will take place in the sector, so that
 - Common research needs can be defined
 - Therefore, broad coordination, e.g. amongst species and industry/research, would be needed.
- This could give good arguments to fund directly research into farm animal species instead of into animal models.
- Important issues are:
 - Robustness/adaptation
 - Feed utilisation
 - Efficiency
 - Fertility
 - Biodiversity
 - Climate change
 - Balanced breeding (e.g. functional traits)
- There are strong arguments (and funding available) for better coordination between for instance 'meat' and 'milk' in the lobby for a broad science base and appropriate project funding.