

Report of the meeting to encounter the Hungarian stakeholders for the Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform

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The meeting to encounter the Maltese stakeholders for the Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform was held in xxx on June 29th, 2007. The venue was xxx. József Rátki and Zsombor Wagenhoffer were chairing the meeting.

Representatives of animal research institutes, animal industries, breeders' organizations, public institutions, scientists were invited to attend the meeting. There were 31 people attending the meeting.

After a short presentation to explain the role and the functioning of the technology platforms in the EU policy, it was fully presented the FABRE TP. The reason of the creation of the platform and then the activities so far were explained during the presentation. Finally the Hungarian animal science and industry community were aware of the first draft of the Strategic Research Agenda. The people attending the meeting were then stimulated to express their view on the FABRE technology platform in general and more specifically the comments, advises and criticisms about the first draft of the Strategic Research Agenda.

During the meeting, the importance of the mirror group role was explained.

The final list is then detailed:

1. There were not enough details on the activities of research on animal reproduction, especially if compared to the details given for molecular genetic research. It looks that the FABRE Technology Platform is not well balanced, there are too much emphasis on breeding and relatively not enough on animal reproduction
2. Research should be focus also to find the possibility to minimize the use of hormones to improve efficiency of animal reproduction. There could be many systems, like breeding, new technology on heat detection and any other means to increase reproduction efficiency
3. For the nature of the FABRE TP, there were missing many aspects of any disciplines and activity of animal science and industry not related to animal breeding and reproduction. There is no mention to animal nutrition, physiology, etc. That might be a very negative impact in the development of animal industry if only research on animal breeding and reproduction fields will be supported by the European Community. A possible solution could be to include nutrition aspects in the research originally directed to improve animal breeding, but this is certainly not the possible best solution
4. There will be the need to select animals to adapt to the new environments especially those created by the global climate change and those created by social changes, such like strong urbanization and concentration of animal breeding in marginal areas or near large markets (surrounding areas of large cities)
5. There is lack of emphasis on horse breeding. Horse breeding is very important for Hungarian livestock system and research on this species is strategic for the national animal industry
6. More emphasis is also requested to management of genetic resources. Genetic resources have public and private interests and then it will require EC actions in cooperation with farmers to support research on this aspect

7. The Strategic Research Agenda lacks, so far, of actions to traditional farming systems. Much emphasis was given to new technologies that could be applied to specialized breeding systems typical of large international enterprises. In the future European animal farming there will be an important role for the marginal areas. The low-input low-output livestock systems will be present in the future having not only a productive role, but also environmental and social reasons. Research support is necessary to make the traditional animal farming very efficient and competitive. The SRA should better consider that for the many conditions the breeding objectives should be less than optimum about productive level. The main breeding objective should be to look for animals fitting well and having high efficient production in the systems in which is bred. An example would be to look for animals that are able to have good productions in marginal areas. Finally the suggestion was to consider breeding and reproduction technologies for low input systems.
8. Not emphasis has been given to support research done in cooperation with non EU countries and developing countries in particular. The cooperation with those countries in the field of animal breeding and reproduction could be strategic for EU. For instance there could be done research with tropical countries to find solutions to fight disease originated in tropical areas that could be exported in EU. Moreover it could be interesting to study in non EU countries techniques not allowed within EU but about which it is important that EU scientists will keep the expertise for any possible future use
9. Both the Steering Committee and the Working Groups do not represent enough the animal science and animal industry communities of Central and Eastern Europe. There many aspects in which the necessities of livestock systems of those countries are just neglected
10. For the aquaculture industries and research there are emphasis only on North-West Europe aquaculture systems. No mention about the types of aquaculture farming o Central and East Europe. It is necessary to give a broader approach
11. It must remember that poultry is a multispecies. The research should not be reflecting only the aspects of chicken and broilers. In Hungary, for instance, the waterfowl are very important. The same in other neighboured countries. It is important that other species “belonging to poultry” will be considered
12. The research on the biology of animals should provoke the increase on knowledge and then efficiency of local breeds.
13. Because it is important to enhance the local products have large quality and related to local genotypes and environments, there is also the need to improve the research looking at correlation of animal traits and food quality and healthy food
14. The research on animal breeding and reproduction should also consider the quality of products of animal origin. It was noted that too much emphasis has been given to quantity of production. Moreover great importance is given to the production of healthy food. The Portuguese attendance suggested that more importance must be given to the quality of products from local breeds that, to be able to be economically efficient, must maintain the existing niche market.
15. It was noted that too much prominence and priorities has been giving to “-omics” fields of research. Such research has been carried on already for twenty years and since then, very little has been achieved and almost nothing has been applied. Almost the entire breeding schemes made use of quantitative genetics technologies and the only extensively spread reproductive technology is the artificial insemination. It is felt as very important that if a lot of resources are given to genomic, for instance, there will not be enough for the research of technologies that are really applied and use extensively.