

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

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The meeting to encounter the Spanish stakeholders for the Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction Technology Platform was held in Madrid on December 13th, 2007. The venue was the Ministry of Agriculture.

Representatives of the major animal industries and breeders organizations, Animal Science Research Institutes in Austria and the Ministry of Agriculture were invited to attend the meeting. There were 34 people attending.

The meeting began by presenting, shortly, to explain the role and the functioning of the technology platforms in the EU policy then it was fully presented the FABRE TP. The presentation was directed to explain the reason of the creation of the platform and then the activities of the platform so far. Finally it has been described the first draft of the Strategic Research Agenda. The people attending the meeting were then stimulated to express their views on the FABRE technology platform in general and more specifically the comments, advises and criticisms about the first draft of the Strategic Research Agenda.

After collecting the comments, the list was sent back to those who attended the meeting for possible corrections and additions. The final list is then detailed:

1. The audience raises the importance of stimulating the participation of the Ministry of Education and relative agencies for the importance on dissemination, teaching and training for the development of the sector
2. In the Vision Paper and in all the produced documents low importance was given to rabbits industry that is very important in Spain. The audience recommends to consider the rabbit production in the Strategic Research Agenda for the high local importance, not only for Spain, but also for other Mediterranean countries
3. It is also very important to make research to refine the phenotypic registration. The importance of field production recording is was discussed and decided to suggest to include in the Strategic Research Agenda the research to improve the efficiency of phenotypic recording
4. Research should also be increased for improving the quality of milk and meat production from small ruminants, i.e. sheep and goats
5. More support should be given to perform research for qualitative genetics
6. In Spain one of the most important swine production system is the typical “cerdo ibérico”, that is the pork raised in extensive systems. More research should be dedicated on typical and local livestock systems and, in this particular case, to extensive swine production system
7. More studies and research must be dedicated, following the Spanish audience, to increase economic efficiency in European livestock systems. In the global competition, Europe can not loose the efficiency in the way animal products are produced
8. One of the characteristics and of the positive aspects of European animal products is the diversity and the typical local production. This is especially important in marginal areas that are especially mountain and Mediterranean areas. Research should be dedicated to increase local production to maintain animal diversity and relative animal product diversity

9. Since there is climatic global change, it is probable that also European livestock system will have to change accordingly. Efforts should be dedicated to predict what type of changes will be suffered by animal production systems in Europe and doing specific research activities to be prepared for the new scenario
10. Major role than in the past must be dedicated to dissemination of results from research activities and to relative application
11. Again the audience would like to emphasize that the EU research support should be also dedicated to rare breeds and to their productions that very often are typical local produces permitting the level of economic efficiency for remaining sustainable
12. Breeding objectives must be more and more dedicated to breed animal in equilibrium with the environment, therefore research must be sustained to select animals not increasing the level of pollution in the environment (green house gases, animals adjusted to environmental friendly livestock systems, etc.)
13. Breeding to select animal with good temperament must also be considered. The final objective will be to breed animals easy to handle, especially in consideration of the new possible “industry-like” livestock systems
14. In the mean of disseminations, must be considered the possibility to teach consumers about the quality products so that the local, traditional and quality products will have larger economic efficiency
15. Genetic defects studying must be considered to avoid decrease of genetic diversity, very important especially in small and rare breeds
16. Spanish animal science and industries communities expressed their concerns about the need to increase efficiency of animal farming for the problems of competitiveness of Spanish livestock systems. The breeding objectives and relative studies must be aiming at increasing the economic efficiency of animal farming
17. The importance of deciphering the genotype-environment interaction was also outlined that is very important especially in low-input livestock system of marginal areas
18. The audience also expressed the importance of improving research for performance recording activities. The technology must be improved to perform proper genetic evaluation and then selection process
19. More research should be done to utilize new breeding and reproduction techniques and finally to obtain animal for which the herd management can be more easily improved in small ruminants
20. More efforts and investments should be done to discover new methods of performance recordings of small ruminants so to diminish the costs. This factor, together with the difficulties to utilize artificial insemination, has a large impact for the low level of genetic improvement in small ruminants
21. An important issue to better exploit for the current and future knowledge of breeding activities is the science of data management. Most of the new disciplines are utilizing a large amount of data collected. Other important field of application for animal science is the technology of collecting data. The data management should therefore be studied and consequently improved. The improvement of technique for data management will automatically increase the efficiency of the entire system
22. The Technology Platform develops a strategic research agenda that is lacking actions in favour of traditional farming systems. In the probable future European animal farming there will be an important role for the marginal areas. 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.

During the meeting, the importance of the mirror group role was explained. There was some interest to organize the national mirror group for Spain, or at least it was expressed the importance of the national mirror group.