

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Interbull, a sub-committee of ICAR, as an international non-governmental, non-profit organization based on voluntary cooperation of many countries / organizations and considering its history and its international patrons is devoted to and advocates:

Active utilization of domestic animal genetic resources; as well as
Effective use of genetic resources globally to obtain the largest sustainable genetic progress.

To achieve this Interbull encourages:

Development of national GES according to the world's best practices for a broad range of economically important traits to fit variable objectives in member countries; and also
Bi- and multi-lateral cooperation between national genetic evaluation centers.

In an across-country evaluation of animals, the ideal situation is characterized by the existence of a balance between *variation* and *resemblance* among various countries' national GES. In a global perspective certain levels of *variation* in national GES is essential for the evolution of any country's GES. We need to have the experience of doing things in different ways in order to decide on the modifications and improvements in each and every stage of national and international evaluations. However, too much *variation* causes the task of international comparisons to become very difficult, if not impossible. Hence, there should be enough *resemblance* among different countries' GES so that the information obtained for an animal from one country becomes directly utilizable and valuable in a different country.

What we have observed and concluded from Interbull surveys (especially IBB 24) is that diversification of national GES, leading to higher levels of *variation* in national GES, seems to be a process that needs no effort and input from outside. The diverse needs and problems within each country are strong enough forces to drive a country's GES towards adaptation to specific circumstances and adoption of measures that increase *variation*.

Resemblance among different countries' GES, however, needs much effort, input and coordination from outside. Naturally, an international cooperative venture, such as Interbull, is the appropriate organization to coordinate efforts that, based on biological and statistical properties of traits and data, will hopefully bring about a desirable level of *resemblance* among national GES.

The present document is the result of a continuing process initiated and maintained by a large number of breeding organizations in the Interbull member countries and coordinated by the Interbull Centre. The recommendations herewith are the result of a pragmatic compromise between dictates of several perspectives, among others, state of art in theoretical cattle breeding, and needs and capacity of individual farmers to incorporate the recommended changes into their operations. In few cases there is so much difference between practices in different countries that no compromise is in sight. In such cases, clear decisive leadership and simple to adopt and easy to follow recommendations are needed.

The present set of recommendations should ideally serve as a reflection of the best practices in today's world dairy cattle breeding and also should be able to give valuable insight about what is a sound practice,

should any country start a national genetic evaluation system or change its current system to a different (and hopefully better) one.

Although we believe that the recommendations presented here are the best possible solutions for the current situation prevailing in the Interbull's member countries and for some foreseeable future (5-10 years), however, they are not to be considered as eternally sufficient. Therefore, there is a need for continuous monitoring and revision of these recommendations at least every five years.