

## PREFACE

A consequence of increasing trade in dairy genetic material, i.e. semen, embryos and livestock, is the breeders desire to make accurate comparisons between animals performing both within and across countries. However, these comparisons are made difficult, among other things, by differences in genetic evaluation methods in different countries. Alleviation of this problem is one of the responsibilities of the International Bull Evaluation Service (INTERBULL).

INTERBULL, which is responsible for promoting the development and standardization of international genetic evaluations for dairy cattle, acts as a mediator in the exchange of information between its member countries by a variety of methods, one of which is periodic surveys on national genetic evaluation procedures. It should also be emphasized that the Interbull surveys have another important function as well, namely they are used as a first step in the process of improving data input quality for national as well as international evaluations. The list of such surveys follows:

Interbull Bulletin No. 2	1985	For dairy production traits
Interbull Bulletin No. 3	1988	For dairy production traits
Interbull Bulletin No. 5	1992	For dairy production traits
Interbull Bulletin No. 6	1992	For non-production, growth & beef production traits; and
Interbull Bulletin No. 13	1996	For non-dairy-production and growth & beef production traits.

Because of the enormous amount of changes that have taken place in the genetic evaluation programs in various countries in recent years much of the information contents of the previous surveys had become obsolete by the beginning of 1999. Therefore, a new survey seemed to be both necessary and of immediate interest. Consequently, the Interbull Centre decided to conduct a new survey on genetic evaluation procedures for dairy production traits practiced in various countries. Obviously, such an undertaking would have not been successful without the kind co-operation of the responsible organizations in the Interbull member countries. The economic support of this project by USDA / NAAB is also gratefully acknowledged.

To conduct the survey a questionnaire and a rather detailed list of guidelines on how to respond to the questionnaire were sent to ICAR / INTERBULL member countries in late April 1999. After reviewing the initial responses a comprehensive list of follow up questions were sent to the respondents in the middle of August 1999. The following table summarizes the responses.

Number of Interbull/ICAR member countries (organizations)	41 (51)
Number of countries (organizations) responding to the survey	31 (36)
Number of countries with multiple organizations responding	3

The present Bulletin comprises the responses to the latest Interbull survey. In summary it can be said that individual test-day records of dairy cows go through a large number of genetically motivated statistical treatments until they are summarized in a few estimated genetic parameters which are used in assignment of breeding values to bulls and cows. The first observation from this survey is that there are a lot of variation between different countries / organizations in every step of this process and that may affect calculation of breeding values. Another interesting observation in the genetic evaluation procedures is that the move from Sire Model to Animal Model is almost complete and a new move towards Test-Day Model has started. It also seems that the time lag between a country adopting a new method and other countries following the same path is decreasing all the time.

This Bulletin and additional information on Interbull member countries / organizations are available from Interbull's web site at [www.interbull.org](http://www.interbull.org).

For the INTERBULL Centre  
March, 2000

Hossein Jorjani, PhD  
Research Geneticist