

## **Preface**

### **Workshop Genetic Improvement of Functional Traits in cattle (GIFT) – Breeding Goals and Selection Schemes, November 7-9<sup>th</sup>, 1999, Wageningen, The Netherlands**

GIFT is a three year project (January 1997 - December 1999) aiming at bringing together researchers and people from breeding organisations to develop concepts for genetic improvement of functional traits by defining breeding goals and selection strategies to achieve the goals. GIFT enhances collaborative efforts for the further development of efficient recording systems and breeding value estimation procedures. For an overview of the activities of GIFT, please see the Workshop Opening (page 9) by Prof. Pim Brascamp, Head of Department Animal Sciences, Wageningen University.

These are the proceedings of the final workshop of the EU Concerted Action GIFT. The proceedings include full papers of the presentations in the sessions on breeding goal definition, breeding value prediction for functional traits, and selection and mating schemes. The core group wishes to express many thanks to all contributors to the workshop.

These proceedings also include the results of a survey among all workshop participants. First part of the survey was the question to list traits for which the breeding organisation should provide information, i.e. predicted breeding values for selection candidates. From the lists of individual participants, a common 'ideal picture' was derived (page 215), considered to be a framework for national and international efforts (see also contribution by Georgios Banos, page 63). Second part of the survey considered the different reasons for publication of predicted breeding values for all these traits, and thereby, the different possible uses, e.g., in total merit index, in assortative mating or for monitoring at population level. The results on this second part of the survey are very interesting and hopefully will be used as a basis for further discussion on the appropriate presentation of information by breeding organisations to facilitate a technological development (i.e., relative genetic changes in traits) that suites societal demands.

This was the final workshop of the EU Concerted Action. On behalf of all participating institutes and all participants to GIFT activities, the core group wishes to express her gratitude to the EU for facilitating the GIFT activities by providing the finances. We are pleased to announce that GIFT activities will continue under the umbrella of the International Committee on Animal Recording (ICAR).

On behalf of the GIFT core-group,  
Hans Aumann, Vincent Ducrocq, Nicolas Gengler, Ab Groen, Erling Strandberg, and Hans Sölkner,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. A.F. Groen, Overall co-ordinator GIFT