

Preface

The EU Concerted Action on the Genetic Improvement of Functional Traits in cattle (GIFT) is a three-year project (January 1997 – December 1999). At August 23rd in conjunction with the EAAP in Warsaw, GIFT organised an intermediate report workshop. In the morning, a business meeting was held to report on the activities and to decide upon the recommendations from the initial workshops on Health (Uppsala, June 1997) and Fertility and Reproduction (Grub, November 1997). In the afternoon, a seminar ‘Developments in dairy cattle breeding with special reference to functional traits’ was held. The intermediate workshop programme is given in these proceedings, as is a full list of participants.

These proceedings include the annual report on the GIFT activities in 1997 with the recommendations from the two first initial workshops. The recommendations were put forward at the initial workshops, summarised and presented at the business meeting in Warsaw. After discussion, the business meeting approved the recommendations, and it was decided to have these recommendations published

- to stimulate the exchange of existing knowledge about the genetic evaluation of functional traits, and
- to enhance collaborative efforts for the further development of efficient recording systems and breeding value estimation procedures.

The recommendations include very useful suggestions to be implemented in practical breeding programmes that aim at a balanced selection for production traits and functional traits.

Full papers from the presentations at the seminar are included in these proceedings as well. The core group feels very pleased to have these papers published as part of the EU concerted action GIFT activities. The papers give a complete overview of current developments in dairy cattle breeding, from an organisational, industry point of view, from the point of view of desired changes in genetics to meet future demands, and from the scientific point of view on methodology (becoming) available.

The core-group sincerely acknowledges the European Association for Animal Production for support given in organising the Warsaw intermediate report workshop. The core-group also wishes to express many thanks to all contributors to the workshop.

On behalf of the GIFT core-group,

Yours sincerely,

Dr A.F. Groen
Overall co-ordinator