Minutes of the Methane Phenotype Working Group (MPWG) – 14th September 2012

Held at: Phone Conference Call, 2200 NZ time

Present: John Basarab (Agr & Rural Development, Canada), Adrian Cookson (RMG Network, NZ), Yvette de Haas (Wageningen, Netherlands), Jan Lassen (Aarhus Uni, Denmark), John McEwan (AgResearch, NZ), Steve Miller (Uni of Guelph, Canada), Hutton Oddy (NSW DPI/UNE, Aus), Natalie Pickering (AgResearch, NZ), Cesar Pinares (AgResearch, NZ), Grant Shackell (AgResearch, NZ).

Apologies:

Marcos Vinicius da Silva (EMBRAPA, Brazil), Phil Vercoe (Uni of WA, Aus)

General Business:

As this was the first meeting, the Chair (Dr Hutton Oddy) briefly introduced the objective of the Phenotype working group as defined at the ASGGN meeting in Cairns (July 2012).

- It was recognised that a common set of principles was needed for phenotyping, especially methane emissions and feed intake (FI). This was needed to help unify measurement protocols and to help the merging of data and meta-analysis (opportunity here to use NZ postdoc: Natalie Pickering). This working group was formed to review current knowledge and to prepare a position paper on measurement protocols.

What do we need to do and who does what? How do we work together?

Prepare a document on phenotype measurement. It was agreed that a structure and timeline was needed so that people could identify work they can contribute to.

Action 1: Hutton Oddy and John McEwan to prepare a list of headings and a draft structure for a paper/report. This will be sent out for review and once the structure was complete and agreed, self-nomination of people to work on specific parts would be invited. Due in 2 weeks (~28th Sept).

How does this fit with the GHG and Animal Conference in Dublin?

The deadline for offered papers/1 page summaries is 18th January. It is unrealistic to have a complete paper from this group by then. However, we could suggest that we can give a talk at the meeting about what we found. We could offer a work in progress by mid-January and present our work in June.

Only preliminary information is available about the conference. There is a section dedicated to genetics and animal variation. A special edition of Advances in Animal Biosciences is dedicated to the conference, this will publish the 1 page summaries and full papers from invited speakers are to be published in a special issue of Animal. Details of the conference are available on their website http://www.ggaa2013.ie/programme.html

Action 2: John McEwan to email Richard Dewhurst about options for a presentation. If anyone wants information about the conference email John, or visit the website.
Livestock Research Group meeting in Uruguay 1-2nd November

There is an opportunity to present a poster about the ASSGN and the phenotype working group at the conference. Abstract for the poster (250 words) is due by 30th September 2012 (enquiry@nzagrc.org.nz), a A2 size poster is expected.

Action 3: Grant Shackell will prepare a draft poster about the ASSGN and MPWG with everyone on this call as co-authors. We will assist Grant prepare the poster.

Europe Network:

Yvette de Haas and Jan Lassen indicated they submitting a grant to start a European network on “Large scale methane measurements on dairy cattle with the purpose of genetic evaluation”. Currently submitting an EOI for a COST-application, with this there is an opportunity to invite some people to a European discussion meeting.

They see the network fitting nicely in with this group. ASSGN strongly supports this initiative and is prepared to provide letters of support.

Timelines:

At the ASSGN Cairns meeting it was suggested that the outcome of this working group would be complete and presented for publication by Sept 2013.

Was suggested that at each phone meeting a section of the agreed structure of the position paper be discussed, thus only those involved in the section to be discussed need phone into the meeting.

Action 4: Next phone meeting in three weeks, at same time, ~5th October (note: it was 4am in Alberta, and remember to check daylight saving time, NZ starts on 30th Sept). The structure of position paper would have been sent out on the ~28th September (Action 1). This will be discussed at the phone meeting, plus timelines for completion.

The meeting closed at 2240 NZ time