Minutes of the 13th Methane Phenotype Working Group (MPWG)

By Phone 2100 GMT 4th Sept 2013


Apologies: Steve Miller, Adrian Cookson, Ben Hayes, Phil Vercoe, Marcos Vinicius da Silva, John Basarab, Cesar Pinares, Roger Hegarty, Grant Shackell.

General Discussion:
An aside fact: As have been writing these minutes, have realised it has been nearly a year since the first MPWG phone call on 13th - 14th Sept 2012.

Today was a general catch up and instigate the MPWG group.

MPWG white paper:
This paper was well received at the ASGGN meeting in Dublin. A few items are obviously lacking with the main section being on Methodologies. This is not how we actually measure the trait (e.g. chamber) but, what is it that you are measuring that related to furthering genetic gain i.e. how it would deploy by GS and be linked to a breeding objective.

Action: Natalie and John McEwan are as part of milestones need to write an extension to their “Milestone 3” that was circulated to the MPWG a few months ago. This extension should cover some of these points, and will be used to start this section of the white paper.

Hutton has received data from Gilles Renand (INRA) and Robert Herd (DPI NSW) both beef cattle methane measurements, to be inserted into the table

Yvette was invited by Animal to write a review on “Genetic solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”. It was agreed with Hutton and Natalie to suggest to Animal that the MPWG paper could be used. Yvette has received 2/3 positive responses from the Animal editorial board.

It was agreed that the following timeline be put in place, to ensure we have a “White paper” and a shorten “Review paper” ready before WCGALP next year.
1. Mid-end October stop point for the White paper.
2. End October
   a. Tick what we want to keep for the review paper
   b. Collapse the other bits.
3. By mid-December, 2 rounds of additions edits
4. Submission of review paper to Animal by February 2014.

Next meeting to be held NZ time 26th September 9am.

Update NZ (John McEwan)
RFP16500 project on Dairy cattle sniffers (~20-40) for high throughput methane measurements. Submitted by Suzanne Rowe (AgResearch) and with DairyNZ.
DairyNZ has been asked to lead the project (i.e Gary Waghorn), but currently in a bit of a muddle, there should be an update on the project by next month. There is a possibility of a meeting with the funding body, and European consultants involved in the bid, in Scotland in November.
GPLER3
NZ$10 Million available for international collaboration
The funders’ gave a powerpoint of what they want last month (ask Natalie for a copy)

- Expression of interest (EOI) 2nd Dec
- Full bid October 2014
- Funding starts Apr-June 2015

McEwan was involved in a bid last time that was unsuccessful, following is some of the outcomes of the funders’ presentation and some tips (john reading the tea leaves about what would be acceptable).

- Funders have recognised that involving international parties takes time, thus longer timeline.
- **Functional focus**, that relates to an outcome that can be used in industry for mitigation
- **Unlikely** to pay for animal, CH₄ measures or genotypes
- **Could pay** for sequencing of the host or rumen or gene expression in alimentary tract
- Reason failed last time:
  - Not a strong enough analytical team
  - Did not explain where the animal resources came from
- Recommend that the basic measurements on animals have already been done by June 2015. If going to use animals, needs to be strongly hypothesis driven.
- If they like the EOI the likely response will be
  - We like these bits, we don’t like these bits, can you address these bits.
  - They will be explicit about their likes/dislikes and what is missing
  - The funders didn’t like the failure rate last time.

The funders are:

- GRA with NZ money
  - Supervised by MPI
    - Technical advisory panel (a diverse group, listed in ppt)
    - External review panel

McEwan, hopes to get parameters nailed down by September to put in a EOI.

ICAR
Yvette meet with Nicolas and Brian Wickham at EAAP. There was encouragement by ICAR to start a working group. There was a group per species, but think it is best to have one across all ruminants. Suzanne Rowe, is setting up the teleconference, if you wish to involved email Suzanne.rowe@agresearch.co.nz.

There is a ICAR meeting in Berlin next May, Brian encouraged us to set up a meeting there.

European Joint Programming Initiative (JPI)
Was announced at the EAAP, a full announcement will be done in November, with EOI due 1st December

There may be a possible link between JPI and GPLER
  - For GPLER if money is going overseas it will only be signed off if there is NEW money from overseas to match it.
  - For GPLER there is also a rolling ball, where in-kind information can come out of an existing project.

Hutton mentioned that due to the Australian elections, there is likely to be a different policy regards GHG and so DAFF may not be continued.