



Minutes of the 4th Eco-AB General Meeting:

March 15th 2011, 17.30 – 19.00 h during the LIB-stakeholders Congress in Wageningen, NL

Topics:

1. Opening of GM
2. Minutes GM 2010 in Leipzig
3. Annual report of Eco AB 2010 (Wytze Nauta)
4. Statement of revenues and expenditures (Anet Spengler / Joanne Conington)
5. Members and membership fee
6. Eco AB-Projects
7. Miscellaneous

In Attendance: Peter Løvendahl (PL), Århus University, Denmark; Sipkejoost Hiemstra (SH), University of Wageningen, Centre for Genetic Resources, Netherlands (Guest); Wytze Nauta (WN), Louis Bolk Instituut, Netherlands; Joannie Leroyer (JL), ITAB, France; Anet Spengler Neff (AS), FiBL, Switzerland; Anna Wallenbeck (AW), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden;

Apologies: Therese Ahlman, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden; Joanne Conington, SAC, UK; Lise Grøva, bioforsk, Norway; Lotta Rydhmer, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden; Veronika Maurer, FiBL, Switzerland; Günter Postler, FIT, Germany

Topics 1 and 2: Opening GM 2011 and Minutes of GM 2010 (W. Nauta)

WN opens the meeting at 5:30 pm.

All attendant members agree with the agenda of the meeting.

All attendant members agree with the minutes of the GM 2010 in Leipzig.

Topic 3: Annual report 2010 (W. Nauta)

All members got the annual report a day in advance.

The most important Eco-AB-activities in 2010 were:

- We worked out a proposal for COST. Unfortunately we did not get through the selection.
- The 3rd general meeting of Eco AB took place in Leipzig during WCGALP. 6 people attended this meeting.

- Eco-AB was asked to join the organisation of the workshop on “ethical aspects related to methodologies in breeding and reproduction” in collaboration with the LowInputBreeds (LIB) project for the first LIB Symposium in March 2011.
- Eco AB started to work on a position paper about organic animal breeding which will be sent to IFOAM.
- During the general meeting 2010 we discussed the start of an Eco AB-project with the money we have on our account.

Topic 4: Statement of revenues and expenditures 2010

AS presents the statement of revenues and expenditures instead of Joanne Conington. All members got the statement one day in advance. The membership fee for 2010 was reduced to 400 € for full members and stayed at 100 € for associated members. Almost all full members paid their fee. The revenues from membership fees amounted to 2500 € in 2010. The expenditures (for administration, rent of a room, food and drinks at the GM in Leipzig) amounted to 1950.66 €. The surplus revenue amounted to 9692.09 € by the end of 2010. This amount was 549.34 € higher than by the end of 2009.

JL and AW approved the account and looked at all the receipts and found everything in order. All attendant members agree with the presented figures.

Topic 5: Members and membership fee

All attendant members agree that the membership fee shall stay at 400 € for full members and 100 € for associated members in 2011.

Topic 6: Eco AB-Projects

At our last GM in Leipzig we talked about the possibility that Eco AB could join a Swedish project including a survey on animal breeding on organic farms. At that time it was not clear, yet if the project would be accepted and financed by the Swedish state. By the end of 2010 we got the information from Lotta Rydhmer that the project is being funded.

AW is providing closer information on that project: It is a research project on animal breeding strategies for organic agriculture concerning pigs and dairy cows. It has three levels:

- 1. Investigating farmers’ perceptions: “how animals shall be” (organic and conventional farmers will be asked). A communication scientist is helping with the design of this survey.
- 2. Simulation study: breeding strategies for organic farms are developed using farmers’ answers (how do farmers rank traits and types of traits?) and other knowledge
- 3. Ethical evaluations: this should be the “glue” between the different research areas. An ethical person will be engaged for that. The aim is to find a transdisciplinary approach.

Therese Ahlman is working mainly in this project. It is her post doc project. AW is working as a coordinator. Lotta Rydhmer and Earling Strandberg are also involved. Up to now it is a Swedish project. The Swedish state is paying for it, but the SLU didn’t get all the money they had applied for. Maybe, because of that, the conventional part will be skipped. The project was started in January 2011. By the beginning of fall AW will be ready to send the amended proposal to all Eco AB members.

PL: After the queries are developed and tested they should be translated into other languages and used in other European countries. That way we could widen the investigation and use the

work which is done in Sweden to develop the questionnaires in several countries and thus multiply the generated information. This would be a good way for Eco AB to join the project and to start an Eco AB-cooperation in a research project. But we need funds to do it in other countries. We could ask national breeding organizations for funding.

JL: In France a similar project is just about to be started, but it is much smaller: 5 students ask organic farmers and technicians in 5 different regions of France about their breeding concepts. But those are biased groups of farmers.

All attendants agree that we should try to organize our next year's meeting in Sweden. So we could be introduced to that project and get the start for our cooperation. AW will ask her colleagues at the SLU if that would be possible.

WN mentions another Eco AB-project: the position paper on organic animal breeding for IFOAM. But up to now our cooperation didn't work. WN doesn't have enough time for it. PL thinks that we shouldn't write a position paper where we set rules, but where we come up with needs. WN says that farmers and breeding organisations have to feel the pressure, otherwise nothing is changing; that's why we need rules. SH thinks that we have to put it together: what farmers think about breeding **and** put pressure on it. We should write to IFOAM, but just a short position paper. Needs and challenges have to be included. WN will write a short draft.

Topic 7: Miscellaneous

The new professor for organic animal breeding at the University of Kassel was elected: it is Sven König. WN will contact him and ask him to become a member of Eco AB.

PL proposes to look for more members from other countries (like Steinwigger and Sölkner from Austria). We decide that all Eco AB members send addresses of possible new Eco AB members to WN. He will write a letter to them and ask them to become members.

WN will make a poster on Eco AB for the EAAP-meeting 2011 in Norway (contents: who are we, what are our aims, where to get information, how to become a member?). He will send the electronic version to AW. AW will print it and take it with her to the EAAP-meeting.

PL points out that we shouldn't waste time on writing COST-projects anymore: they just pay for meetings anyway. It is not worth it.

JL: ITAB wants to apply for an EU-project-call (2012) and is still looking for partners. The main subject will be mastitis in dairy cattle: the main question will be: which kinds of bacteria are in the cells of infected udders? Are those bacteria problematic for milk quality or for milk transport and milk processing? They want to search for alternatives to antibiotics and will try to inject oil into the infected udder instead of antibiotics. JL will send the information on the call to all Eco AB members.

Our website is too quiet. AW proposes to ask Therese Ahlman if she could take care of the website. Maybe she could also do some secretary work. AW will ask her to organize an Eco AB meeting during the EAAP meeting in Norway on August 31st.

Minutes keeper: Anet Spengler