

Introduction to the workshop

A. J. F. Russel

Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, Craigiebuckler, Aberdeen AB15 8QH, Scotland, UK

I would like to thank you all for being with us today, and thank Dr Ho Phan and Ms Claire Souchet for organising this workshop. First of all, I wish to make a short historical presentation on the current network. A previous concerted action on animal fine fibre production (AIR3-CT-920380) identified the need to develop and standardise accurate fibre measurement methods. Another proposal was submitted to the EC and it was granted funding as a Thematic Network on "Increased Competitiveness of High Quality European Animal Fibre by Improving Fibre Quality" (FAIR3 CT96 1597). It started in January 1997 and will be completed in December 1999. Two workshops have already been held, one in Spain and one in France. The one in France, held in March 1998, concentrated on establishing common databases for the recording of genetic performance data for the animals.

The quality of measurements is one of the main emphasis of the network and a Round Trial for cashmere and mohair has been organised by Dr Ho Phan to investigate the use of the OFDA technique in different laboratories for measuring different aspects of fibre quality. The first results of the Round Trial are presented here.

The principal aim of this workshop, however, is to hear an industry perspective on quality assessment of fibre, in order to compare it with the traits identified during the previous workshops.

The mode of operation of the workshop will be initially a plenary session where the preliminary results of the Round Trial will be presented. This will be followed by group discussions on the fibre quality assessment and the requirement of the manufacturers. Finally, there will be a reporting back session from each of the groups, namely cashmere, fine wool and angora/mohair. This will form the basis of the report on the workshop.