

## **ESDAR – how it started**

The development within several areas, not least within reproduction, biotechnology and other new techniques revolutionized the possibilities for science, and as a consequence a growing need of new meeting places for the scientific community. Parallel with existing international congresses/conferences on animal reproduction like ICAR, species related international conferences were established for equine, ruminant, pig etc in the seventies and eighties, being held every 3 or 4 year. Scientific societies like SSF and SSR are since long time organizing annual (or more) scientific conferences and workshops on reproductive biology in Europe and North America, respectively. In North America a Society for Theriogenology was established – this society is organizing both scientific meetings and continuing education on subjects related to domestic animal reproduction.

In Europe, country- or region based societies/associations organized since long time ago conferences on reproduction (fertility, sterility etc), e.g. in France, German speaking countries, Italy, Hungary, Nordic countries, Spain etc. Many of these conferences became over time less attractive for the scientific community, and developed more and more to take the role of continuing education.

With this background professor Aart de Kruif from Belgium and myself had an informal discussion in Uppsala in November 1995 – Aart lectured at a Swedish conference. – I always make some handwritten notes after meetings, telephone calls etc with important people, and I have looked into them when preparing this report – both of us felt a need of an European Society of Theriogenology /Animal Reproduction that could **bring together people, active and interested in animal reproduction from all European countries**. I must admit that I was very happy when saying good-bye to Aart – this very enthusiastic and progressive man!

In February 1996 Aart and myself started to contact some key persons in a few European countries to investigate their attitude/interest of an European Society of Animal Reproduction. The response was in most cases very positive – but some hesitated - ”do we need another society?”. The next step was to bring together some key persons to make up preliminary plans. ICAR, held in Sydney July 1996 could be such a meeting point – however 3 of the key persons (professors Aart de Kruif from Gent, Bert van der Weijden from Utrecht, and Eberhard Grunert from Hannover) should not attend the congress at Sydney. I myself organized a small informal meeting July 4 in Sydney for some key persons from the Nordic countries. Their attitude and feeling was very positive – go on!

**September 30** a meeting finally took place in Gent. Present were Aart de Kruif, Stig Einarsson, Torben Greve, Bert van der Weijden, and Jörg Aurich (sent by professor Grunert). A very constructive and positive discussion in a warm atmosphere ended up in a decision to establish an ”European Society for Domestic Animal Reproduction” designated ESDAR. An **interim board** was established: President Aart de Kruif, vice president Stig Einarsson, secretary Torben Greve, treasurer Bert van d. Weijden, program secretary Jörg Aurich.

In September 1996 a Central European Conference on Animal Reproduction (CECAR) was held in Olsztyn, Poland. Adam Ziecik, Josef Ratky and Laszlo Solti were 3 of the key persons behind the conference. I myself was member of the programme committee as well as of the international scientific committee of the conference. Adam summarized at the opening ceremony the aims of CECAR: 1 High scientific quality, 2 Tighten the bond between people

from all countries within the new Europe, 3 organize the conference every 2-3 years. It was decided that the venue of the 2<sup>nd</sup> CECAR conference should be Hungary in 1998.

Negotiations started already during the autumn 1996 between ESDAR and CECAR. In December 1996 an agreement was accepted in Vienna by board members of these two bodies resulting in the constitution of a Pan-European society which is ESDAR. Adam Ziecik and Laszlo Solti became additional members of ESDAR board. As there was a great interest of a platform for publications and information, contacts were taken with the editor-in chief of Domestic Animal Reproduction, dr. Detlef Rath. Detlef was from the very beginning positive to the proposal and was adjourned to the board. Venue of the first ESDAR conference was Mariensee, Germany, in November 1997 with Detlef Rath as local organizer. At the board meeting at Mariensee Torben Greve announced his withdrawal as secretary, and professor Hilary Dobson from Liverpool was elected secretary of ESDAR.

It was with great pleasure I participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> ESDAR conference at Portoroz-Lipica, Slovenia, 7-9 September 2006 hosted by professor Marjan Kosec and dr Primoz Klinc. ESDAR is stronger than ever under the presidency of Laszlo Solti. I wish the Society the very best for years to come.

Stig Einarsson