
December 2022

To All Breed Association Representatives,

It has been a while since the last formal update, and there is quite a lot of information to share. We certainly appreciate your patience, understanding and support as we have navigated particularly challenging times. This update is organised in sections below to help you find what may be most of interest. If you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me or any other staff at CLRC.

Brian Sullivan, Acting General Manager

Human Resources

General Management and Administration: As you know, Jim Washer is currently on extended leave for treatment of his cancer. We are happy that the treatment has been progressing well. However, a timeline for his return to work remains uncertain. Jim sends his regards and best wishes to all of you. While Jim is away, I have been filling in for some of his duties two days per week while my daughter Brianna Sullivan is also helping three days per week in cooperation with Julie Seibel, our Finance & Office Administrator.

Computer Services: Finding and retaining suitable employees to look after the computer systems has been a big challenge over the past three years. We are really pleased to now have Jack Tran as our Systems Programmer. Jack has been with us for about 20 months and has provided essential stability. More recently, CLRC has also been collaborating with the Canadian Centre for Swine Improvement (CCSI) on computer services. This includes two days per week from Li Li, who has 20 years of programming experience with CCSI and is very familiar with pedigrees, and one day per week from Jim Groves, CCSI's Computer Services Manager. This provides Jack with the much-needed support for CLRC's computer services and has allowed us to stabilize the system and start to consider enhancements, new requests, and options for redevelopment of the system.

Registrars: The registrar team has been stable, and the registrars have been working diligently this year to catch up on a significant backlog that was created due to the challenging circumstances. We are now in a much better position without a backlog and turnaround time about half of what it was a year ago. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Caleigh, Julie, Laura Lee, Lisa, Marin, Melanie, Mohamed, and Pamela, and also the patience and understanding of the associations and breeders.

Telephones and Email

A new and much improved telephone system was put in place in June. However, the quality of phone calls depends on a good internet connection, and we were recently having intermittent issues with poor internet connection speed. Our internet service provider made changes at the end of October and so far, so good. We have also switched our email over to Microsoft 365 in September. This appears to have resolved problems we were having with receiving and sending emails from or to some of you and your members. Communication by phone and email should be much improved.

Integrated Genetic Services Project

CLRC has been collaborating in a 3-year project with several other service organisations to integrate genetic services for Canadian sheep and goat breeders. Although focused primarily on sheep and goats, the longer-term goal is to extend genetic services to more species. The project has helped us to evaluate options for redevelopment of CLRC's registration system and has also helped put in place data exchange that allows sheep breeders participating in the GenOvis genetic evaluation program to do electronic registrations. Going forward, the project will also support adapting this new option for electronic registration of sheep to work for dairy goats and potentially other breeds. The project will also support reviewing the current online registration tools for ways to make it easier for breeders and more efficient for the registrars. There are other benefits coming out of this project and much more to come. For more information about the project see the news section of the CLRC website or feel free to contact us at the CLRC office.

Registry System Redevelopment

As Jim indicated in his update at the end of 2021, CLRC was researching alternative systems to replace the existing APPX Database and Registry program. As part of the Integrated Genetic Services Project described above, we had the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of database specialists from the other organisations participating in the project. This led to a request for proposals (RFP) that was issued and CLRC received two proposals for a new registry system that were reviewed by the project's Database Advisory Committee. The advice from the Advisory Committee has been very helpful for the CLRC Board to make an informed decision on next steps. Both proposals would require a large upfront investment and would likely require at least a year before switching from the current system. It is also possible with a project of this size to experience significant cost and time over-runs. In addition, the new collaboration with CCSI and the Integrated Genetic Services project give an opportunity to consider other options for redevelopment. For example, we could take a stepwise approach that focuses on parts of the system that have the most opportunity for improvement in efficiency and quality of service. In the short-term stabilising the current system was essential and achieving stability this year has put us in a good position to consider how to move forward on redevelopment.

CLRC Board

The current Board is comprised of Dave Vandenbroek (Swine) as Chair, Glen Parker (Sheep) as Vice-Chair, and Directors Gib Drury (Hays Converter), Jasmin Bautz (Meat Goats), Kim MacDougall (Sheep) and Sandy Howell (Goat Society), with David Trus continuing as representative of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). David will be retiring in March 2023 and his replacement, Courtney McMorris, has also been attending board meetings. While we will certainly miss the valuable contributions and support David has provided for the past 25+ years, we are confident that AAFC has found an excellent successor in Courtney.

Holiday Office Closure

For the upcoming Christmas period, our offices will be closed Monday December 26th through to the New Year, re-opening on Monday January 2nd, 2023. From the CLRC Staff and Board, best wishes for this holiday season and the year ahead.