

REPORT ON ICOMST 2014

Dr. Jorge Correa

I attended the 60th ICoMST conference which took place in Uruguay. About 389 participants from around the world gathered in Punta del Este, Uruguay for this event.



Participants at ICoMST 2014

Uruguay, with a population of 3.3 million people, is recognized for its natural beef production and for being big beef eaters (60 kg per capita per year). With 12 million beef cattle heads, 85% is exported to 144 countries. China, Russia and European Union are the most important markets. More than half of cattle (56%) are raised in natural pasture.



Dr. Jorge Correa at ICoMST 2014

Topics/Highlights for 2014

Sustainability

Speakers from several countries presented strategies to remain sustainable (New Zealand, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay). Water protection and use, gas emissions (methane and CO₂), increase in production efficiency, animal welfare and adaptation to new climate were the principal topics considered by all countries with regards to sustainability strategies. Countries should consider factors that affect climate change and then adaptation.

However, these factors are still very uncertain and arguments to convince policy makers are limited.

Consumer preferences

Organic Beef – still has disappointed consumers with tougher meat.

Lamb consumers in Europe were surveyed on the following attributes: price, grass fed and origin of product. Overall, origin was the most important trait chosen by consumers.

Understanding consumer behaviours will increase competitiveness of the meat industry. However, consumer behaviour is not homogeneous, even within the same country.

Uruguay is implementing Quick Reader (QR) codes in restaurants, so consumer can scan the QR codes with their smartphone and see: the cut type, a picture of the producer and even be able to send an email to the producer.

Meat Nutritive Value and Human Health

Sodium reduction strategies in European Union (EU) were presented. No targets are being set but

it seems legislation will come in the close future (2 years). A speaker from the National Cattlemen Beef Association defended the health benefits meat industry.

Meat Safety: Pathogen and chemical contaminations and interventions

USDA and EU speakers presented the use of their interventions strategies. The EU industry has not adopted the use of lactic acid or organic acid sprays. Microbiological results (E. coli prevalence) are pretty similar in both regions despite the difference of interventions used. A Danish speaker presented a mathematical model to assess meat shelf life (pork, beef, chicken). This model is approved by Danish government to validate shelf life of meat products. This is not yet accepted in the EU or other foreign countries yet. The Danish Meat Research Institute has this model available at (free): dmripredict.dk.

Animal Welfare and Meat Quality

Dr. Temple Grandin was the plenary speaker on emerging issues in animal welfare for all species. Countries such as Uruguay and Australia as well as the WTO are in discussions to incorporate animal welfare and sustainability as requirements for trade.



Dr. Temple Grandin (left) and Dr. Jorge Correa

Biochemistry and Meat Quality

Beef meat color is improved by additives and meat packaging. New packaging technology with nitrates imbedded in the plastics increases the colour (redness) and prolongs the shelf life of beef meat.

At ICoMST 2014 in Uruguay, we learned how different countries deal with meat industry issues. Networking with several researchers around the world provides everyone a broader knowledge of different matters affecting our industry.



Dr. Jorge Correa at the ICoMST poster session



A flock of sheep in the pasture