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IDF'S NEW ORGANIZATION

(Abstract of the lecture given by Mr JAMET of CNIEL at CECALAIT's annual meeting, June 2000).

The IDF was created in 1903 and has about 40 member countries, represented by their National Committees. They represent all people involved in the dairy sector, i.e. farmers and their cooperatives, companies, suppliers, government, research institutes, schools and universities. Its mission is « to promote and enhance the image, trade, production and consumption of milk and milk products world wide by :

- collecting and disseminating scientific, technical, economic and legal information,
- providing a platform for meaningful exchange of professional knowledge and discussion» .(in : www.fil-idf.org)

This implies :

- « promoting the study of all aspects of the dairy industry,
- acting as a forum for dairy specialists through regular publications and specialized events,
- representing the dairy industry in decisions affecting standards, hygiene, analysis, etc,
- consulting and advising the dairy industry and international organizations, e.g. FAO or WHO »

(in : www.fil-idf.org)

A new strategic plan has been layed out since 1996 to make IDF more dynamic. Its objectives are :

- attracting other active professionals, especially farmers and companies,
- having a more important role in international discussion and publication,
- giving more responsibility to the general secretary.

The plan was adopted by the end of 1998, under IDF's new president and has been enforced since then.

Before this new plan, IDF scientific, technical and standardizing activities were carried out by 6 Commissions (for instance Commission E, standards for analysis and laboratory techniques). Their work was rather autonomous, not depending on the National Committees or on IDF's secretariat. Moreover, they had more retired than active professionals as members.

The new organization

➤ EXECUTIVE

➤ THE DIRECTOR

IDF's general secretary becomes a general director, responsible for the execution of IDF's activity. He must explain it to the Management Committee (see below) and to the Council, where each National Committee is represented.

➤ THE « MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE »

It is IDF's executive body. It has 6 members : the president, 2 vice-presidents, 2 office members, the president of the Programmes Coordination Committee (see below)

➤ ADMINISTRATION

IDF's secretariat based in Brussels is small : about 10 people. Actually organizing an event is quite totally delegated to the National Committee in charge.

➤ THE SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, STANDARDIZING WORK

➤ PERMANENT COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The former 6 Commissions were disbanded and split into 19 Permanent Committees and 3 « task forces ». The Permanent Committees are composed of Action Teams, each corresponding to a specific and short-term topic.

The Permanent Committees are no longer managed by a group of experts (4 or 5), but by a president and a vice-president with short mandates. Compared to the former Commissions, this is a more flexible organization, where the required knowledge is more specific. It should be more attractive to active professionals wishing to participate in IDF's activity.

However, for work concerning analysis methods, a Method Standard Steering Group, composed of the presidents of the 5 Permanent Committees concerned, has been temporarily set up.

Work is left either to a Permanent Committee, or to a Task Force for topical issues.

Their reports will be consultable on IDF's intranet by the experts registered by the National Committees. The use of this Intranet should make experts' work quicker and easier, as less meetings or travel will be necessary. Thus IDF hopes to solve the long lasting problem of a shortage of experts. It also hopes to attract more professionals, especially farmers and companies.

➤ THE PROGRAMMES COORDINATION COMMITTEE

The Permanent Committees must explain their work to the National Committees (see above) , but also to the Programmes Coordination Committee. This body supervises and coordinates the different work.

Finally, it is responsible for all documents bearing IDF's logo. These must have been approved by the Permanent Committee in charge, but also submitted to the National Committees and to the Programmes Coordination Committee, which may possibly question Permanent Committees after considering National Committees observations.

At last, the Programmes Coordination Committee arbitrates the possible contentious issues between the Permanent and the National Committees. This function did not exist before, possibly enabling some Commissions to ignore the observations or even the opposition of some National Committees.

The Programmes Coordination Committee is composed of 8 members, all having transversal competences, allowing them to supervise the work of one or several Committees. They also make sure that the work is coordinated and transversal. The president belongs to the Management Committee (see above).

➤ ORGANIZING EVENTS

IDF's new strategic plan also aims to produce a better management of the programme of its specialized events, especially to make them more famous. In particular, the Annual Sessions are from now on

replaced by the World Dairy Summit, where interesting conferences, open to all dairy professionals will be separated from IDF's internal business.

➤ Finally, it was reminded that dairy professionals strongly expect IDF's standardization of analytical techniques. In principle, IDF should focus on physico-chemical aspects and on characterisation of dairy products... Indeed most ISO horizontal microbiological standards should become joint ISO/IDF methods, with new work needed only if the methods are not immediately applicable to dairy products. The Committee «microbiological methods of analysis » will survey this field. Another Committee in charge of the automatic milk analysis methods is also concerned.

It is also hoped that, being able to act more quickly now, IDF may start the examination of alternative methods or of proprietary techniques.

Abbreviations

CNIEL : Centre National Interprofessionnel de l'Economie Laitière

FAO : Food and Agricultural Organization

IDF : International Dairy Federation

WHO : World Health Organization