



## **SIMA / SIMAGENA - a key event for European breeders**

SIMA 2007 - from 4 to 8 March at the Paris-Nord Exhibition Centre - was acclaimed by exhibitors and visitors alike, and SIMAGENA, the exhibition section devoted to livestock breeding, was a resounding success at every level:

- the number of breeders showing their cattle and sheep
- the non-stop programme of events in the Ring
- the number of visitors
- the lively business atmosphere in Halls 1 and 2 for the entire 5 days.

SIMAGENA has become established as a major European event for livestock breeders, despite increasingly stringent health regulations.

2007 was no exception since two main barriers (Ovine Catarrhal Fever regulations and IBR regulations which are different in every country) prevented the participation of a number of cattle from neighbouring countries, with 50% of the cattle entered by other European countries being unable to take part in the finals because of health regulations.

Following SIMAGENA 2007, an international think tank is being set up to provide more information on EU cattle health regulations.

All the same, the Limousin bull championship was won by a breeder from Northern Ireland. This bull made the headlines by crossing the Channel to Cherbourg, since the UK has not been able to enter cattle for shows on the continent for 15 years. Britain now has a clean bill of health and can take part in European competitions once more.

As for the Holstein competition, the Bons-Holstein farm (Netherlands) won first prize in the 8-month heifer category, and several lots of American and Canadian embryos were listed in the Holstein auction catalogue.

### **Although health regulations prevented foreign entries, French breeders turned out in force**

The Euro-Limousin competition attracted entries from a large number of French breeders: 120 Limousin cattle competed.

KBS Genetics' Limousin animals characterised by early maturity and muscular development met with tremendous success which translated once again into high bidding at the SimBeef auction:

- a young bull born on the Camus-Huberson farm (Haute Vienne) was sold for €22,000 to Francisco Hernandez (Spain)
- a heifer born on the Bourdarias farm (Corrèze) went under the hammer for €12,800 to the Owell farm (Wales).

There was an equal balance between beef and dairy cattle in 2007 with:

- more beef cattle at Simagena, in Hall 2, up from 200 head in 2005 to 250 in 2007.
- meanwhile the number of dairy cattle in Hall 1 remained steady at 250 head.

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The balance was also preserved in the Ring:

- 2 auctions: one Holstein and one beef breeds
- 2 days of Limousin, Salers, Blonde, Charolais and Aubrac competitions... and 2 days of Holstein, Red-Holstein and Montbéliard events.

Note: there was a sheep competition for the first time which brought together several breeds: Suffolk, Charollais and Ile de France.

### Non-stop events in the Ring

During the 5 days of SIMA, there was something happening all the time in the Simagena Ring. Events kicked off on the Sunday morning with the Young Clippers Competition which saw 20 teams of two competing for the title. They were judged for their skill in grooming a heifer that would later be competing in the ring. The Woitrain & Petitprés team from northern France won the first prize and carried off the 2007 Young Clippers trophy.

Then, beef and dairy cattle events alternated over the 5 days.

On Tuesday lunchtime, the Simagena Ring hosted the SIMA Breeding Quality Challenge. Each of the 10 breeders shortlisted by the judges was interviewed (live) by a journalist from *La France Agricole*, in the presence of the 10 sponsors who each awarded their prize.

Photo-reportages shot on each farm extended the scope of the discussions to include equipment and installations, production techniques and performance. These discussions were highly pertinent as they help foster communication between SIMA exhibitors and SIMAGENA breeders.

### Ideal conditions for showcasing genetic and commercial potential

According to Dr Driesen, Simagena veterinary surgeon, "the conditions were ideal for showcasing the animals' full genetic potential. Outstanding quality hay enabled the cows quickly to settle into perfect rumination conditions".

The 600 cattle and sheep at the show consumed:

- 50 tonnes of straw,
- 30 tonnes of hay
- 10 tonnes of food pellets.

As regards animal feed, SIMA formed a partnership with Nutral which supplied breeders with different feed formulae. A new milking system was provided by Packo-Fullwood which held a demonstration of new equipment. La Fromagerie de la Brie collected 10,800 litres of milk over the 5 days.

### **SIMA/SIMAGENA in figures**

- **294** livestock breeder exhibitors including 20% international from **9 countries** (Germany - Spain - France - UK - Hungary - Ireland - Italy - Switzerland - Netherlands)
- **500 cattle** representing **7 dairy breeds** (Holstein - Pie Rouge - Montbéliard - Brune - Ayrshire - Herens - Abondance) and **5 dairy breeds** (Charolais - Limousin - Blonde d'Aquitaine - Aubrac - Salers)
- **100 sheep** representing the Charollais, Ile de France and Suffolk breeds
- **12 renowned judges** including **6 international**

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