

## CHAPTER 2 – RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

### 2.1 Application for a Regular Classification Visit

A classification service cannot be provided immediately on receipt of an application. In order to keep expenses within reasonable limits, it is necessary to classify all the herds in any district or State, for which applications have been received, on the same trip. Every effort will be made to supply a classification service at regular intervals of six months.

All members are informed regularly regarding the Australia-wide classification itinerary for the forthcoming six months.

Application can also be made to be placed on a permanent register for breeders wishing to participate in all tours in their areas.

### 2.2 Application for Special Service

A Special Classification Service may be arranged for any Holstein Australia member or scheme participant on request. Special visits will be permitted irrespective of whether or not the member is preparing for a sale, and will be subject to the availability of a Classifier and the payment of special classification fees as prescribed from time to time by the National Board.

Requests for a Special Classification Service should be made to the Classification Team, Holstein Australia, 24-36 Camberwell Road, Hawthorn East, Victoria 3122, or by telephone on 03 9835 7600.

### 2.3 Eligibility for Classification

#### i) *Females*

- a) Participation in the classification programme is voluntary for any member.
- b) To be eligible for classification a female must have freshened at least once and must be duly recorded in the Numbered or Appendix Register of the HA Herdbook.
- c) The Certificate of Registration, herd recording number, latest calving date and lactation number must be provided for each cow presented for classification. The Certificate of Registration is not required where there

are two forms of physical identification recorded on the HA database.

- d) A cow must have commenced at least her third lactation to be classed Excellent
- e) Maximum score for a first calf heifer – Very Good 88 points.
- f) Maximum score for second calvers – Very Good 89 points.
- g) *Milk-Out*

A Classifier has the right to request a milk-out on any cow presented for classification. This privilege should not be abused.

ii) **Males**

- a) A bull shall not be eligible for class Excellent until he is at least four years old.
- d) Maximum scores for bulls:-
  - 2 years old – Very Good 88 points
  - 3 years old – Very Good 89 points
- e) *Raising Proven Bulls*

No allowance shall be made in classifying an older bull simply because he is (favourably) proven.

f) *Bull Classification Request by Breeder*

1. If the owner of the bull does not apply, then at the request of the breeder (not necessarily the owner or part owner) a bull may be classified. Normal herd visit fees still apply.

## 2.4 Additional Rules and Special Directives

a) *Breeders Delaying Classification Visit*

Classifiers are to operate on the basis that a breeder is allowed one scheduling refusal. At the time of refusal the Classifier shall inform the

Breeder that, if he does not accept the next offered date, the service could be missed in the current tour.

b) *Breeders Cancelling Classification Visit*

When a breeder cancels a classification visit within 24 hours of the scheduled time, the CEO may apply a penalty of \$110, inclusive of GST, in the absence of a valid reason for the cancellation. At the second cancellation within the 24 hours period prior to a visit, a fee of \$220 inclusive of GST may be applied by the CEO.

c) *Single Herd with Cattle Owned by Two or More Members*

For the purposes of analysis, all animals forming part of the herd are considered simultaneously in sire Type ABVs.

d) *Single Owner – Separate Herds/Localities*

A member may have his animals classified on two or more different farms, **provided the basic herd visit fee is paid in respect of each separate locality** visited by the Classifier. The standard classification fee applies for each animal classified.

e) *Animal Not Owned by Herd Owner*

An animal may be classified in the herd of any member, provided that a Certificate of Registration is available indicating the registered owner of that animal.

f) *Non-Member Classification*

Except for herds visited at the request of AB centres participating in the national progeny testing scheme (ADHIS Linear Evaluation Programme), registered animals in the possession of non-members are not eligible for classification. However, a member may request classification of an animal bred by him and owned by a non-member, for the purpose of acquiring points for any HA award. In such a case the member is responsible for the standard classification fee and the separate herd visit fee if the animal is located on the property of the non-member.

g) *Change of Address*

Should the Classifier encounter a member who has changed his address or telephone number, they should notify Federal Office by e-mail as soon as possible.

h) *Classifier Authority for Animals Not Fit to Classify*

In terms of HA Bylaws, Bylaw 17.3 (iv) stipulates as follows:-

*...the official Classifier shall be the sole arbiter of the eligibility of any animal for classification and he/she may refuse to classify any animal which is considered to be unsuitable because of condition, age, stage of lactation, injury or illness.*

In the case of a perceived manipulation of an animal, the Classifier shall lodge a report with the CEO of any action or omission by a member whose herd he/she is classifying, which in his/her opinion was, or is, designed and calculated to obtain a false classification. Such conduct shall, if substantiated by the Breed Development and Conformation Committee, be deemed to be conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the Association.

Classification is usually deferred only in extreme cases of illness, oedema, etc, as the death of a cow before classification can affect the marketability of its progeny.

## 2.5 Directives for Reclassification

a) *Ask for Previous Report*

The Classifier should feel free to ask for the previous classification report prior to raising the animal. If the animal has improved since the previous report, then the Classifier should feel free to raise the animal's score.

A Classifier may raise the score of an animal, but shall not lower the score of an animal.

b) *Take Adequate Time*

The Classifier shall take adequate time to look at animals submitted for reclassification. Even if the Classifier may have formed a decision, he/she should ensure that a thorough inspection is made of the animal.

c) *Giving Reasons*

The Classifier shall give the herd owner the reasons for declining to reclassify an animal. It is advisable to list strengths as well as weaknesses of the animal under discussion, and to explain the breakdown characteristics to show why the animal cannot be raised in classification points or category.

d) *Do Not Suggest a Future Raise*

Do not comment on the future possibility of an animal being raised. Referred decisions are not popular with breeders or other Classifiers.

e) *Raising First Calf Heifers*

A Classifier may raise a heifer while still in her first lactation, provided the heifer is still in milk. Remember that VG 88 is the maximum score for a first calf heifer.

f) *Reclassification in Same Category*

A Classifier may reclassify an animal within the same classification category.

g) *Excellent 2E, 3E Status, etc*

All Excellent females can only be reclassified to 2E, or higher if they have freshened since the previous classification. However, Excellent cows may be raised in score during the same lactation.

h) *Necessary to Reclassify Imported Animals*

All animals previously classified in their country of origin must be reclassified in Australia at the first regular herd visit.

## 2.6 **Additional Directives**

a) *Cancellation of Animal's Registration Certificate*

The Association no longer deregisters animals. However, animals scoring under 70 points do not the normal classification fee but are not charged. This should help encourage the classification of all animals in a herd.

b) *First Classification of a Visit*

It is important to assess the first animal classified carefully, as over scoring the animal can place a Classifier in a difficult position.

c) *Paddock Classification*

Classification is not to be done in a paddock, with the exception of bulls. Animals should be presented individually in a clean and level yard.

d) *Presentation of Animals for Classification*

Animals should be presented for classification in their normal working condition and the milking routine should not be disrupted because of a Classifier's visit. Distortion of teat shape and placement can occur if animals are not milked out prior to classification, and Classifiers should explain to owners that distended udders are not ideal for classification.

It is important to convey the message that classification following milking, or in mid to late lactation, can be as effective and accurate as when the animal is fresh in milk.

e) *Classification During Shows*

Classifiers shall not classify animal/s at shows/field days or similar events, with the exception of Dexter classifications.

f) *Mobile Phones*

The Classifiers should turn off their mobile phones when visiting a property and should only use them in an emergency while on farm.

g) *'Special Classifications'*

When they are able to be scheduled around the existing tours, the fee for special classifications, the fee for special classifications shall be the current fee plus GST multiplied by 40 animals, eg currently \$11.00 = \$440.00. All other costs incurred by Classifiers for travel, food, accommodation, etc when undertaking specials are payable by the owner/s requesting the special classification.

h) *Classification at AB Bull Centres*

Two Classifiers are required to attend when classifying at AB bull centres with one being a Senior Classifier.

i) *Lost Herds*

In the event of classification information being lost during a Classifier's visit, the owner shall be offered a reclassification of all animals involved with no costs incurred by the owner, at a time suitable to the owner and Classifier within the same tour.

j) *Lost Animals*

In the event of classification information for an individual animal being lost during a Classifier's visit, the owner shall be offered a reclassification of the animal involved with no costs incurred by the owner, at a time suitable to the owner and Classifier within the same tour if possible or during the next tour.

k) *Problem with Breeders*

The Classifier shall immediately report to the CEO any problems in respect to the rules and regulations governing classification. Where a difficulty is encountered with a breeder, a written explanation of the circumstances should be forwarded to the CEO as soon as possible.

l) *Breeder Abuse*

A Classifier may refuse to classify a herd if the owner is abusive. Any classification completed on the visit, up to the point of refusal, should be cancelled. The Classifier shall notify the CEO of any abuse, regardless of whether classification of the herd was completed or not. The CEO shall warn the offending member that any further complaints may result in the cancellation of classification services to the member and he shall report the matter to the Breed Development and Conformation Committee.

The following procedures should be followed when confronted by a threatening or abusive farmer

1. Calmly request that such behaviour stop.
2. If the behaviour continues, reiterate that the behaviour should stop and that if it does not, the classification session will be terminated.

3. If the behaviour continues, calmly inform the farmer that the classification service has been stopped and that you will be leaving the premises.
4. Report all incidents to the CEO.

If at any time, a classifier feels physically threatened, they should leave the property and file an incident report with the CEO. Always speak calmly and try to work with the farmer. Many times, it is not a matter of what is said, but how it is said that can make a difference between a confrontation and discussion.

On farms where incidents have previously occurred, two classifiers should be present.

#### m) *Breeder Complaints*

A copy of any letter of complaint shall be sent to the Classifier involved, but not to other Classifiers. The Breed Development and Conformation Committee or CEO will deal with any complaints. Very few written complaints are received. However, when they are, the following procedure will be followed:

- i) The CEO will contact the Classifier concerned and the member involved for background to the complaint.
- ii) If the complaint regards a score for an animal/s, then the CEO will arrange a property visit with a Senior Classifier and a Committee member within 14 days of receiving the complaint. The CEO will forward a report on the complaint to the Classifier, Senior Classifier and the Committee Member laying out the background as discovered above.
  - a) The animal/s in dispute should be viewed in the same condition as seen by the original Classifier. This includes the time of day, the yard, etc.
  - b) The Senior Classifier, in consultation with the Committee member, should document on an official classification report any areas of concern with the original classification. This report will be presented to the next Breed Development and Conformation Committee meeting.
  - c) The Senior Classifier and Committee will endeavour to resolve any issue at this meeting. If this is not possible, the report will be taken up



at the next meeting and a decision taken there.

d) The CEO will notify the member of the results of the visit within 7 days of the visit and any subsequent action taken by the Committee within 7 days of a Committee meeting.

e) The Classifier will be formally notified by the CEO of the outcome of the visit and/or the Class Committee meeting within 7 days of the visit and if any action is required from the Committee, within 7 days of the meeting.

iii) If the complaint involves the behaviour of a Classifier, the CEO will resolve the issue using his discretion within 14 days of receiving the complaint.

a) The CEO will formally notify the Classifier and the Committee of the outcome of the discussions and any action necessary within 14 days of the complaint.

n) *Fee for Visit where Breeder is Abusive*

The Classifier shall charge the breeder the minimum herd visit fee whether or not the classification work was completed.