

ICAR Certificate of Quality: **CONVIS société coopérative, Luxembourg**

Auditor(s)' Report for the ICAR Executive Board

Name(s) of Auditor(s) and areas audited:

Dr. Marija Klopčič, Biotechnical Faculty (Department of Animal Science), University of Ljubljana (27 to 28 April 2015)

The identification system of dairy cattle
The identification system of beef cattle
The recording of production of dairy cattle
The recording of production of beef cattle
Laboratory analysis for ICAR members
Data processing work for ICAR members

Date of audit:

27 – 28 April 2015

Applicant:

CONVIS société coopérative
Zone artisanale & commerciale, 4
L-9085 ETTELBRUCK
LUXEMBOURG

Activities for which the ICAR Certificate of Quality are requested:

The identification system of dairy cattle
The identification system of beef cattle
The recording of production of dairy cattle
The recording of production of beef cattle
Laboratory analysis for ICAR members
Data processing work for ICAR members

Auditor's recommendation for the granting or refusal of the ICAR Certificate of Quality:

It is recommended that the ICAR Certificate of Quality is granted to the applicant in respect of all activities applied for.

In the event of a negative recommendation, for the whole or part of the application, list the areas requiring attention and give a résumé as to reasons for non-acceptance and or non-compliance. Please list in order of priority.

This section has to refer to any breach of national law or ICAR Guidelines, quoting references.

Not applicable.

In the event of a positive recommendation, please list any areas which, in the opinion of the auditor(s), would improve performance or service to the applicants farmers/customers.

None.

Review

Auditors to give a résumé of each of the areas for which the applicant requested audit and how in the auditors' opinion the applicant was providing service.

Identification

Résumé:

The ICAR Certificate of Quality is requested for Animal Identification.

The national animal identification system in Luxembourg is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, who also maintains the national central animal register, records holding facilities, animals and animal movements nationally, labels and distributes the ear tags to the farmers. There is a close and efficient working relationship between CONVIS and Ministry of Agriculture. All the relevant procedures are in accordance to the relevant national and EU regulations and fully conform to the relevant ICAR Guidelines.

There is a unique national identification scheme for the species for which certification is sought. It relies on the Belgian SANITEL identification system and it is run in Luxembourg exclusively by the Ministry of Agriculture. The format is conforming to the EU directives.

SANITEL runs its own control system. CONVIS take over this pre-checked ID (on the base of a routine electronic data exchange) and runs an internal control to ensure correct animal identification and avoidance of duplication.

In the case that errors of identification are found, then CONVIS organise farm visit by technicians to control the animal's ear tag.

CONVIS take care for checks, which ensure correct parentage. Every 250th female calve is DNA tested; all service bulls registered in the herd-book are DNA tested as all ET calves.

Transport

Résumé:

An efficient system for the identification and transport of milk samples is in place. Samples are preserved and cooled and generally delivered to the laboratory within 24 hours. All samples are analysed within 2 days after sampling.

In Luxembourg for **A & B-methods** are used the same way of identification of milk samples. There is only one permitted identification, which consists in uniform baskets of 50 sample bottles each; the serial numbering is done by the position of each sample in the basket; individual samples are not numbered.

For farms with **AMR**: The shuttle numbering system given by the fabricant is adopted. Samples are carried each day (five days a week) from farmer (B-method, AMR) or recorder (A-method) to the lab by two tours covering the whole country.

Production recording

Résumé:

Generally, milk recording in Luxembourg is done by an official representative of the recording organisation (A-methods) or by farmer themselves (B-method). On dairy farms they use different methods of milk recording:

AS42: method A4, interval: 4 weeks, 2 milking per day (1 sample on the base of 2 milking)

BS42: method B4, interval: 4 weeks, 2 milking per day (1 sample on the base of 2 milking)

AT42: method AT, interval: 4 weeks, 1 milking per day (PM or AM milking) (1 milk sample)

AT22: method AT, interval: 2 weeks, 1 milking per day (PM or AM milking) (1 milk sample)

BT42: method BT, interval: 4 weeks, 1 milking per day (PM or AM milking) (1 milk sample)

BT22: method BT, interval: 2 weeks, 1 milking per day (PM or AM milking) (1 milk sample)

AMR: robotic milking (they collect milk yield from all milking for the period from last to current milk recording). Milk samples are taken from first milking in the period of milk recording).

One milking is recorded alternately (one in the morning, at the next visit in the evening).

One sample is taken per cow and the recording interval is, on average, 4 weeks. Generally cows are milked twice a day. There are a few exceptions to this generalisation – all recording methods are however properly documented and recorded.

Two dairy herds were visited in the neighbourhood of Ettelbruck and the relevant procedures and practices were observed and were found to be in accordance with the relevant ICAR Guidelines. In all cases the field technicians followed the correct procedures and were knowledgeable about the relevant guidelines and procedures. A testing facility for milk meters was visited in Ettelbruck – where CONVIS is located.

On-farm recording devices (milk meters, jars) are owned by the farmer. Most of the mobile devices (milk meters, robot shuttles) are owned by CONVIS.

Mobile milk meters are individually checked at least once a year. Fixed milk meters on the farms are checked once a year by the provider or by CONVIS. Robot shuttles are checked twice a year the provider or by CONVIS.

Mobile sampling devices are maintained under the responsibility of CONVIS. On-farm sampling devices are maintained under the responsibility of the breeders/farmers.

Maintenance and calibration of devices are carried out in accordance with ICAR Guidelines.

The production recording of beef cattle is done by the A-method or B-method.

Beef A-method: all information about each animal in the herd is pre-loaded in hand held computers; any new recorded information is checked against the memory information; ID and ear tags of new heifers and or calves are checked between the animal and the information given by the computer; this is done by the technician; all reproductive events are recorded as long as they are not yet given by any other means (e.g. by technician for example. All data are automatically forwarded to the central database by GPRS.

Beef B-method: idem as A-method; farmers register only weights on their own.

Until now reproductive events were recorded during milk recording; in the future these data will be forwarded by SANITEL; AI-data are recorded during milk recording including the identity of sires

Laboratory

Résumé:

The laboratory is owned by the CONVIS.

The laboratory participates in the Belgium ring-test, run by CRA-W in Gembloux.

Milkoscan is calibrated every week and checked every second hour of work. Fossomatic is calibrated and checked every month with pilot samples from FOSS.

Samples are processed within the same basket used for transport with no relocation.

Flasks from shuttles are put in the laboratory in the same baskets of 50 sample bottles

Data processing

Résumé:

Data are recorded on the farms in two ways:

Dairy A-method: all information about each animal in the herd is pre-loaded in hand held computers; any new recorded information is checked against the memory information; ID and ear tags of new heifers are checked between the animal and the information given by the computer; this is done by the recorder; all reproductive events are recorded as long as they are not yet given by any other means (e.g. by technician for example). All data are automatically forwarded to the Central database by GPRS; laboratory results follow as soon as samples are analysed, mainly the day after the test day.

Dairy B-method: all information is written on pre-edited forms with all known individual information of past milk yield, last calving date, reproductive events, culling date ..., at date of editing; forms are forwarded with the milk samples to the central laboratory and the office (same facility); data are recorded by back office personal; any abnormalities are reported to first the farmer then a technician who makes a herd check. Milk yields and reproductive events are transmitted with the samples to the back office where they are electronically registered and processed together with the laboratory results, mainly the day after the test day.

Laboratory results, milk yield and other data are merged at CONVIS as soon as laboratory results are available.

Dairy data are processed by VIT, Verden/Aller in Germany.

Genetic evaluation

Résumé:

Not applicable.

Other comments/remarks/opinions not covered above

CONVIS is a cooperative run by farmers.

It is structured in 3 main departments: Dairy, Beef and Pigs

For each department CONVIS offers the following services:

- Herdbook keeping
- Performance and reproduction recording
- Advisory services
- Artificial insemination

- Cattle and pig trading

For future I recommend to introduce *bar code identification* systems for milk samples in accordance with ICAR Guidelines (see chapter 11.7.2)

Please note that the wording of the relevant Sections in the ICAR Recording Guidelines (2014 Edition) probably needs review – the Guidelines (and the Auditor in the original Auditor's report) use the term 'bar graph information system', which, in my view, is incorrect. Charl Hunlun, Technical Advisor, ICAR CoQ.

Each animal is recorded on the sample vial using *bar code identification* systems that corresponds with proper laboratory practice procedures. Each animal is recorded on the sample vial via RFID chip installed or embedded within the sample vial that corresponds with proper laboratory practice procedures. It is advisable that every sample vial is properly identified with the corresponding correct cow ID in whatever system is approved for proper usage that will follow proper laboratory practice procedures.

CONVIS was represented by:

- Armand BRAUN, Head of Department "Dairy cattle"
- Gerard ERNST, Head of Department "Beef cattle"
- Frederic CORNET, responsible for the Back office of beef recording
- Luc FRIEDEN, responsible for organising part of milk recording
- Benedikt OSTERMANN, responsible for back office of milk recording
- Marc BETTENDORFF, responsible for the lab
- Steve ROSIER, responsible for milk recording in special for robots
- Alex GROOT, technician for milk recording

The visit was managed professionally and all staff were very helpful and friendly. All questions were answered clearly and openly. The professional assistance of Armand Braun during the audit is gratefully acknowledged.

Marija Klopčič
Auditor

16.05.2015