

FIRST AMERICAN CLASSIFICATION WORKSHOP

Río de la Plata, 3-8 November 2009

Argentina-Uruguay



The first American Classification Workshop was considered to be a great success being attended by seven of the most important Holando Breeders organisations of South America

Excellently organised by the Association of Holando Breeders in Argentina and the Society of Holando Breeders in Uruguay, whose secretaries and executives ensured the agenda providing the opportunity to harmonise theoretical and practical criteria for all participants. In addition the workshop confirmed a very high level of uniformity for the classification of the main traits and definitions of optimum/ideal for all the characteristics of the cow. It was clearly established that the classification work performed in each country by these professional classifiers is harmonised with the standards and protocols of the WHFF Type Harmonisation programme regarding the definition and scoring of the 18 primary traits and general characteristics of the cow.

Programme of Activities

Theoretical session; - Tuesday 3rd of November, Bernardo Busso, the Chief of Classifiers in Argentina opened the Workshop welcoming participants and expressing his gratitude to the hosts for the effort and hard work in the organisation of this event.

WHFF Type Harmonisation Working Group member, Gabriel Blanco, the Chief of Classifiers in Spain, spoke briefly about the history and development of the WHFF Working Group explaining the progress and achievements of Type Harmonisation during the last years, placing especial emphasis on the linear definitions and their importance to the genetic correlations and the reliability of bull proofs between countries.

Bernardo Busso was the second speaker and he clearly explained the automatic classification program in Argentina, which is the same in Uruguay. The aim is to unify the programs and achieve quality data distribution collection by classifiers, so the classifiers will be able to work in both countries.

The third speaker, Claudio Estefan, the Chief of Classifiers in Uruguay spoke about the improvement and selection programs of the Association, focussing on linear classification.

At the end of the sessions a discussion took place in which, Horacio Larrea, chairman of the Argentina Judges Panel participated and shared the opinions Gabriel Blanco expressed about the achievements of the WHFF worldwide Type Harmonisation program regarding

the traits and type characteristics of the cows, emphasising the importance of a good distribution of linear trait scores and type characteristics in each classification round.

Practical session: - This took place on four farms, two in Argentina and two in Uruguay. In addition two farms were visited in order for classifiers to score different types of cows in different situations.

Our sincere thanks to all the organisers and participating breeders for permitting the classifiers, after the classification on the farm, to inspect and discuss the cows in the field to further qualify and discuss any doubts raised during the practical classifications workshop.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Participation success.
- Excellently organised Workshop, both in theoretical and practical session.
- All the participating countries agreed that the most profitable cow for the breeder must not be very large and the most important thing must be the correct type conformation with harmony and balance of its functional traits. The animals type conformation must be representative of its age
- All the classifiers who participated in this Workshop are experts and understand the need and the reasons for worldwide harmonisation. They will go back to their countries with this work principle from WHFF.
- Uniformity of linear scores and individual characteristics of the cows.
- As at worldwide level, it is noticeable that the classification of the body parts (Dairy Strength, Frame-Rump) needs more working time to be fully harmonised.
- It is clearly understood for the need to use the whole biological scale to achieve a good distribution with a correct average and standard deviation for each linear trait.
- It is appreciated that the scales of measurement are for first calf animals. The classifier must keep to these scales as recommended and allow the program to make the suitable adjustments for the rest of calves, depending on the selection aim in each country.
- Today and at worldwide level 18 linear traits and the definitions for Dairy Strength and Frame-Rump are harmonised. It is necessary that each country follows the recommendations given by WHFF Type Harmonisation regarding the Classifiers' monitoring, the organisation of work, publication of sire proofs, etc.
- Udder/Mammary: - Participants in this Workshop know how to score it and the optimum/ideal for each linear trait.
- Within the combined trait Feet & Legs, it should be attempted to assess the trait recommended by WHFF "Rear Legs Rear view", because although highly correlated with locomotion, it provides a more complete definition of the trait, especially in some working conditions where the scoring of Foot Angle becomes more difficult.
- It was agreed to promote and support these Workshops because they help classifiers to keep informed, updated and harmonized. After all classifiers are important responsible persons for selection and improvement in each country.

To finish and as a personal reflection, it would be good if some day a number of countries in South America, or all of them could make progress together to get a common genetic evaluations since, in general, there are many things and interests in the future that unite Holando breeders in South America.

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