



REPORT

Subject: Classification workshop in Mexico

By: Gabriel Blanco

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Place: Hotel Grand Fiesta Americana Sal6n Cerro de las Campanas I, Quer6taro, Quer6taro y Rancho Fuentezuelas, Tequisquiapan, Quer6taro

Participating Countries: Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, M6xico, Paraguay, United States of America, Uruguay and Spain.



On the occasion of the 14th Holstein de las Am6ricas meeting in the city of Quer6taro, the Mexican Holstein Association organized the IV classification workshop which was attended by classifiers and other professionals from 10 countries in America and Spain. After the success from the three previous editions, the participation record was improved and the invitation remained for the next meetings to continue working to combine criteria on the morphology of the Holstein breed and on the different countries' classification programs, both in classification planning and the control and monitoring of the classifiers.



Desk section. Salón Cerro de las Campanas I, Hotel Grand Fiesta Americana

1. Progress in the harmonization of type evaluation: Gabriel Blanco
 - a) One of the main achievements of the World Holstein Friesian Federation (WHFF) is the harmonization of lineal type assessment, having made great progress the past 27 years and after the first world harmonization in Cremona.

Work is being done to improve the correlation of conformation traits and therefore be able to compare genetics among countries, becoming a global program that fits all dairymen's needs. The previous world workshop took place in Argentina, 2016, and the next one will be in the United Kingdom September 2018.

This is the IV Pan-American workshop, in which classifiers and other professionals from 11 countries have participated.
 - b) The 18 main or primary linear traits harmonized by the WHFF were identified. They fulfill the following premises:
 - a. Linear in a biological scale
 - b. Simple
 - c. Heritable
 - d. Of economic value
 - e. Measurable (instead of appraised)
 - f. Essential

The optional traits are those that don't follow the aforementioned premises or those that are under research and that can be evaluated within each country's classification programs because they also help to define the different sections of the cow (texture, bone quality, rear width, etc.)
 - c) The Sections. As explained during the lectures, the four sections (regions) agreed upon by the WHFF are:

Feet and Legs, Udder, Dairy Form, Rump Structure

We know that the first three regions are common to most classification programs worldwide and that some associations evaluate the rump separately from the animal structure.



d) The Defects. Defects have not yet been harmonized worldwide, even though ICAR has stated a series of recommendations to be taken into account by the different associations in light of the number, sometime excessive, of evaluated defects. Most times they are evaluated to help determine the overall (final) classification of a section or to perform genetic evaluations:

Premises:

- a. Heritable
- b. Not rare
- c. Pose a problem to functionality
- d. Easily identified and described

Should be evaluated as 0/1/2 (when enough variation exists and the frequency within the population becomes important, the defect should be considered a linear trait and evaluated 1/9)

Used to evaluate the section's overall classification.

There is no reason to evaluate defects if they are not used to evaluate the animal's sections or to conduct a genetic evaluation.

The advantages of evaluating defects are:

- Evaluate the status of a defect within a population
- Helps evaluating a section of the cow
- May be used to show information of a bull

The disadvantages are:

- Makes it more difficult to harmonize classifiers because definitions are sometimes not clear for discussion
- Classification workshops will not easily find groups of cows that can represent all the defects

Defects can be evaluated as 0 (not present), 1 (slightly present), 2 (evident). For practicability, the classifiers should only take them into account when present, that is, 1 (slightly present) and 2 (evident).

2. Genetic Correlations among Countries: Gabriel Blanco

For there to be high correlations among countries and to be able to compare genetics, classifiers worldwide should work in a harmonized manner:

- 18 type traits defined up to date
- Traits must be defined similarly
- Same scales and reference points for each trait: scales are made for first calving animals
- Precision and consistency when using the scales
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- The classifier should not adjust based on age nor lactation state (although the programs can adjust)
- Achieve a good distribution of traits within the population
- Classifiers meetings and harmonization of criteria: correlation among classifiers

3. Monitoring and Control of classification in Canada: Bruno Jubinville

Talked about the different programs used in Canada to monitor the classifiers, their relationship with dairymen and the correlation among them.

4. Colloquium

Each country briefly explained its classification program therefore provided ideas that could be applied to other countries' programs and improve their efficiency.

For countries with only one classifier, it is beneficial that at least annual meetings with classifiers from neighboring countries are held to combine criteria and update scales and reference points of conformation traits.



Practical Part

1. The practical part of the workshop took place at Rancho Fuentezuelas, where Ignacio Cervantes, general manager, welcomed all participants, explained the operation of the dairy and invited the participants to classify a selected group of animals.

The animals were classified in normal state of milk accumulation (4 to 7 hours) and in a comfortable environment to determine and harmonize criteria.

Criteria was harmonized for 12 first calving heifers and 7 cows which had been chosen because of the variation in the 18 conformation traits, sections and final classification up to discussion.



Two working groups were formed, one with Bruno Jubinville as instructor (José López, Paraguay; Javier Heredia, Ecuador; Alberto Uribe, Colombia; Vicente Argoitia, Argentina; Jorge Rico and Héctor de la Lanza, México) and the other one with Gabriel Blanco (Bruna Schiefelbein, Brasil; Diego Mandini, Uruguay; Ruben Díaz, México; Javier Quiros, Costa Rica and Cy Letter, Estados Unidos). After the classification, the teams exchanged leaders and were therefore able to harmonize the concepts even further: for Bruno and Gabriel uniformity was good and Bruno emphasized the importance of dairy strength in the Holstein breed.

It is recommended to follow WHFF definitions and, if needed, adapt some of the recommended scales to the biological extremes of a trait within a country.

In general, there was a high uniformity of the criteria, presenting disparity and positive discussion only in the traits that also need improvement worldwide:

- Angularity. Should not be confused with body condition nor dairy form or dairy character. We must follow the WHFF definition and base the evaluation only in the spring and direction of the ribs (60/40).
- Body Condition. Use the WHFF recommendation. Classifiers used to a 1/5 scale must consider it to be the same (where 2,5 is equivalent to 5). Remember that when fat starts accumulating in the tail we are already at number 7, 8 or 9. It's an important trait for sire body condition genetic evaluations and for the genetic evaluation of fertility traits.
- Legs' rear view. This trait has to be improved worldwide and we must apply our knowledge as classifiers when evaluating it.
- Mobility. This trait is new for some and must be implemented by all our classification systems. Mobility is the trait with the highest correlation to overall feet and leg's score and has also an important correlation with the animal's claw health.

2. Next classification Workshop of las Americas most likely in Brazil 2019.