

THE VALUE OF ICAR MEMBERSHIP

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Any successful business person will base such success on reliable knowledge. Livestock farming is not different to any other business.

Decisions based on unreliable information or facts that are cannot be verified can be as detrimental as guessing.

The setting of sensible guidelines and adhering to them is therefore the basis for recording, also in farm animal production. For this reason, SA Stud Book has been a member of the International Committee for Animal Recording for many years. Stud Book is one of 120 ICAR members on six continents in 59 countries.

ICAR is the umbrella organisation with sub committees, working groups and task forces. Not only is it the only recognised organisation to set up universal guidelines for animal recording and the use of animal records, but also the Certification of bodies responsible for recording and accreditation of devices (such as ear tags, milk recording

devices, radio frequency identification, etc) and laboratories (such as DNA, milk recording, etc.)

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In that regards ICAR works with ISO (International Standards Organisation). Each of the working groups have specific tasks in setting up guidelines based on the latest scientific knowledge and global developments. Also, to attract the top experts to join these groups and to convey scientific findings and practical experience at the ICAR conferences and workshops hosted by these groups. It is therefore no surprise that the most respected scientists serve on the sub committees and working groups of ICAR. They include geneticists in the Interbull subcommittee responsible for global breeding value predictions for dairy cattle and the Interbeef working group setting the pace for global beef cattle genetic evaluations to experts on molecular genetics (DNA working group) working closely with the International Society for Animal Genetics (ISAG), laboratory analyses (milk analyses subcommittee), database and technology developments (animal identification, animal data exchange, feed and gas working groups), recording of production animals (dairy cattle milk recording, breeding associations, Interbeef, sheep, goats and camelids and conformation recording working groups) and others. ICAR has a General Assembly once a year that also allows for the meeting of most of the working groups and sub-committees. This also allows for the exchange of scientific and other knowledge and ideas.

All members can also measure themselves against what is currently on

offer and topical as well as the ICAR guidelines ensuring relevance and reliance. ICAR has also set up a service allowing members to be certified against the ICAR guidelines for different aspects. Such an audit involves a visit by an auditor once every five years and an update within two and a half years (audit review). Taking part in these audits is voluntary.

SA Stud Book's recording practices, services to breeders' societies and the recording of breed data (including the application of breed standards), system maintenance and calculations and breeding value predictions were awarded the ICAR Certificate of Quality since 2012 and renewed in 2016. The next audit is taking place during 2019.

Dr Japie van der Westhuizen currently serves on the board of ICAR and is also a member of the Team of Auditors and the Interbeef steering committee.

SA Stud Book value its participation in the activities of ICAR and especially conformance with international guidelines. This also ensures peace of mind to the Breeders' Societies and their members making use of Stud Book's services and products to select more productive animals.

