

VALUING THE CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY AT HOLSTEIN UKDarren Todd.

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The Holstein UK and British Friesian Cattle Herdbook has registered animals since 1909. Over that time, a great deal of care has been taken to accurately record animal births and their parentage. Being 'pedigree' has long been a provenance of quality and reliability. Animals registered in the Herdbook still command a premium price at cattle sales and all the breeding companies still register their AI sires in the Herdbook.

The modern Holstein UK continues to operate the Holstein and British Friesian Herdbook, as well as running a milk recording company (CIS) and operating a classification and data company (NBDC). NBDC provides Herdbook registration and database services to 7 other dairy Herdbooks in the UK and classification services to 20 dairy and beef Herdbooks.

ICAR certification for animal ancestry recording, phenotypic and milk recording provides a modern guarantee of quality for customers of Holstein UK. Data customers of Holstein UK include farmers, genetic evaluations services, auctioneers, AI companies, government and other commercial companies. All these rely on the Herdbook to provide up to date and accurate information for use in genetic and genomic evaluations, sales, traceability and even breed conservation. Our core customers are farmers, who face greater demands on time than ever before. They need the Herdbook to operate accurately and efficiently when recording their animals' data, to continue adding value to their businesses into the future.

Historically challenges to the accuracy of the Herdbook were limited. In the sphere of parentage verification for example, biological 'verification' began with blood typing, then later on microsatellite DNA markers and now genomic markers. In 2022, about 20% of calves registered in the Herdbook were genomic tested – a figure that is growing each year. Most of the genomic testing in the UK is done by multinational companies, whose commercial goals do include accurate parentage recording. About 5% of Herdbook females are declared to have a different genomic parent after they have been pedigree registered. This is a challenge for both Holstein UK and ICAR animal recording. In the wild west that is genomic testing, an opportunity exists for the Herdbook and ICAR to be a source of 'quality information'.