



**CONDITIONS AND GUIDELINES
RELATING TO THE
ICAR CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY**

Revised February 2011 and replaces all previous editions



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1. Preamble

ICAR General Assembly in June 2006 approved the new programme called ICAR Certificate of Quality for acknowledgement of services provided by its member organisations. The new Certificate has now totally replaced the ICAR Special Stamp.

2. Background

The global trend of reduced state involvement in recording; the reduction in dairy farmer numbers; the reduction in farm labour whilst at the same time herds and flocks increase in size; financial and competitive pressures; increasing technology; increasing customer-awareness have all conspired to bring about changes not considered possible in the past.

ICAR membership is increasing in size and scope both globally and by the services provided by its members. To reflect the need to ensure that the members provide a service which is both relevant and of good quality to its farmers and others, ICAR has introduced its Certificate of Quality. The Certificate of Quality is but one of a series of measures, including Benchmarking and the ICAR logo on recording devices, which are designed to recognise and acknowledge the standard of service and product-provision to and by its members.

3. Benefits

The introduction of the ICAR Certificate of Quality is to enhance and expand the benefits offered by the previous program. The benefits to organisations will include:

A unique logo identifying product and service quality for customers which meets or exceeds the published ICAR guidelines

A strong marketing tool for organisations which will identify their conformance with internationally recognised standards

A time-sensitive approval period which will ensure to customers that the service provider has regularly met the ICAR standard criteria thereby providing enhanced confidence in the quality of service or product received.

Staff motivation

A mark of the demonstrated leadership of ICAR and its members in the international marketplace through the provision of value-added services.

Audits are carried out by independent international experts in their field

4. Awarding the Certificate

Any ICAR Member, full or associate, may apply for ICAR Certificate of Quality.

The Certificate of Quality covers service parameters for the products and services of the ICAR membership, whether all of the process is carried out by the member or whether it is "contracted out". Organisations wishing to use the ICAR Certificate of Quality and the logo relating thereto, shall be audited not more than triennially. In the case of existing Special Stamp holders, the first audit may be carried out by the organisation itself by using ICAR approved procedures (such a process will cease in 2011). The second audit shall be carried out by an ICAR commission visiting and inspecting the organisation. If a "Special Stamp" member requests, then the first audit may be carried out by external auditors. In the case of new applicants, or ICAR members who have never been awarded a Special Stamp, the initial audit shall involve an on-site review by external auditors.

Costs of any external auditors will be fully met by the organisation to be audited.



NB External service providers: Where an ICAR member “out-sources”, or “contracts-out” a function, such as laboratory analysis and/or data processing, the ICAR Certificate of Quality may be issued to include these services, or upon request and subject to a separate application, be considered separately for ICAR Certification, but only if they are members or associate members of ICAR. Services of external service providers must be fully described by applicants in the questionnaire. It will be the auditors’ responsibility to satisfy themselves that such service providers meet the standards described by the applicant and are as such required to provide the required standard demanded by the Certificate of Quality audit.

In the same way, external organisations who provide data to the applicant, should operate within the standards expected by the ICAR guidelines and standards to which the applicant has to operate and should be clearly demonstrated.

Process:

- a) An application document (Appendix 1) must be completed and sent to the Secretariat with agreed non-refundable fee which will be 20% of the estimated final fee, or €640, whichever is the greater.
- b) The Secretariat will confirm the date by which the audit will be carried out and confirm the final required fee.
- c) **For an internal audit**, the member will complete the appropriate documents and return it to the Secretariat by the agreed date. (Appendices 2 and 3)
- d) **For an external audit:**
 - i. The member will complete the appropriate document as an initial briefing for the auditor(s). (Appendix 3).
 - ii. The requesting member, the Secretariat and the auditors will agree on the visit date.
- e) Prior to the auditor(s) receiving any documents, including the completed Appendix 3, they will be checked by Secretariat to assist in ensuring that the auditors receive fullest and clearest information.
- f) The member will pay the remaining part of the fee prior to the auditor’s visit, or in the case of self-audit prior to any documents being considered by an auditor. Should auditor cost be greater than first estimated then the applicant must pay such fees before the ICAR Board consider the auditors recommendations (it is not always possible to calculate time needed prior to audit).
- g) The Secretariat will forward the audit documents to mutually-agreed auditors appointed by ICAR, (Appendices 2 & 3) who will consider and make recommendations to the Board.
- h) The auditing will initially be based on the following programme which for each step refers to the detailed stipulations of the latest ICAR International Agreement of Recording Practices (Guidelines approved at Niagara, United States of America 2008). More specifically auditing should ensure that:

4.1 General - for all applicants

All applicants should read, fully understand and accept the 15 Articles in 1.2 of the Introduction to the Guidelines

All applications shall fulfil the Guideline’ requirements relative to the cells expressed in items a) to d) below, when completing the questions *in* Appendix 3. It must be noted, that certain applicants may be required to include a greater number of items than the minimum shown below. The minimum relevant Sections of the ICAR Guidelines 2008 are outlined:

- a) The “cell/s” which is/are identified in ICAR general rules
 - ✓ *INTRODUCTION*
 - ✓ *1.6.1*



- b) The "cell/s" which produce/s publication of results, such as certificates, statistics, animal passport, genetic ranking, manuals, ...
 - ✓ *Section 1.4*
- c) The "cell/s" which include/s supervision and training activity:
 - ✓ *Section 1.5*
- d) The "cell/s" which include/s data management
 - ✓ *Section 1.3*
 - ✓ *Section 2*
 - ✓ *Section 7.3.7 will be used as a template for all data quality matters, not just animal health issues.*

4.2 Service (rows in the table) specific requirements

- e) **Identification** must include as appropriate: animal identification (national, international or supra-national), parentage recording, identification devices, fertility recording, straw identification, record keeping for milk/meat recording, herd book or genetic evaluations:
 - ✓ *Section 1.1*
 - ✓ *Section 1.2*
 - ✓ *Section 1.6.2*
 - ✓ *Section 6*
 - ✓ *Section 8.1*
 - ✓ *Section 8.2*
 - ✓ *Section 10*
- f) **Dairy Production Recording** must include: milk yield, milk analysis, recording devices, conformation, health recording, record keeping for performance recording:
 - ✓ *Section 1.3*
 - ✓ *Section 2*
 - ✓ *Section 5 Introduction*
 - ✓ *Section 5.1*
 - ✓ *Section 7.1*
 - ✓ *Section 7.2*
 - ✓ *Section 7.3*
 - ✓ *Section 11*
- g) **Beef and other Meat Recording**
 - ✓ *Section 3.1*
 - ✓ *Section 3.2*
- h) **Genetic Evaluation** must include: methodology used, breeding strategies, pre-evaluation step, evaluation step, post-evaluation step, international evaluation.
 - ✓ *Section 9*



4.3 Requirements specific (to be added to those listed in 4.1 & 4.2) to species or type of production (columns in the table)

Table A

	Dairy Cattle	Beef Cattle	Dairy Sheep	Dairy Goats	Buffalo
Identification					
Performance Recording	1.6.3 2.1	1.6.4 3.1 3.2	1.6.3 2.2	1.6.3 2.3	1.6.3 2.4
Genetic Evaluation	9.1	---	---	---	---

Estimated numbers of hours needed for the auditing

Table B

	Dairy Cattle	Beef Cattle	Dairy Sheep	Dairy Goats	Buffalo
Identification (within the EU or if there is more than one section to be considered then the number of hours for the second and subsequent section will be halved)	2	2	2	2	2
Production Recording (including field work, sample collection, laboratory analysis, data processing) Dairy cattle plus buffalo will be considered as one item where appropriate. Dairy sheep and dairy goats will be considered as one item where appropriate.	4	4	3	3	4
Genetic Evaluation (if there is more than one section to be evaluated then the number of hours for the second and subsequent section will be halved)	4	4	3	3	3

Table B indicates the estimated necessary time in hours which an auditor will need to review information, prior to site visiting and report writing. Additionally, there will be a daily charge based upon twice the number of hours shown in the table for the auditor’s time whilst on a site visit.

The same table indicates the estimated number of hours an auditor will require if the work to be done is on an internal audit. NB: there may be additional time required if further contact has to be made with the applicant to ensure clarification and/or additional detail.

Table B does not include any additional work the Secretariat may have to carry out, over-and-above the basic administration. Such additional work will be tabulated and the Member will be charged accordingly.

NB: “Umbrella organisations”

Since there is no “standard” umbrella organisation it is recommended that the applicant discusses their application with the ICAR Secretariat to confirm most effective process. Where an “umbrella organisation” is to be audited by external auditors the above times and fees will be adjusted to cover the additional sites to be inspected. Such fees will be available on request. The number of sites to be visited will be up to √of the total number of constituent parts, reflecting the ranges of size, geography and customers, or other such number as agreed or deemed necessary by the auditor(s).



Process following the auditor's report

- a) The ICAR Board will consider the recommendation and notify the member of its decision as to award the Certificate, or not, within 30 days of receiving the recommendation of the auditor(s).
- b) Where it is to be an audit where there is to be on-site inspection, i.e. the alternate audit, steps a) and c) will be carried out, plus
 - i) The member will also complete the internal audit document (Appendix 3) to assist the auditors
 - ii) The auditors will ask for additional information as may be deemed appropriate prior to the visit.
 - iii) The auditors will agree mutually agreeable days for visit, but will not be more than 90 days from receipt of the completed questionnaire. It is the auditors' responsibility to decide what will be seen in their inspection and it is the responsibility of the member to facilitate this process.
 - iv) The auditors shall make their report to the ICAR Board via the Secretariat not more than 30 working days following their visit. The auditor will not copy their report to the member; such copy may be forwarded at the discretion of the Board or Secretariat.
- c) No member will be considered for the ICAR Certificate of Quality if there are outstanding fees due to ICAR from that member.
- d) A member may apply for additional Certificates of Quality to cover different species or areas of business at any time.
- e) The period of physical audit will be dependent upon the latest internal audit accepted by the ICAR Board relating to that organisation.
- f) The ICAR Board retains the right to withdraw Certificates of Quality if fees to ICAR become overdue and/or the ICAR membership is suspended or withheld.
- g) Formal awarding of the Certificates will take place at the General Assembly following its granting. The member may use the ICAR Certificate of Quality logo immediately upon receiving formal notification of its granting.



ICAR CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

Options for which application may be made

1. The identification system of dairy cattle
2. The identification system of beef cattle
3. The identification system of milking sheep
4. The identification system of milking goats
5. The identification system of buffaloes
6. The recording of production of dairy cattle
7. The recording of production of beef cattle
8. The recording of production of milking sheep
9. The recording of production of meat sheep
10. The recording of production of milking goats
11. The recording of production of meat goats
12. The recording of production of buffaloes
13. The genetic evaluation of dairy cattle
14. The genetic evaluation of beef cattle
15. The genetic evaluation of other species
16. Laboratory analysis for ICAR members
17. Data processing work for ICAR members

The above list is not exhaustive, therefore should the member, or organisation, require consideration for an ICAR Certificate of Quality for an activity which is not listed above, application should be made to the ICAR Secretariat.



Appendix 1

ICAR CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

Internal Audit Questionnaire

Also to be used as the initial briefing document prior to an auditor's visit

Relating to

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(¹Insert name and address of applying organisation)

Contact name
Position in organisation
Contact telephone number.....
Contact fax number.....
Contact email address.....

State which areas of activity are to be considered for the Certificate of Quality.

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.....

Date of audit



For use of ICAR Secretariat only:

Date received

Date passed to auditors

Date returned by auditors.....

Date passed to ICAR Board members

Date of ICAR Board decision



Appendix 2

AUDITOR FOR CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY

An auditor, or auditors, suitable for auditing the member's application, will be selected by the ICAR Secretariat. The name, or names, of the auditor(s) will be forwarded to the applicant, prior to the applicant's documentation being forwarded to the auditor(s). Should the applicant have sufficient reason to object to an auditor, for reasons such as commercial competition, a change of auditor may be sanctioned. Any such objection, with reasons, must be sent to the ICAR Secretariat in confidence within 7 days of notification of the auditor(s) name(s).

The auditor shall have full responsibility for examining and assessing the services of the ICAR member/ organisation applying for the ICAR Certificate of Quality and will be expected to work independently and to achieve targets preset by the ICAR Board. It is expected that the applicant will use their best endeavours to assist the auditor.

He or she will also:

Request and analyse the audit documentation

Ask for additional information as appropriate

Collect all possible information with the help of the ICAR Secretariat

In consultation with ICAR Secretariat, decide the timing and duration for any visit and make all the necessary arrangements (agree the days of the visit, inform about what to visit)

Perform the visit where appropriate.

Produce a report for the ICAR Board (either after visiting the ICAR member concerned, or after auditing based on existing documentation)

The auditor will:

- ✓ Have a comprehensive knowledge of the animal industry sector, both in terms of science and applied production and relative recording and genetic evaluation
- ✓ Likely be a leading expert with international recognition, based on experience and with evidence of international collaborations
- ✓ Likely have a higher degree in animal science or closely related area
- ✓ Be familiar with ICAR activities (participation in ICAR Board, Sub-Committees, working groups, task force) or national/regional identification, recording, genetic evaluation activities



**NOTES FOR THE APPLICATION FOR THE ICAR CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY
ALL DETAILS CONTAINED IN THIS OR ANY REPORT OR DETAILS SENT TO ICAR
RELATING TO THE ICAR CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL
AND WILL ONLY BE USED FOR PURPOSES RELATING TO THE ICAR
CERTIFICATE OF QUALITY**

When supplying answers to the following questions:

1. Head each reply with the question and its number as some of the questions may not apply to all applications.
2. Give as much detail as possible as the list of questions is not exclusive or exhaustive.
3. Use definitions contained within the ICAR Guidelines where possible
4. Use tables, graphs, charts where possible.
5. For any points of clarification please contact the ICAR Secretariat electronically on elena@icar.org or frank@icar.org
6. Examples of reports and documents sent to farmers and third parties should be enclosed to clearly demonstrate service and standard provision.
7. Please remember that the answers you give will not be divulged to anyone outside the certification process, unless you give written approval.
8. Please reply in English

Questions relating to the whole Organisation:

1. Does the organisation itself carryout the work for which certification is requested or is it an "umbrella" or national coordinating organisation?
2. In the case of an "umbrella" organisation:
 - a. Give details of any state involvement
 - b. Ensure that all areas of the organisation and constituent-organisations complete the sections of this questionnaire which are relevant to their structure and activities; or such format as may be made with and agreed by ICAR, but such that there is true understanding of the organisation and its working .
 - c. In submitting the reports to ICAR please include national information and copies of the replies from each member-organisation.
3. Please give details of the organisation, including a description of the governance and management structures. Ideally here include a map showing any business sites such as laboratories, offices, service providers which have a bearing on the services/products provided to farmers.
4. Please provide an organisational structure chart
5. What is the core business of the organisation?
6. What other business is the organisation involved with?
7. How is the organisation funded?



8. Does the organisation provide services in other countries? If so please give details. (Commercial confidentiality will be respected).
9. What, if any, other quality assurance schemes, not covered elsewhere, have the organisation in place? Give details.
10. What is the number of farms serviced by the organisation? If a national or "umbrella" organisation please give details for each constituent member organisation.
11. What recording options are available to these farms? Here and in the following three questions, options mean recording options as defined in the ICAR Guidelines. Should there be other options these should be clearly shown and defined.
12. How many farms use each option?
13. How many animals are recorded in each option? If less than the whole herd/flock please show.
14. What is the average herd/flock size in each option?
15. Give details of the supervision programmes for technicians and both internal and external staff. Include here the routine number of items such as identity checks and check recordings for dairy production staff. For beef, meat and conformation, the programme of checks and comparisons including national and international comparison training.
16. In the case of "umbrella" organisations: (the purpose of this section is to ascertain the inter-relationships in the areas of supervision and commercial activity)
 - a. What quality standards of performance are expected of the participating constituent-organisations?
 - b. What programme of supervision is carried out to ensure such standards?
 - c. What input do the participating constituent-organisations have in the quality control programme of the whole organisation?
 - d. What direction is given, if any, on individual service and product development in constituent-organisations?
 - e. Is there active business competition between the constituent-organisations?
 - f. If there is such competition, what effect does this have on the "umbrella" organisation?
17. What direct and indirect benefit do you believe that organisation will derive from the ICAR Certificate of Quality?

Animal Identification

18. Is there a unique national identification scheme for the species for which certification is sought? Give details of format and give examples. Give details of how identifications are allocated.



19. Is the above identification used as the sole identifier within your organisation? If not please give details of format and give examples.
20. If there is no single national identifier, what system(s) is/are used?
21. What checks are made by your organisation to ensure correct animal identification and avoidance of duplication? If there is a routine programme of such action give details, including timescales.
22. Give details of any links between your organisation and breeding companies and breed societies which takes place on a routine basis.
23. What action takes place if errors of identification are found?
24. What checks are carried out to ensure correct parentage?
25. Give details of any DNA or blood-typing which are carried out. Include the name of the laboratory carrying out such analyses, who receives the results and for what purpose. Indicate if the laboratory is ICAR registered, or takes part in international ring-testing programmes and what other registrations it may have to show technical competence.
26. Are genetic defects recorded and reported? Please give details.

Recording and Sampling Devices

27. Who owns the recording and sampling devices used on farm?
28. If known, give details of the numbers of each type of recording device.
29. What checks are carried out to ensure reliability of results obtained and what record of such checks are kept?
30. Who is responsible for the maintenance and calibration of the recording and sampling devices?
31. Is such maintenance and calibration carried out in accordance with ICAR Guidelines or another protocol?
32. What action takes place if the results obtained from the recording or sampling devices are found to be outside the limits described in the ICAR Guidelines?
33. What process, if any, does the organisation take to ensure staff and farmers are aware of ICAR-approved recording or sampling devices?
34. What use is made of any record derived from non-ICAR-approved recording or sampling devices?

Production and conformation recording

35. Give details of how data is recorded on farm and what on-farm check are made to ensure best quality of data.
36. What unit of measurement is used to record yield milk or meat?



37. What, if any, checks are made to ensure that the recorded yield is in line with that which may be reasonably expected and what is the process undertaken if they are not?
38. In which cases and under what conditions are records deemed to be missing and what procedures are then taken to "bridge the gap"?
39. Are the ranges of yields recorded in conformance with ICAR Guidelines?
40. Where there is meat recording give details of the programme also give details of any international linkage.
41. Give details of how and what events such as calving/lambing/kidding, inseminations (AI and natural, plus identity of sire) and health events are recorded.
42. Give details of the training programmes of farmers and staff to ensure reliable recording practices.
43. Give details of check procedures to ensure maintenance of recorders or recording standards.
44. Give details of any conformation recording carried out by the organisation. Include details of which animals are classified for conformation, such as whole herd, parity groups, only daughters of young sires, any rescoring asked for by farmers or breeding organisation, etc. Clearly show breeds involved and give examples of conformation scoring for each breed.
45. If no conformation is carried out by the organisation, are such details obtained from a third party? If so give details.

Transport

46. How are samples identified for transport to laboratory?
47. Are there any temperature constraints or criteria during transportation?
48. Give details of transport system, collection points and timeframes used for samples from farm to laboratory.
49. Give details and timeframes used for recorded data to go from farm to data-processing centre.
50. In the case of an "umbrella" organisation are there fixed requirements for constituent-organisations? If so what are they, such as time from farm to laboratory, sample box distribution, etc? (The purpose of this question is to ascertain the role, if any, in the day-to-day issues relating to transportation of samples. It is likely that "umbrella" organisations have no part in this as it may be considered a purely constituent-organisation issue).

Laboratory

51. Is the laboratory owned by the organisation applying for the ICAR Certificate of Quality?



52. If not so owned by the applicant :

- a. Please give details as to ownership and governance
- b. What standards of performance are expected, or contracted, in terms of service provision in areas such as return of results to either the data processing centre or farmer?
- c. Does the applicant have a formal place on its governing body?
- d. Who instigates development of analysis-driven services?
- e. Does the laboratory carry out analytical work for another organisation which carries out similar work to the applicant?

53. Does the laboratory have external certification? Give details such as ISO 17025.

54. Does the laboratory take part in ring-tests? Give details.

55. Give numbers and details of instruments used.

56. Give details of instrument calibration and checking programmes.

57. Give details of staff skills, including routine training and monitoring programmes.

58. How many samples are tested annually?

59. How are samples identified within the laboratory? Give details.

60. Is there any secondary check to ensure that the sample received is from the species animal?

61. Give details of the systems and processes used to ensure accurate analyses.

62. Give details of systems and processes which are used where sample results are not that which would be expected.

63. Give details of processes which take place if the samples are missing, or in a condition which would not give reliable results.

64. Are the ranges of constituents reported in conformance with ICAR Guidelines?

65. Are there any additional analyses carried out for which there are currently no ICAR Guidelines? Give details.



Data Processing

66. Does the organisation applying for the ICAR Certificate of Quality own the data processing centre or facility?
67. If not so owned please give details:
 - a. Please give details as to ownership and governance
 - b. What standards of performance are expected, or contracted, in terms of service provision in areas such as return of results to the farmer, third party or genetic evaluation centre?
 - c. Does the applicant have a formal place on its governing body?
 - d. Who instigates development of data-based services for farmers and others?
 - e. Does the processing centre carry out work for another organisation which carries out similar work to the applicant?
68. Does that data processing centre have external certification and if so give details?
69. How does the data arrive at the centre and by what route?
70. At which point are laboratory results incorporated with yield and other data?
71. What method of lactation calculation is used?
72. Does the organisation record health traits, if so which? What use is made by the organisation of this information? Is such information passed to third parties and if so give examples.
73. What are the timeframes from data processing to the farmers receiving reports?
74. Give details/examples of reports sent to farmers.
75. What process is in place if it is found that a farmer knowingly provides misleading or false information, within the official recording programmes?
76. Do third parties such as nutritionalists and veterinary surgeons receive copies of the farmer's results? If so what protocols are in place for this service?

Genetic Evaluations

77. Does the organisation seeking the ICAR Certificate of Quality carry out genetic evaluations itself?
78. If the applicant does not carry out the genetic evaluations itself:
 - a. Please give details as to ownership
 - b. What standards of performance are expected, or contracted, in terms of service provision in areas such as return of results back to the data processing centre, third parties such as breeding organisations or farmers?
 - c. Does the applicant have a formal place on its governing body?
 - d. Give details of its governance
 - e. Who instigates development of analysis-driven services?



- f. Does the evaluation centre carry out analytical work for another organisation which carries out similar work to the applicant?

79. What species/breeds are evaluated? ***NB this may include dairy and meat animals***

80. What traits are evaluated in each case?

81. Give formulae for calculations for species which currently have no ICAR Guidelines for genetic evaluations or where evaluations are for purely internal use and/or what is the model used for evaluation of your production traits?

82. Give correlations where known. For countries using Interbull and Interbeef use the last two successive releases used and date them using nverify or equivalent. In addition give details on the frequency of the Interbull validation tests.

83. Give details if the number of traits to be expanded in the next year and give details.

84. Give details of standards of operation including any peer-review.

85. Give details of the length of time for which production and pedigree data have been collected

NB: For applicants using ICAR's Interbull services

Where appropriate, the ICAR Secretariat will obtain from Interbull Centre, for the auditor, a Report of Conformity relating to the Applicant in relation to genetic evaluations, showing regard to the current ICAR Guidelines and the current Interbull Code of Practice

Such a report will include:

- Résumé of information received from the applicant or service provider
- A copy of the Form GE as per Interbull Code of Practice
- A short summary of current validation procedures

86. Give details of the length of time which the applicant or service provider has taken part in ICAR's Interbull and/or Interbeef genetic activities.

87. Has the applicant or service provider's data been rejected for inclusion in the Interbull evaluations for any reasoning the past five years? If yes give details and the steps taken to address the problem(s).

88. When did the applicant or service provider last take part in an Interbull test-run for production traits? If possible give a summary of that test.

89. What is the average correlation between your results and other organisations' results from the Interbull evaluations?

All applicants completing this section

90. What use is the organisation making, or intends to make of genomics and the reporting of such information?