

Moving from approval to certification for recording and sampling devices by ICAR – a dynamic approach to connect member organizations and manufacturers while encouraging innovation and testing of new devices.

Steven Sievert, Chair, ICAR Subcommittee for Recording and Sampling Devices

National DHIA/Quality Certification Services, P.O. Box 930399, 53593, Verona, WI, USA
sjsievert@dhia.org

Summary

Traditionally, successful ICAR testing of recording and sampling devices results in a lifetime approval from ICAR for the specific device combination. A recording and sampling device may have many components – milk meter, controller, keypad, sampler, firmware, and software. The approval approach has served the milk recording industry well for many devices, particularly mechanical milk meters. However, changes in one or more of the components of a complete device may affect the accuracy of either the milk yield prediction or the delivery of a representative milk sample. While the current ICAR guidelines state that manufacturers are required to report these changes to the Subcommittee for Recording and Sampling Devices (RSD-SC), some modifications are not reported in a timely fashion. Further, device installation protocols or routine calibration procedures, which are reviewed during the ICAR testing process, may be altered by manufacturers after the ICAR approval is awarded. Validation of these changes by the RSD-SC along with timely communication to ICAR member organizations of such changes has been identified as an area in need of improvement.

The current ICAR guidelines include language for annual reporting by both device manufacturers and member organizations. Building on these existing reporting guidelines, the RSD-SC is moving to an annual review of certification for all recording and sampling devices. This dynamic approach is designed to increase the responsiveness of the RSD-SC to member organizations' challenges or concerns as well as facilitate timely resolution by device manufacturers. Further, this certification plan is desirable when compared to re-testing and re-certification of every recording and sampling device after a specific time frame or certification period expires. Rather, manufacturers are encouraged to invest resources into ICAR testing of both modified and new devices rather than in testing of current devices that have not undergone any changes in design or components. This approach to device certification is also expandable to include sensor devices in the future. The RSD-SC is committed to meeting the needs of ICAR member organizations and building strong relationships with device manufacturers.