
The way to reference systems and centralised calibration for milk recording testing. Present status in Germany

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Summary

In a globalizing world analytical results play a major role in free and fair trade. Global trade needs global validity of analytical results! This means that analytical results have to be equivalent worldwide at any place, at any time and despite what method has been used.

Some sources of error are affecting this analytical equivalence: Bad performance of reference methods and/or reference labs in characterizing (secondary) reference materials, insufficient reference materials in terms of imprecise target values and/or problems with shelf life, shipment etc. and failures in calibration of routine methods as well as information gaps and misinterpretations are hindering the optimal use of capabilities.

IDF has started a discussion about how to cope with these problems. In Bulletin 427/2008 a paper outlines the way towards a reference system for somatic cell counting as an example of how to come to a solution.

In this paper the author deals with the present status of implementing such a reference system in Germany. After a short description of the dairy sector in Germany and especially Bavaria, a picture is drawn of the DHI system and the laboratory work. Different aspects of QA in laboratories and the interlaboratory reference system in Germany are highlighted and it is shown, how the German system is interlinked with the ICAR Reference Laboratory System.

The author strongly pleads for cooperation between analysts on all levels. ICAR should join the IDF activities and assist in creating an international structure for reference systems. Centralized calibration procedures could be one of the tools to step forward.

Key words: *Analytical reference systems, Centralised calibration, Equivalence of analytical results, Dairy sector in Germany, Interlaboratory reference system.*