



The WHFF Council has been meeting through the Covid19 Pandemic virtually by Zoom. The challenge to Herd Books of non-standardised Data being available from sensors and robots was discussed at the last meeting. Due to the importance of this topic, a Task Force has been created to propose a way forward.

The WHFF Council has met virtually four times during 2021.

The topics discussed by Council during this time have been WHFF membership, Virtual Animal IDs, Bovine Spastic Paresis (BSP) and Crampiness in the Holstein Breed. The Council are looking at the possibility of holding Virtual Meetings with the WHFF membership. However, the most important topic the Council has been working on is the challenge of bringing data from robots and sensors into Herdbooks.

Dairy farmers around the world are no strangers to technology and innovation. The first Automated Milking System (AMS) in the world was installed in 1992, according to data that was presented at the National Mastitis Council meeting in February 2022, held in California, USA. By 2000, it is estimated that there were 800 AMS units worldwide. By 2007, that number grew to 8,000 AMS units in 22 countries, and 10,000 by 2010. Today, industry experts estimate that there are over 35,000 AMS units worldwide!

In this past year, a WHFF member country raised a question as to how other Herdbook organizations were handling data coming from AMS in their respective countries. This sparked a discussion amongst Council members regarding AMS data, as well as that from other types of on-farm sensors, such as activity monitoring systems, in-line milk analysis installed in existing milking parlours, among others. Discussion led to a recommendation from Council members that **WHFF be proactive and initiate discussion with ICAR around inclusivity of production and sensor data, to have a mechanism for labelling the data as certified or non-certified data, to give direction to Herdbook members.** A WHFF Task Force has been appointed to address this important topic. **The Inclusivity of more Production Data Task Force** comprises of Council members Jens Baltissen (Germany), Vincent Landry (Canada) and Lindsey Worden (US).

The widespread adoption of all types of new technologies on the farm creates new challenges and opportunities for Herdbook organizations. As more farms adopt this technology, there is a call for all organizations in the dairy industry to do more with the information, to gather it, store it, and transform it into something that adds value for the farmers. This may sound simple in theory, but we recognize there are challenges presented by these new data streams. Many Herdbooks are not ready to receive and store large amounts of new data. Not all new data inputs are standardized, or of the same quality, and certification and labelling metrics must be developed and implemented by all industry partners.

Despite these and other challenges, the WHFF Task Force feels it is important to be inclusive of breeders using all types of systems on their farms. As membership organizations, Herdbooks are ideally suited to protect farmers' data and to work on their behalf, with no commercial gain. Private companies will have private commercial interests.

There are risks to Herdbook organizations as AMS becomes more widespread around the world, and new types of on-farm sensors are developed and adopted. One example of a primary risk for Herdbooks is that farms with AMS may quickly feel that they are getting enough information from their robotic software and cease to participate in traditional milk recording programs that would have fed their data into the Herdbook. This means that data will be lost from the Herdbook system permanently, unless new ways of gathering this information can be developed. There is a further risk that if this data remains in "silos," only within commercial organizations and private companies, proprietary indexes and other methods of herd improvement may be developed which are only available to customers of those organizations. This may not only slow breed progress, but it also creates direct competition with Herdbooks.

We Want to Hear from YOU!

The Council, through this Task Force, wish to conduct a survey to better understand the status of on-farm sensors around the world, what Herdbooks are doing with the information, what they want to do, and any other ideas they have regarding this issue.

Following an analysis of survey results, the Council will be sharing their thoughts with the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR), who could be an asset as they could work on certifying sensors and working with companies developing this technology. ICAR need to promote the certification process for milk components and other data points. When there are other easier ways to get data for farmers, there is a danger that farmers will think they don't need certified data.

If you have any ideas or comments about this topic, please contact worldholstein@gmail.com

Denis Bieri of Prim' Holstein and Giorgio Burchiellaro of ANAFIJ retired from the WHFF Council in 2020 and have been presented with plaques thanking them for their service to WHFF and EHRC.



Photo of Fortunato Trezzi President of ANAFIBJ with Giorgio Burchiellaro

If you have any concerns you wish the Council to discuss, please either get in touch with your regional representative or email worldholstein@gmail.com

WHFF Web Site

Please remember to send in news stories, show details, and pictures of your Holstein Champions for the web site: www.whff.info

Dates for your Diary:

The following dates are subject to change due to the COVID 19 pandemic, but planned as below:

17 - 19 May 2022	Harmonisation of European Judging and Judges Panel Workshop, Cremona-Montichiari, Italy
30 May to 3 June 2022	ICAR Conference in Montreal, Canada.
20 – 22 September 2022	WHFF World Classifiers Workshop, Switzerland
Cancelled 22 - 27 November 2022	European Show in Verona, Italy
26 - 29 April 2023	EHRC – Conference and General Assembly, Ireland
2023 - August	European Judging school, Latvia
Planned 2024	15th WHFF Conference and General Assembly, UK