

AWEX Review Committee

14th March 2007

Review Committee – Summary of findings

The following is a summary of findings made by the Review Committee with respect to complaints raised regarding the 2007-09 AWEX DRAFT Code of Practice.

Under the Business Rules of AWEX an aggrieved person, who may be a member or non-member of AWEX may make a claim, which will be heard by a Review Committee, if the aggrieved person considers they have been “unreasonably disadvantaged by amendments to industry codes of conduct or industry standards introduced by AWEX”.

The AWEX Board has referred to the Review Committee complaints received from The Australian Dohne Breeders’ Association (ADBA) and the Prime SAMM Breeders Society of Australia Inc. (PSBSA) each claiming that they had been unreasonably disadvantaged by the AWEX Draft Code of Practice 2007-2009 (COP). The Review Committee has considered the written complaints and have received verbal submissions from representatives of the ADBA and the PSBSA.

The Review Committee has been provided with written and verbal evidence by the Industry Services Advisory Committee (ISAC) and their technical advisors, about the processes undertaken, and the technical information considered, in determining the structure and content of the draft 2007-2009 COP. The Committee has noted that ISAC is constituted from a range of industry participants including woolgrowers, woolclassers, exporters, private treaty merchants, and processors. AWEX has engaged widely in consultation with others in the industry and collated and reviewed information from a range of sources over the period of review and incorporated those into the draft 2007-2009 COP.

The Committee understands that the inclusion in the draft 2007-2009 COP of the recommendation for breed identification, in bale descriptions, of wool from Dohne Merinos and wool from South African Meat Merinos as distinct from wool from Australian Merinos, has been provided on the basis of:

- Requests for that information from processors, exporters and buyers, and
- The fact that as more information is available, and as processors and consumers become more sophisticated in terms of processing technology and product differentiation, they require more information. It is assumed that all parties should benefit from the additional information.

ISAC has noted that defining Merinos creates some level of technical difficulty. However, ISAC considers, in the light of the demand from the industry for this information and its relevance to wool quality, that the inclusion of the identification of wool from Dohne Merino and SAMM breeds, as part of the bale description process, should be proceeded with.

Outcome and Conclusion

The Committee does not consider that the proposals in the AWEX draft 2007-2009 Code of Practice, that the bale descriptions, of wool from Dohne Merino and from South African Meat Merinos to distinguish this wool from the wool from Australian Merinos, would “unreasonably disadvantage” the producers of the wool in question nor the Members of the ADBA and the PSBSA.

Technical Issues

We understand that the proposal for distinguishing bale descriptions are intended to be applied to wool from the F1, F2 and F3 etc. crosses of the Dohne and SAMM sheep with the Australian Merino.

However, the Committee is of the view - and believes this view is shared by the technicians concerned - that the trials which have been conducted to date have not included a sufficient volume and spread of samples for conclusive determinations to be reached.

Recommendations

The Committee therefore recommend that consideration be given to the following:

1. AWEX should initiate further trials and testing involving AWI, FAWO and sheep breed societies, aimed at accumulating a viable volume of sample test data to enable refinement of the breed identification component of the draft 2007-2009 COP to the benefit of all industry participants.

And that for the effective life of the 2007-2009 COP:

2. The wording on Page 30 of the Draft 2007-2009 COP, under the heading ‘Bale Descriptions’, should be expanded in terms of explaining the main functions of a bale description and emphasising the objective of providing the information sought by buyers and thereby engendering broad market confidence.
3. Section 9 of the 2007-2009 COP – Classing Pure Merino Wool - should be headed – Classing Merino Wool.
4. The Breed Group column in Section 9 – Classing (Pure) Merino Wool - should provide for the main line of wool from Dohne Merino to be branded:- AAAM- Dohne; and in the case of SAMM:- AAAM-SAMM - with other lines described accordingly. The requirement in respect of wool from F1, F2, F3, etc. crosses needs to be made clearer.
5. The introduction to the table of Sheep Breed Characteristics in Section 20 of the COP should make it clear that Y/K risk assessments are provisional and subject to the outcomes of further trials and research.

We wish to thank the ADBA and PSBSA for their time and cooperation and provision of information to the Review Committee.