

## Changes to Evaluation System - November 2006

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### Holstein stillbirth and Brown Swiss calving-ease evaluations from Interbull

*By George Wiggans, John Cole, and Paul VanRaden*

Evaluations of stillbirth for foreign Holstein bulls became available from Interbull. The same procedures as for calving ease are applied to determine if the domestic or Interbull evaluation is official. If a sire or daughter stillbirth value is missing for use in calculating economic indexes, it is estimated from the corresponding calving-ease evaluation. Although 10 other countries provide Holstein calving-ease data, only 5 (Denmark, Finland, Israel, the Netherlands, and Sweden) provide stillbirth data. Genetic correlations between the United States and those 5 countries average 0.66 for the service-sire effect and 0.77 for the daughter effect on stillbirth.

Evaluations of Brown Swiss bulls for service-sire calving ease and daughter calving ease also became available from Interbull. Three other populations (Germany-Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland) are included, and reliabilities for most foreign bulls are still low. Correlations between the United States and the other populations average 0.71 for service-sire calving ease and 0.69 for daughter calving ease. Methods used in the multitrait across-country evaluation (MACE) for Brown Swiss were reported by Jakobsen and Fikse ([2005, Interbull Bull. 33:28-33](#)). Calving-ease MACE are not calculated for Jerseys or Guernseys but are calculated for the 5 Red Dairy Cattle populations that do not include the United States. Stillbirth MACE are not calculated for bulls of breeds other than Holstein because of weak ties and poor correlation estimates. The calving-ease MACE for Brown Swiss will be official, used in the [lifetime merit indexes](#), and distributed using the same procedures reported for Holsteins in [May 2005](#).

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### Ayrshire and Red Dairy Cattle breed codes

*By George Wiggans*

Interbull changed all its breed codes for Ayrshire (AYS) to Red Dairy Cattle (RDC) to better represent the Scandinavian red breeds. In the United States, however, an AY breed code was retained for the breed of evaluation and for identification (ID) numbers except for IDs of red, non-Holstein animals from the following countries:

- NR = Norway
- RE = Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland
- SR = Sweden

For data files sent to Interbull, AY and other red breed codes are changed to RDC. For data received from Interbull, RDC is changed to AY or to one of the other red breed codes. This procedure increases the likelihood that the ID breed will be the same as the breed shown on semen straws and reported in NAAB codes.

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### Series-840 Animal Identification Numbers

*By George Wiggans and Neil Hammerschmidt\**

The Animal Identification Number (AIN) became an official numbering system through an interim rule in the Code of Federal Regulations in November 2004. The AIN is a 15-digit identification (ID) number and follows International Organization of Standards (ISO) 11784, which defines the code structure for ISO radio frequency (RF) compliant transponders. All U.S. AINs start with 840, the country code for the United States. Recently USDA has approved AIN tags and authorized several tag manufacturers to use AINs. All such tags require the printing of the AIN on tamper-evident eartags and, as supplemental identification, may have an ISO-compliant transponder encased in the eartag.

The Animal Improvement Programs Laboratory (AIPL) now stores AINs in the national database. They are above 003000000000, which makes them larger than almost all [American ID Numbers](#) (Cattle Fax was allocated a range up to 003001000002 but may never have used any above 003000000000). The 840 country code will be retained with U.S.

AINs to ensure uniqueness, but adjustments will need to be made to allow 840 to be displayed instead of USA. Before the system for allocating ID numbers with an 840 country code was established, RFID-compliant tags were distributed with manufacturer codes between 900 and 985 assigned by the International Committee for Animal Recording. Thus far, AIPL has not stored those RFID numbers as they are viewed as a transition to the 840 series and including them might increase confusion over ID numbers. Their use may become necessary, however, if an RFID number is the only type of ID number available for an animal. See <http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/index.shtml> for more information.

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## **Additional release of yield evaluations for dairy goats**

*By George Wiggans*

Twice-a-year evaluation of yield traits has been implemented for dairy goats with evaluation releases in July and November. Because of the normal seasonal kidding pattern for goats, November evaluation allows recently completed lactations to be included and also coincides with the release of type evaluations for dairy goats.