

The Relevance of the Meat Classification System

Feedback for the Meat Classification workshop 7 November 2014.

Comments were requested from members following our previous board meeting.

The Red Meat Abattoir Association took a decision, with the termination of funding from the Trust, to SAMIC to continue with the funding of meat classification coordination.

The Association was of the opinion the the Meat Classification system was an important trading mechanism in the value chain to effect price differentiation on the basis of age and fat thickness, as a result of customer preferences.

The Association agreed to the inclusion of the AB grade to provide for the rupture of the first molar at the time of final presentation of this animal for slaughter. This would not effect the quality of the carcass to the extent that it should be handled as a B class.

The members of the RED Meat Abattoir Association agreed to fund meat classification and meat classification coordination with the implementation of a statutory levy for the red meat industry and also agreed to fund trade visits as the most important source of classification contravention. This cost of provision and coordination is approxamitely R 45 million.

The Association are of the opinion that:

- 1 The system as is remain a trading mechanism to differentiate age and class categories for both the seller and purchaser of the product.
- 2 It became less important for trading purposes since the client rely more heavily on the assurances provided by the abattoir owner. Tenderness is not only dictated by age determination and the age of an animal alone is not a good indicator of the eating quality by the consumer.
3. The system is not marketed well to the meat consumer to reflect the quality of the different classes of meat.
4. No need to change the current system for the purpose which it currently serve - A trading mechanism. The other aspects influencing eating quality

should receive more attention in the industry applied reseach. These factors should also be better managed in production and processing systems to obtain a better consistency of red meat.

The regulation also provide for users of the system to brand specific traits that a customer wishes to market to his clients.

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