South African Carcass Classification System Workshop

RMAA Conference and Congress

Spier Wine Farm, Stellenbosch

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South African Carcass Classification

1932 - Classification of red meat in South Africa started

1936 - Age of animals was used as a characteristic to grade carcasses

1949 - Use number of permanent incisors for the first time

1981 - Age classes were defined

- A: 0 permanent incisors
- B: 1 to 6 permanent incisors
- C: 7 to 8 permanent incisors

- Class terms: Super for A; Prime for B; Top for C carcasses with fat codes 3 and 4 (3 – 7 mm fat thickness) that was the most preferred fat levels by consumers at the time

South African Carcass Classification

1990's - Main emphasis was on costs

"Grading" of carcasses was terminated and only the classification criteria remained to facilitate a classification system moving to the idea of "description only" and leaving the choice to the buyer and the consumer according to their needs

1999 - carcasses with 2 permanent incisors were put in a separate age class (AB)

South African Carcass Classification

2000's - Industry became more consumer driven

Although the classification system was not intended for the purpose of ranking carcasses, description of "Most Tender", "Tender", "Less Tender" and "Least Tender" were given to the 4 age classes, respectively

Over time the description systems have been adopted and refined as informed by research in consultation with industry

Classification system vs Quality Assurance

The classification system is a carcass description system and not a quality assurance system

CLASSIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS OF:
Beef, Lamb, Sheep and Goat Meat

AGE	CLASS
0 Teeth	A
1–2 Teeth	AB
3–6 Teeth	B
More than 6 Teeth	C

FATNESS	CLASS
No fat	0
Very lean	1
Lean	2
Medium	3
Fat	4
Slightly overfat	5
Excessively overfat	6

CONFORMATION	CLASS
Very flat	1
Flat	2
Medium	3
Round	4
Very round	5

DAMAGE	CLASS
Slight	1
Moderate	2
Severe	3

SEX

The carcase of a ram or a bull as well as of a hamel, a kapater or an ox showing signs of late castration of the AB, B or C age classes, are identified.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS ACT, 1990 (ACT No. 119 OF 1990)

Regulation R55 dated 30 January 2015, REGULATIONS REGARDING THE CLASSIFICATION AND MARKING OF MEAT INTENDED FOR SALE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Quality Indication Marks

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"**Quality indication**" means a word or expression or brand name or trade mark or any other mark or symbol, that may directly or by implication influence the choice of the buyer in buying that specific meat, that has been approved by the executive officer on written request for use in a roller-mark and/or as a stamp on the carcasses and/or as an indication on meat or the packaging thereof

Quality Indication Marks

Examples of active trademarks registered by DAFF

- Beefcor Select
- Braeside's Free Range Grass Fed Meat
- Certified Natural
- Certified Karoo Meat of Origin
- Certified Woodview Beef
- Checkers Angus Beef
- Food Lover's Free Range
- Fruit & Veg City
- Grassfed
- Gesogte Laingsburg Karoo Lam / Famous Laingsburg Karoo Lamb
- Grassland Meat

- Guaranteed Natural
- HHB Free Range
- Kalahari Certified Free Range Beef
- Karoo Naturally Free
- Morgan - Zilmax Free
- Oak Valley Free-range Acorn-fed Pork
- Oak Valley Wagyu Beef
- Pick n Pay Free Range
- Pick n Pay Veal
- Pork 360
- Spier Pasture Reared Beef
- Woolworths Free Range

12th Meat symposium

- 2009 – Team of researchers appointed to investigate the current carcass classification system

- 12th Meat Symposium – 7 November 2014, University of Pretoria

- Theme: Relevance of the South African Carcass Classification System
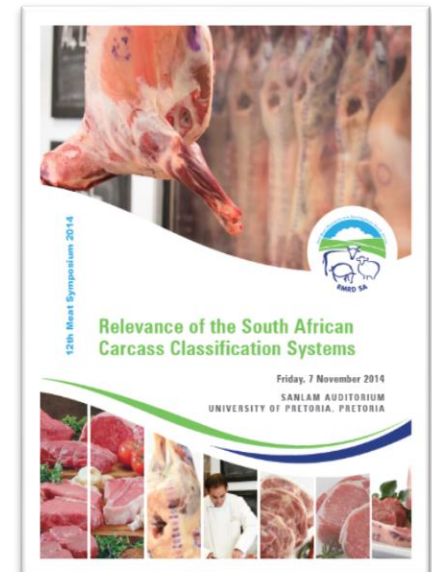
Research team:
Dr Phillip Strydom   Dr Arno Hugo
Dr Lorinda Frylinck   Dr Ina van Heerden
Prof Edward Webb   Prof Hettie Schönfeldt
Ms Hester Vermeulen

12th Meat Symposium 2014

Relevance of the South African Carcass Classification Systems

Friday, 7 November 2014
SANLAM AUDITORIUM
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA, PRETORIA
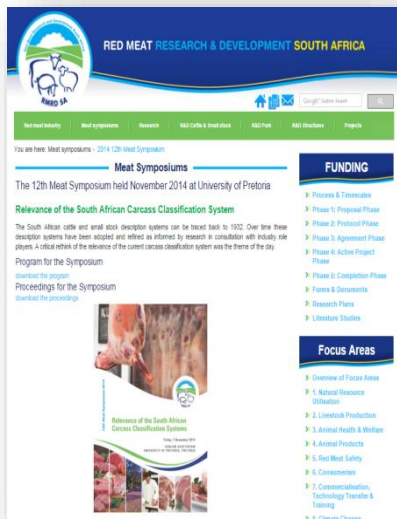
SAJAS Special Edition

2015

South African Journal of Animal Science

Issue 3, volume 45, 2015

Special issue: Relevance of the South African Carcass Classification System

- Editorial

- 11 Scientific articles

- 2 Historic perspective articles, available electronically

www.rmrdsa.co.za

http://www.sasas.co.za/journals

The SA beef classification system in 2015 – a critical review of age classification

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This document aims to summarize a series of events since October 2009 when a first meeting of stakeholders was held to discuss the existing red meat classification system in South Africa. It culminated into the 12th Meat Symposium on 7 November 2014 publication of the research as peer-reviewed papers in 2015 in a special edition of the South African

A document by the research group to:

- **Evaluate the current system**
- **Identify shortcomings and needs**
- **Advice on improvements of the current system**

A further workshop was held with all the industry role players to further interrogate if the current system could be improved and how - 1 March 2016

Research presented at the 12th Meat Symposium did not prove conclusively that a change to the present classification system was warranted due to a wide range of variables.

The most important changes since implementation of the current classification system:

- Beef carcass weight increased from 210 kg in 1993 to 266 kg in 2013
- Use of growth promoters
- Fat content of carcasses has reduced drastically
- Processing practises at the abattoir and retailer (e.g. electrical stimulating, ageing)

There was consensus that:

Amending the current beef and lamb / mutton meat classification system would not address these issues
The Red Meat Industry agreed that the current beef and lamb / mutton classification system is still relevant

During the workshop an opinion was expressed that:

Management, Production and Processing Practise
should be improved to assure the consumer of higher quality products

The following aspects need attention:

- **Consumer awareness and education**

- **Labelling and branding**

- **More attention to the post harvesting processes, e.g. electrical stimulation and chilling, which should include better education at the abattoirs where proper knowledge may be lacking**

- **Possible inclusion of a fat colour code in the classification system**

- **Use of beta agonists in production**

http://www.rmrdsa.co.za/Research/CarcassClassificationSystem.aspx

Current RMRD SA research projects 2016

- **Animal welfare, stress biomarkers and meat quality**
- **Slaughter conditions and chevon quality**
- **Chilling & electrical stimulation of beef carcasses**
- **Lamb & mutton quality audit**
- **On-the-hook ageing of beef**
- **Brine injection of beef**
- **Occurrence of mycotoxins in red meat products**
- **The protein quality of animal sources of protein**
- **Investigating the low, middle and high income Western Cape consumer's perception towards beef & sheep meat**
- **Consumer purchasing behaviour of red meat**

Thank you

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