



## **Ultrasound Guidelines Council**

P.O. Box 5097

Bozeman, MT 59717-5097

Ph: 406-581-9071

Fax: 406-585-4685

<http://www.ultrasoundbeef.com>

### **Ultrasound Guidelines Council Revised Policy for Re-certification in Absentia**

October 2010

#### **Questions and Answers**

- Q. I want to apply for re-certification in absentia in 2011. Will IQ scores on images that I submitted before 2011 be used to evaluate my application?
- A. No, only images submitted during 2011 will be used. Because applications are due in the summer, this means that IQ data from January through June will be the only data available at the time decisions are made.
- Q. Why will IQ scores on images submitted before 2011 not be used to compute average IQ scores?
- A. The UGC Board thought that the fairest way to implement new standards was to communicate the standards before they were used to evaluate technicians. Techs whose current IQ scores fail to meet the new standards will have opportunity to work with UGC labs to identify weaknesses and to improve image quality.
- Q. My current certification expires in 2012. If I apply for re-certification in absentia in 2012, what IQ data will be used to compute my percentages?
- A. IQ from 2011 (January through December) and 2012 (January through June).
- Q. The standards appear to be set very high. How were they established?
- A. In the data summarized, average IQ scores for absentia techs were very high, as they should be. Average IQ scores for most current absentia techs exceed the new standards. However, the data also revealed that a few techs are far below average of all absentia techs, and below the new standards. The new standards support the mission of UGC – i.e., the assurance of high quality data for the genetic evaluation of beef cattle.
- Q. Why are the IQ thresholds different for RIB, IMF, and RUMP images?
- A. The thresholds were established based on analyses of IQ data for absentia techs. These thresholds suggest that high-quality RIB images are slightly more difficult to

obtain than high-quality IMF images, and that high-quality RUMP images are much easier to obtain than high-quality RIB or IMF images.

Q. Why must technicians have scanned a minimum of 3,000 head?

A. Re-certification in absentia is offered as a service to experienced technicians who have a proven record image quality. This minimum head count serves to identify experienced technicians. In 2009, absentia techs averaged over 2,600 head per year.

Q. Why must a technician scan at least 250 head per year?

A. Certification via proficiency testing (i.e., field certification) is based on a 20 head sample, repeated once (for a total of 40). Animals used for UGC Field Certifications are pre-scanned and chosen to provide sufficient variation in ribeye area, rib fat thickness, rump fat thickness, and percent IMF to evaluate image quality. Scanning 250 head per year helps insure that there is adequate animal variation in the data to evaluate image quality. Further the 250 head per year requirement provides evidence that techs are active in the industry.

Q. What were the common criticisms of the old absentia policy?

A1. Techs who had scanned thousands of animals over many years with good image quality, but who did not scan 1,000 head every year were not able to certify in absentia, and had to bear considerable expense to re-certify via proficiency testing.

A2. Absentia techs who had maintained large ultrasound practices, but due to age or other business obligations reduced their practices, were required to re-certify via proficiency testing under the old policy if the number of cattle scanned per year dropped below 1,000 without regard to image quality.

MWT

Last update 10/11/10