

Dairy Evaluation Review Team (DERT)

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Dairy Evaluation Review Team (DERT) provides independent, objective, and impartial technical review of dairy genetic evaluation results generated by CDCB prior to their official release. The Committee serves as an independent quality assurance mechanism by reviewing routine evaluation runs, validating evaluation outputs, and assessing whether implemented or future evaluation methods perform as expected.

Following completion of CDCB's internal quality control procedures, DERT reviews evaluation results, identifies unexpected outcomes or implementation issues, and provides technical feedback before official publication. When appropriate, DERT may recommend additional validation, investigation, or reprocessing before results are released.

DERT also reviews the implementation of newly developed traits, updates to existing evaluations, and other significant enhancements to the genetic evaluation system to verify that resulting outputs are consistent with approved methodologies and meet CDCB's standards for quality, accuracy, and reliability.

The Committee comprises individuals with expertise in quantitative genetics, statistical genetics, dairy cattle breeding, genomic evaluation methods, and dairy data analysis.

2. Purpose

The Dairy Evaluation Review Team (DERT) was established by the CDCB Board of Directors to provide independent, objective, and impartial technical review of dairy genetic evaluation results prior to their official release.

Its primary purpose is to provide an independent assessment of whether evaluation results have been correctly implemented, adequately validated, and are suitable for publication. By providing an additional layer of technical review, DERT helps reduce the likelihood that implementation errors, data anomalies, or unexpected evaluation outcomes are incorporated into official CDCB releases.

DERT serves in an advisory capacity to CDCB staff and provides recommendations based solely on the technical quality and consistency of evaluation results. Responsibility for the implementation, publication, and accuracy of official genetic evaluations remains with CDCB.

The DERT leverages the voluntary contributions of recognized technical experts from across the dairy genetics community to strengthen the quality assurance process supporting CDCB's genetic evaluation releases.

3. Term

These Terms of Reference shall become effective on August 19, 2026 and shall remain in effect until amended or terminated by the CDCB Board of Directors.

4. Membership

The CDCB Board of Directors shall appoint **up to eight individuals** to serve on the Dairy Evaluation Review Team (DERT) for two-year terms during its April Board meeting. Members shall serve two-year terms beginning on May 1 of the year of their appointment and ending on April 30 two years later.

DERT members serve as **volunteer technical reviewers** in support of CDCB's mission. Members are appointed because of their recognized scientific and technical expertise and contribute their time and knowledge without compensation.

Representatives nominated by stakeholder organizations shall be submitted to the CDCB Board of Directors for approval. Self-nominations shall not be considered.

Given the specialized knowledge and experience required for these positions, there shall be no limit on the number of consecutive terms a member may serve.

Prior to appointment, CDCB staff shall verify that nominees satisfy the eligibility requirements established in these Terms of Reference.

Each DERT member granted access to confidential review materials, shall execute a confidentiality agreement prior to receiving any evaluation files.

DERT members shall restrict access to confidential review materials to the minimum number of staff necessary to conduct the review.

To be eligible for appointment, a DERT member shall:

- Hold a graduate degree in quantitative genetics or a related field.
- Have demonstrated experience interpreting results from dairy cattle genetic evaluations.
- Have demonstrated expertise in analyzing genetic evaluation outputs, pedigree data, and related datasets.
- Have experience reviewing or validating genetic evaluation results and associated statistical reports.
- Be familiar with the principles and methodologies used in dairy cattle genetic evaluations.

The list of current DERT members shall be maintained on the CDCB website.

5. Accountability

DERT is an advisory, non-executive committee established by the CDCB Board of Directors and accountable to CDCB staff.

DERT recommendations are advisory in nature and are intended to support CDCB's internal quality assurance process prior to the release of genetic evaluations. Responsibility for the implementation, publication, and accuracy of official CDCB genetic evaluations remains with CDCB.

DERT reports may be shared only by CDCB staff with internal or external committees, as appropriate. Any reports distributed by CDCB staff shall exclude references that could identify individual reviewers, confidential deliberations, unpublished evaluation results, or specific animals, unless expressly authorized by CDCB.

6. Scope of Review

DERT shall evaluate routine genetic evaluation results and related technical outputs exclusively from the perspective of implementation quality, technical accuracy, completeness, consistency, and readiness for publication.

The Committee shall not evaluate or approve the scientific methodology underlying a genetic evaluation. Scientific review of evaluation methodologies is the responsibility of the Genetic Evaluation Methods (GEM) Committee.

Likewise, DERT shall not consider commercial, political, organizational, or sector-specific interests when conducting its reviews. Recommendations shall be based solely on the technical quality, consistency, reliability, and readiness of the evaluation results.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

DERT

The DERT shall:

- Review routine CDCB genetic evaluation results prior to their official release.
- Review the implementation of new traits, evaluation updates, and other planned improvements to routine genetic evaluations prior to publication.
- Assess whether evaluation outputs are technically accurate, internally consistent, and suitable for release.
- Identify anomalies, unexpected outcomes, implementation issues, or data inconsistencies that warrant further investigation.
- Recommend additional validation, reprocessing, or technical review when appropriate.
- Provide independent, objective, impartial, and technically sound recommendations to CDCB staff.

Materials provided for review may include:

- Official CDCB evaluation files, including genomic and traditional evaluation results for males and females.
- Statistical summaries, validation reports, and supporting technical documentation.

- Other evaluation-related files, when appropriate.

Consistent with agreements between CDCB and Interbull, unpublished MACE evaluations shall not be provided to DERT.

Members

Each DERT member shall:

- Act in the best interests of CDCB and the integrity of its genetic evaluation system, independent of personal, institutional, organizational, commercial, or sector-specific interests.
- Evaluate evaluation results solely on their technical merits.
- Accept review assignments in good faith and make reasonable efforts to complete assigned reviews within the requested timeframe, typically within three business days.
- Submit written technical comments, questions, or confirmation that no concerns were identified through the designated DERT communication channel.
- Review CDCB staff responses and draft summary reports when requested to ensure that comments have been accurately captured and addressed.
- Notify CDCB staff as early as possible if unable to participate in an assigned review.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all unpublished evaluation results, review materials, and Committee discussions.
- Comply with the Committee's confidentiality agreement and refrain from disclosing or using unpublished information for personal, organizational, or financial benefit.

Benchmark statistics or analyses generated during the review process may be shared internally only after the official DERT report has been distributed by CDCB.

CDCB Staff

CDCB staff shall:

- Coordinate the distribution of review materials.
- Establish review schedules and deadlines.
- Organize DERT members into standing review panels, as appropriate, to support the timely review of routine evaluation releases.
- Determine which review panel will review each routine evaluation release.
- Request review by the full DERT whenever a release includes significant methodological changes, new traits, major system enhancements, or other matters requiring broader technical review.
- Provide technical documentation necessary to support the review.
- Respond to reviewer questions and comments throughout the review process.
- Prepare and circulate a draft summary of reviewer comments and CDCB responses for verification by DERT members prior to finalization.
- Maintain Committee records and documentation.
- Determine the final disposition of recommendations and communicate outcomes to the Committee, as appropriate.

8. Operating Procedures

DERT conducts its work primarily through electronic communications.

To support the timely review of routine monthly evaluation releases, CDCB staff may organize DERT members into standing review panels. Panels shall normally consist of approximately one-half of the Committee membership, although CDCB staff may adjust panel composition as necessary to balance expertise, workload, availability, and potential conflicts of interest.

Routine evaluation reviews shall normally be assigned to one review panel. When warranted by the significance or complexity of a release, CDCB staff may request participation from the full DERT.

Conference calls or meetings may be convened by CDCB staff on an exceptional basis when additional discussion or clarification is necessary.