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Cayman Islands Bull Breeding Policy (Drop-off/Delivery Service) **Department of Agriculture – Livestock Genetic Improvement Programme (LGIP)**

1. Purpose

The primary objective of this policy is to enhance the genetic quality and productivity of privately owned, local cattle in the Cayman Islands. By providing access to government-owned stud bulls, the Department of Agriculture (DoA) aims to:

- Improve beef production efficiency.
- Reduce reliance on imported livestock.
- Support the sustainability and resilience of the local livestock sector.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all registered farmers in Cayman Islands who wish to participate in the natural mating programme offered at designated DoA breeding facilities.

3. Definitions

- **Stud Bull:** A male bovine animal provided by the DoA for breeding purposes.
- **Dam:** A female bovine animal (cow or heifer) brought by the farmer for mating.
- **Drop-off Service:** The process wherein farmers deliver their dams to DoA facilities for natural mating with Stud Bulls.
- **Delivery Service:** The process wherein the DoA delivers the Stud Bull to the farmer's facility for natural mating with dams.
- **Pick-up Service:** The process wherein the DoA delivers the farmer's dam(s) to DoA facilities for natural mating with Stud Bulls at the rate stipulated (i.e. minimum of 7 or more heads of cattle).
- **Registered Farmer:** An individual or entity officially recognized by the DoA as engaged in farming activities.

4. Eligibility

To participate in the Bull Breeding Drop-off Service, the following criteria must be met:

- **Registered Farmers:** Only farmers registered with the Department of Agriculture (DoA) are eligible to participate in the programme.
 - Priority will be given to registered commercial farmers.
- **Health and Condition of Dams:** All dams (cows and heifers) must meet the health and condition requirements as specified in Section 6 of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, being free from diseases, having an optimal body condition score, and meeting all vaccination and deworming protocols.
- **Health and Condition of Farm/Breeding Location:** All farms and/or breeding locations must meet the health and condition requirements in Section 7 of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, being

free from diseases, pests, and other hazards.

5. Application Process

To participate in the Bull Breeding Drop-off Service, farmers must adhere to the following application procedures:

- **Submission of Application:** Farmers are required to complete and submit an individual application form for each dam intended for breeding.
- **Processing of Applications:** Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. However, priority will be accorded to registered commercial farmers, in line with the benefits outlined in the Farmers' Identification and Registration Programme (FIRP). doa.gov.ky
- **Evaluation Criteria:** The Department of Agriculture (DoA) will assess applications based on the following factors:
 - **Compliance with Health and Condition Requirements:** Dams must meet the health and condition criteria specified in Section 6 of this policy.
 - **Resource Availability:** Consideration of the current capacity of breeding facilities and availability of stud bulls.
 - **Farmer's Compliance History:** Past adherence to DoA policies and protocols may influence application approval.
- **Notification of Decision:** Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application *within 10 business days of submission*. If an application is declined, the DoA will provide a written explanation outlining the reasons for the decision.
- **Appeals Process:** Farmers have the right to appeal a declined application. Appeals must be submitted in writing, **within five business days of receiving the decision**, addressed to the Director of Agriculture. The appeal should include any additional information or documentation supporting the case.
- **Record Keeping:** All applications and related correspondence will be documented and maintained by the DoA to ensure transparency and accountability. Farmers are required to keep written records of all livestock produced from the stud bull. Farmers who previously acquired red poll from the Department must keep written records of all offspring from acquired red poll. Dams to be serviced shall be registered under NLITS.

6. Health and Condition Requirements for Dams

To ensure the health and safety of all animals involved, the following conditions must be met.

- **Parasite Control:** Dams must be dewormed and treated for internal and external parasites before admittance, using appropriate products (e.g., Avermectin or Benzimidazole).
- **Health Status:** Dams must be visibly free from any ailments or physical illnesses.
- **Body Condition Score (BCS):** Dams should have an optimal BCS between 2.5 and 3.5 on a 5-point scale. Assessment to be conducted by a qualified veterinarian or livestock specialist.
- **Calves at Foot:** Dams with calves aged between 2 to 6 months are accepted. Calves over 6 months must be weaned before admittance. The DoA is not liable for any injuries or trauma to calves or dams during the breeding period.
- **Pregnancy Status:** Dams will be checked for pregnancy upon arrival. Pregnant dams will be promptly rejected.

7. Health and Condition Requirements for Farms/Breeding Location

To ensure the health and safety of all animals involved, the following conditions must be met for eligibility for the Delivery Service. The DoA will verify these conditions through site visits before approving farmers for use of the Delivery Service.

- **Location:** Must adhere to the five freedoms of animal welfare – meaning the location must provide the animals with:
 - Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition (i.e. the animals must be fed and cared for appropriately inclusive of regular and sufficient feed, water and nutrition)
 - Freedom to express normal behavior for species (e.g. allowed appropriate space per animal)
 - Freedom from fear and distress
 - Freedom from pain, injury and disease (e.g. appropriate veterinary care must be provided)
 - Freedom from discomfort due to the environment (e.g. appropriate shade, ground surface and other facilities must be present)

8. Breeding Service Details

- **Duration:** Each dam will undergo a breeding period of 6 to 9 weeks (minimum of 45 days). This duration balances the biological needs of the animals with operational considerations, aiming to maximize reproductive success in the programme.
- **Post-Breeding:** Dams must be collected within seven calendar days after the breeding period. Failure to do so may result in a fee of CI \$30 per head per day. Note: Where Delivery service is used, the DoA shall collect the Stud Bull within five working days after the breeding period or will pay the farmer a fee of CI\$30 per day per Stud Bull.
- **Re-breeding:** Dams that do not conceive may be re-admitted for a second breeding cycle. No dam will be admitted more than twice if unsuccessful in conceiving.

9. Fees and Subsidies

- **Service Fee:** There is no fee associated with the Drop-Off Service
- **Pick-up Service Fee:** where a farmer requests this service the following fees apply:
 - Collection and delivery for one trip (i.e. minimum of 7 heads of cattle and up to 10 heads of cattle) from a farm to the DoA is a fixed rate of \$25;
 - Return for one trip (i.e. minimum of 7 heads of cattle and up to 10 heads of cattle) from DoA to a farm is a fixed rate of \$25;

(Note: where collection or drop-off trip requires stops at multiple locations an additional fee of \$5 per stop will be charged.

- **Promotional Subsidy:** During an initial promotional phase (12 Months), the DoA may offer subsidies to offset costs, encouraging farmer participation and genetic improvement.

10. Facility Management and Biosecurity

- **Stocking Density:** Maximum of 1 bull to 20 dams to ensure effective breeding and animal welfare.
- **Biosecurity Measures:** To minimize cross-herd infection risks.
 - **Exclusive Use Option:** Farmers submitting more than five dams may request exclusive use of a stud bull. This practice minimizes the risk of disease transmission between herds by preventing commingling.
 - **Acknowledgement of Risks:** Farmers consenting to mixed-herd breeding acknowledged potential health risks associated with cross-herd infections.
 - **Best Practices:** To mitigate biosecurity risks, the following measures are recommended
 - **Health Screening:** Prior to breeding, animals should undergo health checks to ensure they are free from contagious diseases.
 - **Sanitation Protocols:** Where feasible, facilities and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected regularly to prevent the spread of disease.
 - **Visitor Control:** Limit access to breeding facilities and ensure that visitors follow biosecurity

protocols, such as wearing clean clothing and disinfecting footwear.

- **Bull Maintenance:** The DoA is responsible for the care, feeding, and health monitoring of stud bulls, including regular health checks and vaccinations.

11. Farmer Responsibilities

- Ensure dams meet all health and condition requirements before drop-off.
- For Delivery Service, ensure farm/breeding location meets the minimum standards set in Sections 7 and 10
- For Delivery Service, farmers shall ensure that reasonable and safe access is provided to DoA staff to check/monitor the Stud Bull
- For Pick-up Service, farmers shall ensure that their farm labourers are on site on scheduled collection dates to facilitate the capture and loading of animals
- Submit accurate and complete application forms.
- Adhere to agreed and scheduled drop-off and pick-up times.
- Monitor dams post-breeding and report any health concerns to the Department of Agriculture (DoA).

12. DoA Responsibilities

- Maintain the health and welfare of stud bulls, for farmers utilizing the Delivery Service this shall include regular visits by the DoA team to monitor and check the health of the Stud Bull
- Provide adequate facilities and resources for the breeding programme.
- Communicate effectively with participating farmers regarding schedules, requirements, and any changes to the programme.

13. Compliance and Enforcement

- Non-compliance with the policy guidelines may result in suspension or termination of the applicant's participation in the program. The Department reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure the integrity and success of the LGIP.

14. Policy Review and Updates

- This policy is subject to periodic review to incorporate advancements in livestock breeding practices and to address emerging challenges. Updates will be communicated to all stakeholders in a timely manner.

Note: For application forms and further information, please contact the Department of Agriculture or visit our official website, doa.gov.ky. Service is subject to availability of the stud bull.