



Complaint Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail how AniMark will handle complaints.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers all complaints made to AniMark about the operation of AniMark and associated organizations that are approved or certified under any assurance program owned and/or operated by AniMark (Certified Entity).
- 2.2 It does not cover 'complaints' made to AniMark or an Approved Certification Body (ACB) about certification decisions made by ACB's. This type of complaint is an 'appeal' and will be dealt with using *AniMark Appeal Policy*.
- 2.3 This policy does not cover 'complaints' made to an ACB about the performance of that ACB or an Approved Auditor engaged by that ACB. This type of complaint is managed by the ACB as part of their own complaint procedures.
- 2.4 This policy does not cover 'complaints' made to Certified Entities, regarding their fulfilment of certification requirements. This type of complaint is managed internally by the Certified Entity that as part of their own complaint policy.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Rules and Integrity Committee (RIC) has responsibility for the oversight of complaint processes.
- 3.2 The responsibility to receive, assess and potentially investigate complaints has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (or nominee).
- 3.3 Changes to this policy must be approved by the RIC.

4 Valid Complaints

- 4.1 The following complaints are considered to be valid complaint categories under this policy:
 - a) complaints made to AniMark regarding adherence to the certification requirements by a Certified Entity;
 - b) complaints made to AniMark regarding the performance of approved certification operators (e.g. ACB's or Approved Auditors);
 - c) complaints made to AniMark regarding the performance of AniMark or any of its officers;
 - d) complaints made to AniMark about the misrepresentation of any approval or certification associated with any assurance program owned and/or operated by AniMark including any false and fraudulent use of certificates and/or marks of conformity.
- 4.2 A complaint shall be deemed valid when:
 - a) the written complaint and all associated evidence are submitted in English by the complainant using the complaint form via the AniMark website;
 - b) the nature of the complaint corresponds to one of the categories listed in 4.1;
 - c) the complainant has access to the direct or firsthand basis of the complaint; and
 - d) the complaint is specific and includes relevant, objective evidence to substantiate any claim.
- 4.3 Complaints based upon hearsay, without appropriate objective evidence will not be accepted by AniMark.
- 4.4 All valid complaints will be addressed as quickly as the circumstances allow.
- 4.5 AniMark may determine that a complaint is:
 - a) spurious, and no further action will be taken;
 - b) incomplete, and further clarification is to be requested and received from the complainant, to allow the complaint to be considered valid; or
 - c) valid, and will be assessed in accordance with this policy and associated AniMark procedures.



4.6 Where more than one complaint is received containing essentially identical material, AniMark reserves the right to deem only the complaint received first in time or only the complaint containing the most complete evidence to be a recognised complaint.

4.7 AniMark shall retain all records relating to complaints for 7 years.

5 Complaints Handling

5.1 Complaints received by AniMark which are not valid will not be progressed and the complainant will receive notification of the dismissal of the complaint.

5.2 On receipt of a **valid** complaint AniMark shall:

- a) acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing;
- b) review the complaint to determine what action is required such as an investigation;
- c) where appropriate set a timeframe for actioning, including any investigation(s); and
- d) conduct or facilitate the action or investigation of the complainant.

5.3 AniMark shall work with all relevant organizations including Certified Entities and/or ACB's to conduct investigations where appropriate.

5.4 For complaints regarding AniMark or it's personnel, the CEO will have the discretion to appoint an independent investigator if required.

5.5 For complaints received regarding the misrepresentation of AniMark approvals or certifications, the AniMark will:

- a) investigate if such misrepresentation exists;
- b) contact that source of misrepresentation to explain the concerns of misrepresentation;
- c) where AniMark has formed the view that the complaint is justified, request redress and cessation of the misrepresentation; and
- d) should this prove inadequate the matter may then be referred for legal action.

5.6 On completion of the complaint action or investigation AniMark will communicate the outcomes to the complainant within 7 days.

5.7 Complaint resolutions required to be reported to regulatory bodies will be communicated by AniMark within 48 hours of the resolution of the complaint.

6 Confidentiality

AniMark shall manage all data relating to complaints in accordance with AniMark's Privacy Policy www.animark.com.au/privacy. AniMark shall keep all data relating to complaints confidential unless AniMark is obligated to disclose the data in order to fulfil its obligations under the relevant Certification Program Rules or any regulatory requirements.