

ITALIAN JERSEY

There is some evidence of the presence of Jersey cattle in scattered areas of Italy in the 19th century. However, in the mid-1980s, a more significant importation of Jersey cattle took place from the United Kingdom and Denmark and since 1990 the numbers of Jersey cattle have consistently increased. Jerseys started the Millennium with a high reputation and popularity in Italy.

In 2000 there were 460 herds with 4601 milk cows recorded, producing in 305 days, 5251 kg with 5.64% fat and 4.08% protein. In 2014, there were 727 herds and 7272 cows producing 6314 kg milk with 4.85% fat, 3.90% protein (percentages are given weight on weight – weight on volume percentages are 5,16% fat, 4,11% protein).

Year	Herds	Cows	Milk KG.	Fat %	Fat KG	Protein %	protein KG
2000	460	4601	5251	5,64	296	4,08	214
2001	488	5000	5235	5,61	294	4,09	214
2002	532	5499	5290	5,46	289	4,09	216
2003	560	5870	5420	5,44	295	4,04	219
2004	594	6050	5613	5,42	304	4,01	225
2005	603	6117	5706	5,37	306	4,00	228
2006	656	6346	5857	5,28	309	4,00	234
2007	683	6391	5953	5,20	310	4,00	238
2008	718	6488	5901	5,10	301	4,02	237
2009	736	6506	5949	5,08	302	4,02	239
2010	729	6593	6168	5,09	314	4,03	249
2011	726	6771	6207	4,98	309	4,01	249
2012	725	7063	6293	5,01	315	4,02	253
2013	721	7275	6197	4,92	305	3,92	243
2014	727	7272	6314	4,85	306	3,90	246

The average number of annual registrations is around 1800 head. Demand for heifers is still exceeding the domestic availability and nearly 40% of heifers are imported from Denmark. All cows are milk recorded once a month and type evaluated once in their lifetime, or more, upon request from the breeder.

The national herd size average for Jerseys is 10 cows per herd. Although there are few entire Jersey herds, most of the Jersey cows are bred in mixed herds with Holsteins and some with other breeds. The majority of Jerseys live in intensive herds from 40 to 800 head, with free stalls (cubicles) bedding or pack bedding. They are fed on total mixed rations with no, or very limited pasture. Jersey cows clearly showed their adaptability in intensive conditions, being very competitive in terms of longevity, health resistance, heat and cold tolerance. However, farming conditions in Italy include very different situations for climate and environment; there are Jerseys in the Alps or near the Mediterranean sea, where they also adapted very well.

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