

Vice President Report *Europe*

For my first report it is very pleasing to record that the Jersey breed is thriving across Europe. For those countries with established populations there is a good opportunity to export heifers. These cattle are going to European countries with growing populations, for example The Netherlands, and also to areas of the Middle East.

The breed's popularity can be attributed to the demand for butterfat along with the environmental benefits of smaller cows which are suited to grazing grass. Equally, the influence of the farmers' cooperative, Arla, deserves a mention. Arla operate in Denmark, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK. This large player's contract rewards production of fat and protein for value-added markets.

Of course, as well as the Island home there are many well-known Jersey product manufacturers who breed and manufacture from their own and bought-in Jersey supplies.

For the last ten years or so, the various national associations of jersey breeders have had the opportunity to meet through the European Jersey Forum (EJF). If Europe has about 200,000 purebred jerseys, the population sizes are very different from one country to another.

Today, 13 countries participate in the EJF. During 3 to 4 days, the country hosts the opportunity to discover its farms, its dairy production and some touristic places. It is of course also a moment of discussion and work.



In September 2018, Albania with ALDA Jersey welcome us.

Jersey breed development in Albania.

Member of ALDA Jersey Board, Mrs. Adelina Mehmetaj presented the Jersey Breed and Dairy cattle farming in Albania in general, highlighting the following points:

- Main cattle breed are Holstein 48%, Jersey and crosses 33%, (129000 heads), Simmental, Brown Swiss, Tarantoise ,etc 19%.
- Approximately 19,000 are pure breed Jersey cows.
- Artificial Insemination level is 70-75%.
- The Jersey semen is imported from "VikingGenetics" as well as from the USA and Italy.
- Need 15-17 thousand heads of heifers per year in order to replace the entire population of Jersey cows.
- Only 4-5 thousand pure breed heifers come from local herds.

The biggest challenges:

- Production control and cow's registration in the Herd Book, are still not performed
- Farmers are not organized in associations
- The ALDA-Jersey Farmer Union needs to improve its capacities, infrastructure and basic materials.
- Lack of financial means to support breeding programs.
- Small size herds of jersey cattle (1-2cows).
- Relatively high cost of growing heifers (1300€).
- Low price of milk sales 0.28 euro/liter
- About 60% of the jersey cow's population is inseminated with beef breeds.

Main activities:

- Pilot project for milk control of 500 heads of Jersey cows were in focused.
- In 2010, Alda-Jersey Association in cooperation with World Jersey (WJCB), and Heifer Albania organized "The Week of Jersey Cattle Breed" in Albania.
- In 2017, Alda-Jersey contributed to the implementation of the project "Support genetic preservation and improvement of Jersey heifers imported in Albania from Denmark".
- Distribution of 1700 imported jersey heifers and 1000 doses of sexed semen imported from Denmark to Albania.
- Technical assistance and trainings for more than 1,000 supported farmers.

Breeding values and bull testing

In Europe, less than 40 bulls per year are sampled and less than half of all females have breeding values and contribute to a breeding program.

We must therefore encourage all forms of discussion and cooperation to use the genetic diversity and increase genetic level.

Most countries are doing a very good job and we need to encourage breeders to genomic test females and best heifers.

Other topics

New topics will also be mentioned at our next meetings.

Animal welfare is becoming more and more important in Europe, with many consequences:

- code of ethics for shows (preparation and loading of udders for example)

- The death of newborn calves will be prohibited very quickly and the increase of sexed semen use can not be the only solution.
- selection of polled population.

There are also the new expectations of our society, such as the development of A2A2 milk in the dairy industry, or the environment. On this last point, Denmark is currently working a lot:

- Jersey are more efficient and climate friendly:
 - Getting ready to launch a feed efficiency index, based on real data (3D camera solution). Jerseys expected to be app. 20% more efficient than bigger breeds
 - Getting ready to launch a GHG emission index, based on real data (CO2 and CH4 measured in robotic milking systems). Jerseys expected to be app. 20% more efficient than bigger breeds
 - Cows of average stature/size are expected to be the cows of the future when efficiency and emission is taken into account.

Finally, we also present jersey topics, like JX and breed definition discussions or Zootechnical Directive who requires that National Breeding Association produce written breeding goals.

The next EJF meeting will take place from September 20 to 23rd 2019 in Czech Republic. We will be greeted by Bohemia Jersey. The country has just under 2000 jersey cows. The association has small means and relies on a lot of volunteers. However, it seems that the level of production is very good and that the breed can count on a lot of young people to help them.

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