

Argentina has its own Jersey museum

For many years, the Holstein breed was the most important dairy cow in Argentina. As from the 1980s, milk producers began to introduce the Jersey breed to their herds in search of greater efficiency and better milk quality.

Since then, there has been an evident growth of crossbred animals in dairies which proved to have a good productive and reproductive behaviour. To promote the advantages of the Jersey breed and spread it throughout the country, 11 breeders founded an association in 1981. At the beginning, they imported animals from Uruguay, later from USA and Canada. The leading bloodlines were those from New Zealand, but American genetics were introduced afterwards, followed by Canadian genetics as well.

Today, thanks to the fact that milk is paid on solids instead of volume, the Danish bloodline is well known too. Argentina is a big country, with all kinds of lands and all types of weather. This has served as a tool to spread the breed, since the Jersey has proved to be rustic and easily adapted to different production systems.



The Argentinian Association of Jersey Breeders (Asociación Argentina de Criadores de Jersey) was set up in 1981.



The Jersey Latin-American Museum opened in 2001 in a restored old country house.



From the Jersey Latin-American Museum.

In Argentina the grazing system prevails, mainly with alfalfa (lucerne) and winter grasses (oats, wheat, ryegrass) and summer grasses (sorghum, soybean). During winter, food is supplemented with corn (maize) silage. Today it is quite

difficult to buy live Jersey animals because breeders are either expanding their herds, or opening new dairy farms.

More crossbred than purebred

Besides the advantages of the Jersey, there are more crossbred animals than pure in Argentina. Some dairy farmers kept with the Jersey; others preferred crossbreeding.

The association has sponsored research into proving the higher quality of the Jersey compared with the Holstein. The huge number of enquiries received via e-mail are proof of the promotion the breed has received. The continuous increase of imported semen straws makes it clear that the breed is growing. Today, it is very common to see Jersey cows in the most important dairy fairs in the country.

In 1908, some 1,000 Jersey cows of British origin were auctioned in the province of Santa Fe. The herd belonged to a world-famous cheese factory. In 1909, the first Jersey animal was registered in the Argentine herd book.

In 1970, there were 40,000 dairies producing 4,500 millions of litres per year. Nowadays, there are 20,000 farms, but the production is higher (10,000 million litres).

In Argentina, roads are not always in ideal condition for transporting milk, or



With the cows out to pasture most of the time, they need to be able to walk very long distances, with longevity and good udders also very important under these conditions.



Dairies under official milk recording program in Argentine (all breeds)

Number of herds	Herd size	% of total national herd
242 Herds	0-100 Cows	11.0%
745 Herds	100-200 Cows	34.2%
526 Herds	200-300 Cows	24.0%
520 Herds	300-500 Cows	23.5%
140 Herds	500-1,000 Cows	6.5%
19 Herds	More than 1,000 Cows	0.8%



Jersey breeders and breed associations worldwide have sent material such as books, documents, deeds, pictures, catalogues, art pieces, pedigrees, photographs, tools, and souvenirs related to the Jersey breed.

there are not enough paved roads. This is why the Jersey breed is also a good alternative for small dairy farmers, who produce their own cheese varieties because they are unable to transport milk. (Information from Maria Victoria Montoro, 2010)

A 120-day strike hit hard in 2008

This report is intended to give a glance of the situation of the dairy sector in Argentina and the growth of the Jersey breed. The year 2008 has been a particular year for the agrarian sector, especially the dairy, due to the 120-day strike.

The economic measures and higher taxes on the agrarian products caused total discontent among farmers, whose profitability became seriously affected. We are still under the same situation, or even worse, if we consider the international crisis and the drop in the prices of commodities.

The dairy producer receives around US\$ 0.18 per litre of milk. Some provinces receive less than US\$ 0.16. These numbers are lower than production cost values. Such a situation led to the closing of many dairy farms. According to statistics, more than 500 dairy farms closed last year. Today there are only 10,000 farms left.

The dairy producer charges 20% of the sale price. The Argentine annual milk production and the export surplus was little as the government banned the export of dairy products. Sales of grain in port and live cattle were prohibited for four months. By the end of the year the situation went back to normal, but in April 2009, the story repeats itself.



Cover magazine 1944 which was the first time a Jersey cow in Argentina was used in a publication. In Argentina, the Jersey had a reputation as being 'a fancy cow' for many years, suitable for showing but not a good producer.

In brief:

- The export surplus consists of 2,500 millions of litres per year
- International prices are not enough to cover production costs
- This surplus must be exported, otherwise local prices will fall deeper
- The actual price of milk per litre is US\$ 0.20

At the association we have designed a new website where people can search for information on the breed. Also, the association has sponsored conferences to spread the Jersey breed's benefits.

Dairy fairs were very much affected due to sporadic roadblocks as a sign of protest to the government that made it impossible to transport animals. We began to work with people from the Holstein Association, who



manage the breeding registry and control of milk production in a genetic evaluations program. The program has just begun, but we will eventually obtain the first progeny tests for the Jersey. This is very important for national genetics behaviour evaluation. Some national farms are using genetic markers on their animals. The first Jersey x Holstein crosses were officially registered, with a corresponding purebred category. The use of imported semen remains favourable: 45,000 semen doses were imported in 2008.

I think that we must take advantage of this financial crisis and the meteorological drought we have suffered to prove that the Jersey needs less feed intake to produce milk. (Agustín Robredo, 2009)

The Jersey Latinoamerican Museum

The Jersey Latinoamerican Museum opened in 2001 in a restored old country house located in an arable cropping area. The house was renovated following the outline for rural construction in the

Pampa. The front walls are made with baked brick without no plastering. The floor tiles are handmade.

In these rooms there are books, documents, deeds, pictures, catalogues, art pieces, pedigrees, photographs, tools, and souvenirs related to the Jersey breed, all of it compiled after years of hard work and the collaboration of breeders and breeder associations worldwide.

The Jersey Island, the United States, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Uruguay have sent material that our association proudly exhibits to visitors. Breeders' annual meetings and Jersey special auctions take place in this house. (Information from Maria Victoria Montoro, 2010)

Chile – Holsteins are bred to Jerseys

Bob Wills of UK Genetics was visiting Chile for the second time, it was September 1996. While looking at a large herd of Holsteins with his local agents near Lake Rupanco, it suddenly occurred to him that they were looking in the wrong direction! While Chile is nearly self-sufficient in dairy products, export (especially to other members of Mercosur), was becoming increasingly important.

With payment for protein just starting from most dairies, minds were being concentrated on a cow to make good use of excellent grazing potential, to be 'trouble free' for management in large herds and to provide large volumes of protein per hectare. The seed was sown! That evening Wills spoke to a group of dairy farmers near Orsomo and tested the idea on them. It was highly satisfying to see heads nodding in agreement.

The shipment of 65 head from Denmark was instigated and planned by Dr. Felipe Elizalde and Dr. Fernando Klein of Genesis Ltd and involved two major players among the nine would-be importers. The federal government consultancy agency, INLA, would import one large batch to run a three-year project and Alexander Kaufmann, a dynamic young farmer from the Orsomo region ordered a similar number. Both of these batches were to be run together through the trial period on a newly-established unit that was run extremely efficiently.

Danish Genetics and UK Genetics combined forces to ship 65 heifers, mostly of very high genetic merit (dams to have produced 5,500 kg and 4.3% protein) in early January to form the highly exciting nucleus herd of Jerseys in Chile.

Semen is being exported from Denmark and the USA and a large number of Holsteins in Chile are now being crossbred to Jerseys. A sign that greeted Wills and his colleagues at Puerto Montt proudly stated 'Here is the breed of the 21st Century – Jerseys'. This meaningful statement made by a lifelong Holstein devotee indicates the way Chilean dairymen are going! (WJCB, April 1998)

Forming a Jersey breed association

"Chile has also formed a Jersey breed association – the Asociación de Criadores Jersey de Chile at Casilla 1102, Osorno, Decima Region, Chile. Chile imported her first Jerseys in 1996 from Denmark and although these

are the only purebred Jerseys in the country, the Chileans have been crossbreeding Holsteins to Jersey sires excessively for the past eight years. Chilean dairymen graze their cows and are recognizing the excellence of the Jersey cow, her high component milk and her ability to perform in varied environments." (WJCB, April 1999)

However in March 2000, two cases of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) appeared in Denmark and due to the fear of getting BSE introduced from Europe, the Chilean authorities wanted the Danish animals destroyed. However, Alexander Kaufmann and others, together with the owner of the Danish Genetics A/S in Vildbjerg, vet Jørn Erri, fought against this decision having shipped 65 pregnant heifers from Denmark to Chile in 1997. Before the decision was implemented, the owners had secured a lot of offspring from the affected animals.

In 2004 WJCB at their council meeting paid a visit to the southern part of Chile, where some farmers were very interested in moving to Jerseys and many were crossbreeding to upgrade to the Jersey breed. The milk price was still volume-based, but eventually changing to a solids payment which was expected to speed the change to Jerseys. On the tour they visited Kaufmann's farm with his pure Jersey stock originating from Denmark. (Source: WJCB, 2004)

In 2009 'Agritour' in Chile planned a 'Jersey dairy, south Chile tour'. The group would first make a: "Visit to a beautiful farm next to Llanquihue Lake. The owners are a couple of progressive farmers, he is an agronomist and she is a veterinary surgeon. They have a Jersey herd achieved by crossing Holstein Friesian cows and also by embryo transfer. [They would also]...get to Alejandro Astete's farm – one of the pioneers with Jersey breed in Chile. [And the group planned to] visit Alexander Kaufmann's farm at Filuco. Dairy and beef cattle. Jersey cows were imported initially from Denmark in 1998." (www.agritour.cl 2009).

"Kaufmann now has a herd of Jersey cows, all 2000 of Danish descent." (Jørn Erri, 2010)

In recent years, however, there unfortunately has been some controversy over imports of semen from Denmark.

