

# Country Reports

## American Guernsey Association

The US Guernsey Association has had a strong period since we last met in 2004. Although we are currently in a period of very low milk prices, we have had a couple very good years prior to that. With 5,224 registrations recorded in 2006, we completed our second year of growth in this area. Although the increases have been small, it beats the alternative. We are trying to fill the need for high component cattle that the market in the US is demanding right now. We are also aggressively promoting crossbreeding as a way to get Guernsey genetics into new commercial herds. Many exotic breeds are being considered for crossbreeding in the US right now and the AGA is trying to get a share of those matings for Guerneys.

In terms of young sire usage in the US, we have been running near 25% of all registrations in recent years. I think it would be useful to see what genetics are making up the largest part of our population in the US. In the last three years we have released 21, 17 and 16 young sires respectively. Each year, at least 10 different sires were represented and 11 different maternal grandsires. This has certainly helped gain more genetic diversity at the top end of our genetic pool.

Trotacre Loral Tiller-ET, My Day Bliss Banger-ET and Trotacre Enhancer Lewis-ET easily had the most daughters registered in the US in the last three-year period.

Marketing, especially through consignment sales, is an important part of breed promotion in the US. Registered breeders of all persuasions use the averages of sales and the prices of the top sellers to gauge popularity and interest in a breed. Since 2004, we have sold seven individual females for over \$10,000, a price level that was achieved just once from 1995 to 2003. Interest and marketing opportunities for the top end animals are really high at this time with lots of activity in embryo sales domestically.

Sexed semen has made its way to the market in our breed for the first time. Currently four different young sires have sexed semen available. Results have been mixed. Although the accuracy of the sexing process appears quite solid at 90%, the pregnancy rates achieved using the sexed semen have left some breeders disappointed. It requires an excellent reproductive program, and the use of virgin heifers, to achieve success using sexed semen right now.

In other news in the US, the Hoard's Dairyman herd is planning an expansion to 250 cows. This is important in that, as a landmark and the home farm for the famous farming magazine, this herd is viewed by more people annually than any other Guernsey herd in the US. A successful commercial-style dairy utilizing Guerneys will be of great promotional value to us.

*Seth Johnson*

## Canadian Guernsey Association

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a pleasure on behalf of the Canadian Guernsey Association to present this report to you

today. Since the last meeting, the Canadian Association and its breeders have undergone some major changes. Since the month of July 2005, the directors of the Canadian Association has overseen the restructuring of their Association. With our office being at Gencor, a major AI company, the directors contracted all administration on a part time basis to Gencor staff. This is handled very capably by Nellie Endamen, Jill Medland and Doris Curran. Along with this they hired a part time Fieldman, who is the main contact for the Association. He will handle such requests as breed information, the national show, cattle and embryo sales, along with assisting in the newsletter and journal. The main responsibility of the fieldman is the 1 on 1 contact from association to breeder to create more interest in the Guernsey.

With the restructuring, Vivianne McDonald who faithfully promoted the Guernsey cow since 1990 decided not to continue with the association. It was heart warming to listen to the many greetings from world wide contacts bestowed at her retirement party in March of 2006.

The state of the Guernsey breed in Canada is a great minority. In 2006 we had 244 registrations which was a decrease of 19% over 2005. We had 16 non pure registrations and 42 transfers which is an increase of 20% over 2005. In looking at our annual membership it stayed even with 47 members and 43 life time members. The largest population is in the province of Ontario and 2nd is in the province of British Columbia. We are optimistic that these numbers will increase due to the following factors

1. Large number of requests for milking cows. Due to our marketing system for milk, there has been a large number of Holstein breeders looking to add Guerneys to their herd for the butterfat content.
2. An increase in interest from 4-H youth looking to show Guernsey calves.
3. Number of requests from breeders for embryos to add Guernsey to their herds.

Our major market south of us, the United States, remains closed due to BSE since May of 2003. Many breeders are awaiting this border opening so we can once again participate in numerous sales and shows.

One exciting new venture is the Upper Canada Cheese Co. This is a company that is solely devoted to the marketing of cheese made from Guernsey milk. This has not happened since the inception of the milk marketing board in 1965. This company sources their milk from Comfort Farms, whose roots trace back to the Empire Loyalist. The farm has been in the family for 5 generations. Upper Canada produces 2 types of cheese. Comfort Gold is a favourite with a white bloomy rind and a siLky semi soft, creamy gold interior. The 2nd cheese is Niagara Gold. This is a washed rind cheese with a mellow, buttery, semi soft cheese with a nutty earthy overtone. I encourage everyone to go to their web site [www.uppercanadacheesecompany.com](http://www.uppercanadacheesecompany.com) to find out more about this company. Also we have just had a second cheese company start in British Columbia.

Although our numbers are small, the Canadian Guernsey breeders are very optimistic that our breed will once again flourish in the future. I encourage everyone here to follow our web page. In the next 2 - 3 months it will be totally redone and this will provide up to date information on the Guernseys in Canada.

Thank you very much for your time and I wish everyone a successful and enjoyable conference.

*Fred Brown*

Fieldman for the Canadian Guernsey Assoc.

## **English Guernsey Cattle Society**

I am forced to start by congratulating Australia on their cricketer performances during our last winter, at least we gained a consolation Trophy at the end.

Thank you Australia for keeping up the standards of hospitality and organisation which has become the norm at our Breed's World Conferences, both at the Conference itself and the tours before hand. In this we must include the tremendous standard of cows you produced at your show. I also very much enjoyed the judging exercise in Queensland, and very much appreciated the efforts of all the exhibitors at both events.

Since Jon White reported to you in the UK in 2004 farming in Britain, especially dairying, has continued to have very little financial reward. The milk price has hardly moved at all but, of course, the expenses have continued to rise steadily. The only saving grace being that inflation has only been on average 2.5%.

With this background we have had to manage the Society in a situation where our members incomes are not expanding to meet the Societies extra costs. GGBP has not only been a breeding success but has also come to our rescue, as the Society is the only consistent supplier of Guernsey Semen in the UK. Up to now this extra income has allowed us to balance the books.

The GGBPScheme has continued to flourish. Last autumn the 2nd crop of daughters calved in. The proofs of the first 15 bulls selected for the scheme are showing PTAs for GMI greater than their ETAs at selection for AI. The heifers are of a very consistent type being long dairy heifers with good hind legs. The udders are not quite where we would want them but are better than the previous generation. We are anticipating some improvement in this department because from 2003 onwards the selection on mammary score was strengthened. Now no bull is taken onto the scheme unless his ETA mammary score is at least +1.25, no matter how good the total GMI. If you or any Guernsey people happen to be in England at the end of April we are putting on a demonstration of about 80 GGBP daughters by 11 different bulls, and you will be welcome to join us.

Digby and Bill will be speaking to you tomorrow morning in more detail and will outline the suggested adjustments to GMI being recommended by the Scientists following further membership consultation. The joint Island and Mainland Management Committee is expected to discuss these in some detail next month, in particular a fertility index which we are expecting to be available to us in 2007. We have also been con-

sidering the new genetic markers in particular DGAT, the BF% one, and will be using it in the near future.

The one great thing that has developed during the last three years has been the expansion of our youth programme. It all started from the Show of GGBP calf groups at the World Conference Show at the Bath & West in 2004, when Digby got 18 very amateur youngsters to parade the calves. From this has come a series of shows with classes for our children, as well as mixed breed classes. At the All Breeds National Calf Show, our first participation, we had 34 calves and their handlers on parade, winning the Reserve All Breeds Handler Championship. Digby and James Warren plus their army of helpers must be congratulated. We are not at the scale of the AGA's programme but it is a very encouraging start.

I personally am starting to withdraw from Guernsey politics but there are three subjects that I would like to see develop between now and Canada. Firstly, we now have two major scientifically produced breed specific indexes. I would like to see these used more widely and as many bulls as possible have both their ETA and PTA published in both forms. Thus giving all Guernsey breeders a wider understanding of the position of each bull worldwide and not only in his own country.

Secondly, for about the last seven years we have all been talking about the potential benefits of A2 beta casein milk to those who suffer from Autism and other similar problems. We now, at last, expect a trial to commence in the September term in a specialist school, of about 50 children. These children have been on commercial dairy products and we hope the trial will show that Guernsey milk, 90%+ A2, will substantiate all the anecdotal evidence to be correct. If we can show that Pedigree Guernseys will not need to be tested to be 100% A2/A2 then we will be able to use our distinct advantage. We will have to stop bulls carrying A1 getting into Breeding Programmes and strong pressure would have to be used on members using farm bulls, as we would have to show that we were urgently targeting a 100% population.

Last and thirdly, the Hap Map concept of bull selection is likely to make genetic life very interesting in the near future, perhaps by the next Conference? Prof Robert Banks is speaking on this subject tomorrow afternoon and is also leading a workshop. I personally find this subject fascinating and feel if the Breed is going to continue to compete we will have to get involved, but it will take absolute international breed co-operation.

Lastly I am standing down from EGCS chairmanship so you will have to listen to someone else at these conferences in the future, but I hope to see you in some capacity in Canada in 2010.

*Chris Watson*

## **Guernsey Cattle Society of Australia**

Firstly I would like to welcome everyone here especially our overseas visitors. I hope your stay in Australia has been an enjoyable experience and will continue to be so. For those people that have been on the pre-conference tour you may have felt that you have seen a lot of our country but you have merely touched the surface. There is still the magnificent outback,

the state of Western Australia, which is the largest state and the state of Tasmania where the Guernsey population continues to grow thanks to some very enthusiastic breeders.

In our last report to the world body dairy farmers in Australia were hoping that the drought conditions that we were experiencing were on the way out and that we could present our country in all its beauty for the entire world to see. Unfortunately the drought has persisted and many of the dairying areas are suffering enormously due to the lack of rainfall and consequently the water restrictions that have been enforced in many areas, have made it extremely difficult for adequate pasture management. In some dairying areas farmers are only allowed 20 to 30% of their water allocation for the year. This means a dramatic re-evaluation of farming and herd management. In Queensland the Government is planning to build a dam on the Mary River which will cause prime agricultural land, about 1.3 times larger than Sydney harbour, to be under water. Those people than were on the pre-conference tour would have visited Cochrane's property which will be underwater should the dam go ahead. The water levels in the River Murray, which is the life blood of NSW, Victoria and South Australia, are extremely low and measures are being put into place to try to conserve as much water as possible. This means that dairy farmers are restricted in their allocation from the River Murray and in some cases it is not worth the effort of starting the pump to irrigate. Many cows have been sold or culled to ensure that a base herd can be maintained and built on when the drought eventually breaks. Many herds have been dispersed and farming enterprises have changed. The blue gum industry has impacted on the dairying areas as well. The amount of money they are investing in land, especially prime dairying land, is enticing farmers to sell and get out of dairying. This has slowed down in the past year with the introduction of water restrictions and a levelling out of the milk prices but has still resulted in the loss of good dairy farms.

In spite of this our membership numbers have remained static at 110 with those people not renewing their membership taken up by new ones. It is pleasing to see that we have gained some junior members who hopefully will remain with us for many years to come. Our registrations total approx 750 per year which includes male and female animals.

Since the last conference our Type Committee has succeeded in having our National Identifier as our herd book number. I believe we are the only breed in Australia to adopt this method. We are also using the National Livestock Identification System number as an alternative to tattooing. The next process is to incorporate the NLIS number into the system and use this as our herd book number. As each animal has a specific NLIS number this would mean that animals could have one number to cover their herd book number, national identifier and NLIS number. At present in other breeds 3 different numbers are required. Our classifications are still being processed by the Holstein Friesian Association. The handheld computers are now in full use for our classifications and the classifications are printed out on the farm and immediately available to the owner. The results of the heifers are directed to ADHIS who process the data for type proofs.

In the previous drought 2001/02 Genetics Australia, who were helping with our progeny test programme decided not to go forward with testing young bulls in the Guernseys and two other minor breeds. The Society privately tested two young bulls, one being a son of Tamaracks Valiant and the other Coulee Crest Storm. The uptake wasn't great but their daughters are now starting to enter the milking herds. The Bull Proving Committee is currently working on a survey to send to all members to gain an insight into their bull requirements. At present the committee is negotiating with AgriGene to put in a bull this year.

Members are still actively involved in showing and although numbers are down at shows, the quality is still high. The On Farm Challenge competitions continue to grow in numbers and now 4 States are involved. The On Farm Challenge is an excellent way of involving dairy farmers who cannot or choose not to show their cattle in the show ring to compete with the studs that do show. The animals are to be presented straight from the paddock and this appeals to many people as they do not have to clip, prepare their animal or travel as the judge comes to their farm to judge their animals. Digby Gribble has had first hand experience of this as he recently judged the Queensland On Farm Challenge.

Calf shows are still popular though many are now combined with other breeds and known as coloured breeds calf days. This is always a wonderful day for the youth as they are actively involved because the animals are appropriate to their size and age.

International Dairy Week has become very popular with the youth of Australia in recent years, especially in the Youth Challenge. The Guernsey youth of Australia entered a team in 2006 and 2007. Teams of 9 youth under 22 years of age must compete in 3 disciplines, clipping, leading and judging. The clipping discipline involves 4 team members who must clip and prepare a supplied heifer for the show ring within 30 minutes. The leading discipline involves 3 team members parading 3 animals, in our case Guernseys, in the judging ring. The judging involves 2 team members who must judge 4 selected animals and comment on their placings. They must try and get as close as they can to the over judges score. The youth cannot compete in more than one discipline. In 2006 the Guernsey team achieved 2nd place in the clipping and leading disciplines.

Youth camps have been run in Queensland in the past but due to the geographic nature of our youth this hasn't happened for a few years.

Due to the size of Australia, the increase in herd size, decrease of dairy farms and the widespread dairying areas it is difficult for our youth to get together and improve their skills. Several years ago the South Australian/Western Australian branch started the idea of getting our Guernsey youth to work in a show team at a Royal or other major show in a different State. Their airfare, food and accommodation were provided and hopefully the knowledge they obtained would put them in good stead for the years to come. This was very successful at the time but has become more difficult to achieve. The youth of Australia are our future and the future of the Guernsey breed

and we should be trying to provide as much support and encouragement to them as possible. At the time of writing this report I was unaware that the World Guernsey Committee had the Guernsey Youth on their agenda. It could be of great benefit to have Australian Youth tap into the youth schemes of other countries, perhaps the setting up of travel programmes to give our youth experience overseas. The pressure from other major breeds is enormous and we must do all in our power to keep and prove to our youth the many advantages of the Guernsey breed.

*Joyce Cleggett*

## **Guernsey New Zealand**

It does not feel as if three years has past since our last conference in Mid Summer Norton England.

In New Zealand our stock numbers remain very much the same as is our membership. Despite all our efforts to grow both cow numbers and members. We do our promotions at National Feilddays where we have a shared site and talk to potential users of the breed. The Magazine the dairyman has been publishing an article once a year. The comments that we have received from other breeds is that they are informative and should attract interest.

This season we had 2 herds sold up with a large number of Guernseys in them all selling for good prices. One of the owners took the time to look at the averages of all the breeds in his herd and found that was only about \$5 difference between the breeds.

Confirming our claims of the past that the Guernsey Cow can compete well on price and production.

We had concerns of losing such a large number in one season with our small national population. They have become spread around between breeders and others of which we have made contact with. We regularly get inquiries of people wanting to purchase stock but not to breed them up as the rest of us have. Currently we cannot supply what they require.

Guernsey New Zealand has concerns and we feel other small populations of Guernsey breeders will have similar or others.

Semen supply is our biggest problem. As we try to support the objectives of the Guernsey Global Breeding Plan. We are constantly become frustrated by a lack of understanding and service. At time of inquiry we make it quite clear for when we must have supplies in New Zealand for our intense mating season, (6 weeks starting October 1). We often market the goods during period April - June as being available from the information that we have at the time to finalise the order. More often than not we are let down and semen is not delivered on time.

For the Guernsey Cow to Grow in Population and Popularity we MUST be proactive in providing service and product.

This lack of service needs to be addressed if we are to grow the passion for the breed.

We would like the Federation to be active as little is heard from them between conferences other than the Guernsey World.

We complement Bill Luff on Guernsey World an excellent publication and remarked on by many readers as we hand them out to potential users. We feel an enhancement could be comments from the World President, The Chairman, Directors and others wishing to contribute.

To Conclude my country report we believe that we should be more proactive in our promotion and help each other with information to support our claims about the Guernsey cow in all dairying populations.

Our topic of interest this conference is to focus on a special lady of New Zealand who passed away on 15 August 2006.

Dame Te Arikini Te Atairangikahu, affectionately referred to by VIP's as "our lady", was the Maori Queen. She was leader of Maori Kingship, the first female monarch, and the longest standing, serving over a period of 40 years.

Left with the enormous task of uniting a divided Maori people, Dame Te Ata worked tirelessly to bridge gaps not only within her own culture but across all cultures on an international scale. For four decades Te Ata was the epicenter- of all things maori, working alongside 11 Prime ministers during her reign to settle grievances and offer advice on Maoridom and its future. Maori people contribute a lot to our country and our economy. They are large farmers of all kinds, dairying, sheep, horticultural, live stock, forestry and fishing.

Her home at Turangawaewae Marae, Ngaruawahia, in the land of the Tainui people, has over the years been visited by many important V.I.P's. The marae has seen through its gates such people as Queen Elizabeth, and the South African President Nelson Mandela.

Turangawaewae Marae, was more than a home for her and her people. It was a home with open doors for all people. Anyone was welcome, and in Te Ata's presence no matter who you were, you would always feel welcome. You didn't have to address her as Queen, she was just Te Ata, another maori, another New Zealander, a truly special Kiwi.

Such a special lady was Dame Te Arikini Te Atairangikahu, that over 150,000 people from New Zealand and abroad came to pay respects to her during the week of her Funeral. A special time was set aside for the general public to pay their respects, and the whole country literally came to stand still.

During my time as Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Ngaruawahia High School, I was fortunate enough to have shared time with Te Ata, as she was a supporter of education for her tribes siblings. 80% of the high school's population at Ngaruawahia is Maori. At prizegiving, if possible she would attend and mix well with students, parents and teachers. I felt privileged to have met 'the lady' known to those at the high school as Te Ata, Maori Queen from next door.

*Jim Lichtwark*

## **Royal Guernsey Agricultural & Horticultural Society**

The RGA&HS is proud to present its report to the 12th. World Guernsey Conference.

Over the past three years the Society has pursued its aim to develop the Island as a centre of excellence for the

Guernsey breed.

The main developments that have taken place have been

- A return to full production after the initial setback caused by the introduction of quotas

- Consolidation of the industry's important environmental and heritage status

- Diversification into value added products sold from the farm gate

- Continuing success of the Pilot Guernsey Global Breeding Programme

The Island population consists of 21 herds with 2750 Guernseys.

#### PEDIGREE REGISTRATIONS FOR:

2004 516 Heifer Calves plus 14 Bull Calves

2005 501 Heifer Calves plus 13 Bull Calves

2006 480 Heifer Calves plus 8 Bull Calves

All the above registrations include Alderney.

#### AVERAGE PRODUCTION

1558 COWS 305 DAYS MILK 5889 kgs FAT kgs 270  
FAT% 4.60% PROTEIN kgs 205 PROTEIN% 3.48%

The Island of Guernsey is justly proud to be the home of the Guernsey breed. There is strong public support for the environmental and heritage status of the dairy farming industry.

The farms are made up of a patchwork of small fields bounded by earth banks that are protected by law. Farmers are required to maintain the highest environmental standards to prevent pollution of water resources by farm waste and chemical fertilisers and sprays. Farmers are also responsible for the trimming of road hedges and cleaning of watercourses on their properties: this has to be carried out twice annually.

All farmers have contracts with Guernsey Dairy that require them to implement high standards of wildlife conservation. Farmers interact with local conservation organisations and a number of farms have won major conservation awards that are open to all sectors of Island life.

The standards of animal health and welfare are the highest anywhere in Europe. Guernsey was the first place in the British Isles to be declared free of Bovine Tuberculosis and has maintained this status for 100 years. The Island is free of BSE and diseases such as BVD, Brucellosis, Leptospirosis and IBR have never been recorded.

The Island is proud to be the home of the top production herd of the UK and Guernsey Island: Les Jaonnets herd, owned by Bonamy and Margaret Martel has won this award for five consecutive years. Their current herd average from a diet of spring and summer grazing, grass and maize silage and concentrate fed at 0.32 kg/Litre is:

83 Cows 7518kgsMilk 381kgs 5.06% Fat 263kgs 3.50% Protein

33 Heifers 7095kgsMilk 358kgs 5.05% Fat 246kgs 3.46% Protein

The top genetic herd in the UK and Island is the Meadow Court Herd owned by the Watts Family

119 Cows 6781kgsMilk 300kgs 4.42% Fat 237kgs 3.49% Protein Profit Index 12

38 Heifers 6345kgsMilk 284kgs 4.48% Fat 246kgs

3.47% Protein Profit Index 23

We also have the top GGBP sire:

Lorry's Zulu of Meadow Court Rel. 92% +395M +25.9F  
+0.14%F +16.9P +0.05%P GMI 385

the top GGBP Young Sire:

Meadow Court Red Oak Rel. 64% +219M +22.4F  
+0.22%F +11.1P +0.06%P GMI 367

and the top Guernsey Merit Index cow:

Oaks Fluff of Les Jaonnets VG 88 +887M +34.4F -  
0.08%F +26.4P -0.07%P GMI 514

Our heifers sired by GGBP bulls have estimated transmitting abilities far in excess of those by other young sires and proven bulls available at the time their dams were mated.

Our farmers are also showing us how diversification can add value to the produce of their herds. We have an Icecream and Yoghurt maker who uses all natural ingredients in superb products that are becoming firm favourites with consumers. On another farm a butchery is supplying the local market with home-grown Guernsey and crossbred beef, veal and pork sausages, and pork when available. The butchery also supplies specialist Guernsey cheeses made in UK. We also have one organic farm that supplies Guernsey Dairy with its branded organic milk.

The RGA&HS can report that the Island herd and dairy industry is healthy position with strong support from the general public and our government, the States of Guernsey.

*Bill Luff*

We should consider ourselves very fortunate to be associated with such a wonderful animal as the Guernsey Cow. She is such a versatile animal, docile, easy calving, adaptable and produces a high quality product in its milk and the quality of its meat is unbeatable. She is also recognized as a great ambassador for the Island, everybody knows the Island for its Cattle rather than the finance industry which at present provides the main income for the Island.

The Guernsey Cow provides such a wonderful opportunity to promote dairy products into niche markets. The quality and the colour of the milk make its dairy products instantly recognizable.

Certainly a few farmers on the Island are going down this road and providing added value to their products. One farmer has gone into Ice Cream making. The product is superb, it is very creamy, as you would expect, smooth to the taste and also very filling. Again it is a high quality product aimed at the top end of the market, where all Guernsey products should be.

The Guernsey cow also produces a high quality meat. This has been confirmed by Rick Stein, a leading U.K. Chef, who conducted a blind tasting session which confirmed the quality of Guernsey beef being the one with the most flavour and the most tender. Guernsey Cross Breds also produce an excellent product, especially when crossed with Aberdeen Angus or Hereford. This is a market with a big future.

We have started rearing bull calves for veal. Again this is a market with enormous potential. People have always associated veal production with the intensive system adopted by the French. We take calves to 5 - 6 months old when they produce a Rose Type of Veal. This is now becoming very popular with-

in the Island and especially with leading Hotels and Restaurants. Again this is creating a market out of something that would cost to dispose of.

We have also created a superb market for Veal and Pork sausages. We are told that they are the best sausages within the Island and demand is growing.

Last August we started attending the Farmers Market. This was a completely new experience for us and it really was a trip into the unknown. We set off with a selection of meats, sausages and butter. Sales started very slowly then word spread that there was a farmer at the market. On our first trip we were sold out in 22 hours.

Since this first excursion into the unknown things have grown and now the other stall holders rely on us to be there to bring in the punters.

Our stall has expanded, we now import Guernsey Cheese from Jason Salisbury's Guernsey herd in Suffolk. Again this has created great interest and again those cheeses sell like hot cakes.

Attending these markets gives us a great opportunity to meet the public at first hand - some of the comments we get are priceless, such as one customer thought that Veal was a kind of fish - while another could not believe that all the produce was provided from our farm.

Going from our first experience of the Market to the present, we actually look forward to it and treat it as a social occasion meeting new and old customers alike. It provides a wonderful opportunity to promote the industry and quality local food. Farmers in the past have been very poor at there P.R. and this provides a wonderful time to tell people about our aims and objectives.

One of our next aims is to take a stall at the Island Cattle Show which is the shop window of the Islands farming industry and promote our product to a wide audience. In the future it is going to be difficult to make a good living out of milk production and so it is vitally important to develop these niche markets and with the Guernsey breed we have a marvellous chance to cash in on her quality milk and meat.

Just remember the market is there, it needs seeking out and developing. Nobody owes us a living, we as cattle breeders and food producers have got to get out and seek new innovative ways of promoting our industry.

*Ray Watts*

## **South African Guernsey Cattle Breeders**

It gives me great pleasure and an honor to present the following report on the Guernsey Society of South Africa to the 12th World Guernsey Conference.

At present the society has 25 members. During the past three years the number of registered animals has remained stable although there was a slight increase during the past year with the sum total of 3000 registered animals consisting of cows and young stock. Approximately 20 bulls are registered each year, which indicates that there are also about 3000 grade animals in herds in the country; of these 1500 animals are milk recorded. The milk production of registered cows were 5552 kg of milk in 2006 with a butterfat of percentage of 4.41% and

a protein percentage of 3.48%. During the last 5 years there has been a 15% increase in milk production, 16% butterfat and 13% protein increase. One must bear in mind most of these cows are milked directly from pastures and no BST is used.

The top registered herd milked 155 cows 8104 ltrs milk 4.22% BF and 3.52% Pr. The top 1st lactation cow Shangri-La Regis Esme produced over 10000 ltrs of milk.

Most of the semen imported was from unproven young sires simply because the semen of the proven sires has become too expensive. 75% of the calves that are registered are the progeny of unproven sires. At present semen is being used from the USA, Canada and Guernsey Island.

The South African Society had decided to use some of our own young bulls' semen. We have collected semen from 5 young bulls over the last 2 years and sold the semen amongst the members at very affordable prices.

It is especially important for all countries to realize that we do not want semen from bull dams that have been pampered and need special attention but we want cows that can compete with other cows in a commercial set up, because in that our future lies. In February 2006, we held our National Championships. The show was judged by Bill Luff. The classes were well represented with a champion heifer bred from a South African bull out of an Australian bred dam by Kookkaburra Arrow Boolaboo. The junior cow was also bred out of a South African young sire and the champion cow, who was the senior champion, was a Boolaboo daughter.

The South African Guernsey Society won for the first time the prestigious best stall award at the African cheese expo. We also would like to congratulate Gay van Hasselt who kept the Guernsey and South African flag flying high at the International cheese expo in London. She won a silver medal and a bronze medal for various cheeses.

I was asked by our breeders to make the following statements and ask some questions.

Do we still regard the Guernsey Breed to be the balanced breed?

We in South Africa feel that more emphasis must be put on protein % and production. The BF/PR ratio is not what it used to be. Most of us are paid 3x more for protein than butterfat.

We will also encourage breeders to add value to their milk by selling Golden Guernsey products.

We can and will move forward as Guernsey breeders, but we must not be afraid to adjust the genetic material we offer to the needs of the industry. It is not where we are, but where we are heading! It is similar to the situation of the French who originally put dairy cattle together and moulded the Guernsey cow to meet the 18 & 1900's. Let us cooperate and meet the needs of the 21st century. The Global Breeding Plan has great potential if we are not hesitant of the challenge that lies ahead!

*Reuben Kotze*

## **Zimbabwe Guernsey Society.**

Almost three years have passed since the 11th World Guernsey Conference was held at Midsomer Norton, Devonshire U.K. on 16 th June, 2004. It seems that event occurred only a few days ago, and as I re-read those Country

Reports I look back over the last three years at what has happened and what is currently happening in Zimbabwe today.

It is Marguerite's (my wife) and my wish that we could be with you in Australia this year and have the opportunity of meeting Guernsey Breeders from across the world. Alas this cannot be, there are too many anxieties and concerns that affect our lives as we endeavour to regain some of our former life and of course our cattle. Ask any Zimbabwean living in Zimbabwe today and you will be told, "life is really difficult". However, our society sends you our Greetings and wish you all, including your organisers, a truly successful conference.

The Zimbabwe Guernsey Society continues to "hold-on" hoping that sooner rather than later, we shall be of some use to our Guernsey enthusiasts and dairy farmers. Few meetings or field days are held today, as was the custom in years gone by. Travel is made difficult owing to shortages of fuel and the cost involved, thus contact is maintained by telephone. We still hold an A.G.M. every year and the 23rd A.G.M. is to be held on the 1st April 2007. We expect twelve or so Guernsey breeders including Hobby farmers plus a number of Government officials to attend making a total of twenty five to thirty in all. Such meetings are always held on a member's farm and is an all day affair. The meetings take place in the morning and after lunch a tour of the farm follows. This year's venue is Dr Timothy Stamps' farm, Chwech Guernseys. Last year's meeting was held on Harry van der Merwe's farm, known as Sandown Guernseys just south of Harare.

Our membership is more or less static. There are three members who own commercial herds that are operating albeit under difficult conditions. The fourth is Flaxenfield Guernseys (our own herd) which has been taken by Government and has now been split up. Had we been allowed to retain this herd at the time we were evicted from our farm this herd today would number some three hundred to three hundred and fifty head all told; a small herd by some standards but nevertheless a herd that provided a source of fresh blood from the U.S.A. I say this because we had been importing semen from selected herds for the past thirty years and were fortunate to have chosen bloodlines from such well known herds as Ideal, Lone Palm, Yellow Creek, Trotacre and Roslyn. Bulls such as Calib, Buttermost, Victory, Welcome Choice Admiral, Dixie's Admiral Davis, Magicman, Telstar and Ripley Banner Skytop to mention a few. Two thirds of this herd has been lost, whilst some fifty seven are still at a Government Research Station to the north of Harare. It is doubtful whether we shall ever see the missing cattle again, but we remain hopeful.

Enthusiasm amongst our Guernsey breeders is not great. Whilst there is relative peace on their farms there are still spasmodic disruptions taking place on some farms with commercial farmers being harassed or evicted. One never really knows where next from here, and this leaves one somewhat depressed. Savannah Guernseys, owned by Terry and Steve Lapham, were considering selling unwanted cattle and moving into beef production largely because of interference and viability problems. I believe all our members would quickly regain their enthusiasm were the land re-distribution programme resolved one way or another. At present all agricul-

tural land is under the control of Government. One cannot simply purchase agricultural land. One can apply for land but the delays are never ending and there is no choice for the buyer as to which farm, the buyer, may lease from Government. That decision remains with Government. As mentioned all land is under state control and is not for sale. One can only lease, on a 99 year lease, a farm that Government is prepared to lease to you. We have been waiting for some three and a half years with no end in sight yet. There are of course our Hobby farmers who have been given a few hectares of land, who have two or three animals and who would like to enlarge their herds but will find it difficult to purchase young stock yet alone increase their land holding. It is here that a herd such as Flaxenfield could have been of great value to these new farmers and Zimbabwe as a whole as up to some fifty or so young animals could be released or sold to them from Flaxenfield annually.

Regarding individual herds and their numbers we have on record some 12 possibly 14 herds in all and the total numbers are as follows.

Cows 283	Bulls (mature) 9
I.C.H. 32	Bulls (yearlings) 5
Yearlings 68	Bulls (calves) 11
Calves 52	

These figures include 57 animals from Flaxenfield which are presently at the Research station to the north of Harare. It does not include those animals with which we have lost contact; albeit the remaining animals are some where in the country but I have no idea just where.

Of concern to our long standing commercial Breeders is the very real problem of loss of identity of the Guernsey cow in Zimbabwe. A well run breeding programme needs to be implemented in order to acquaint our new "hobbyists" of just what constitutes a Guernsey cow. You may well laugh, but here in Zimbabwe an animal that produces milk is generally known as a dairy cow! The characteristics of the different breeds, apart from colour, are not generally understood. The New Farmer appears to favour the Guernsey believing it to be tougher than its Black and White counterpart and is seen to mate well with the local breed known as Mashona. The Mashona is a smallish animal, is light boned and is a general purpose animal, being used as a draft animal that can also produce a limited amount of milk.

And now to the all important subject of imported semen. Here we have a real problem. Although we have a very well managed A.I. centre in Harare, imported semen has to be paid for using Forex (foreign exchange). Few people can afford to purchase such semen as they do not have the where with all with which to purchase American dollars or sterling, so locally bred bulls fill the gap. An exchange rate of Z\$12000 equates to just US\$1 or approximately Z\$23400 to £1. These are black market figures as of yesterday which are generally used in Zimbabwe today. The official rate of Z\$240 to US\$ 1 is no longer relevant today.

And again on to the years of Dudley Dickin of Hi-Tor Guernseys, who was our President for many years until his death some five years ago. It was he who introduced our own Guernsey Registration Herd Book. This worked well but has

now been scrapped which is such a pity. Today, we have a National Herd Book which covers all breeds including beef breeds. This has been done as there are simply not enough people to do the work. Further the costs involved are high resulting in many, particularly new breeders, not bothering to register their calves. Here I should like to pay tribute to Dudley and Stella for the untiring work they did in promoting the Guernsey breed here in Zimbabwe. Stella continues to live here in Harare and many will remember the magazine they published each month on behalf of agriculture named, Ulimi Mulimi. Stella is an honorary life member of our Society.

Moving on to registration of young animals, classification of animals, appendix animals and so on. These issues are no longer subjects that are thought about or discussed. Whilst we all wish the best for the breed our breeders are too busy trying to cope with the day to day difficulties that always occur. We all appreciate the need for breeding programmes, good young sires and paying particular attention to The Guernsey Global Breeding Programme. Presently, there are only a handful of breeders who could countenance such an undertaking and so until better times arrive we shall have to soldier on.

Presently, milk production in Zimbabwe continues to fall. This has been the pattern for the last six years. A Government report dated 21st February 2007 stated fresh milk production had dropped from 177 million litres in 2000 to a low of 85 million in 2006. The Chief Dairy officer in The Dairy Services Department of Livestock Production and Development within the Ministry of Agriculture has attributed the decline to lack of expertise on behalf of New Farmers. She further added, that price controls on the selling price of milk had contributed to the decline as well as the high price of concentrates. Recently, two milk processing firms, namely Nestle's and Dairybord Holdings have embarked on a dairy herd rebuilding exercise

which has yet again been hampered by lack of Forex. This scheme involves selecting good in calf heifers (usually black and white) in South Africa and importing them into Zimbabwe in batches of 50. These animals would then be allocated to aspiring farmers, who will have been placed on now vacant farms left abandoned by former commercial farmers. Having chosen vacant dairy farms has meant the infrastructure left behind by the former dairy farmer can be utilised by the new farmer. In the course of time the farmer concerned would have to pay-back the original purchase price of the cows he was given. Marguerite and I applied but were told all available funds were exhausted and thus there was nothing more we could do. To date only two batches have been brought in, a total of 100 heifers in all. It is interesting to record that one of these batches has been placed on that part of my farm known as Glengrey and is presently using the infrastructure left behind that had taken me many years to establish. Such equipment would include dairy buildings and machinery, pastures, fencing, water and irrigation systems, tractors and implements, housing and so on. Were the new owners milking Guernsey cows rather than black and whites the heartache would not be quite so bad!

Yes, it's a fairly sad report but we all live hoping one day soon, we shall come through this difficult period in Zimbabwe. In ending, I should like to thank Bill Luff for his never ending efforts in promoting the Guernsey breed and also to thank all those who will have spent time making this, the 2007 conference a memorable event. Bill Luff is a real inspiration and ensures that we are all kept up to speed. Thank you Bill.

So I thank you for listening to our rather sad story. We wish you success in the years ahead and as I said at the 2004 Conference, "Go well, and Good Luck to you all."

*Nicholas Browne*

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# WGCF DIRECTORS' REPORT

## 12th. WORLD GUERNSEY CONFERENCE

Your Directors held two meetings at this Conference. There has also been one meeting of the Executive Board.

Your Directors approved the accounts of the World Guernsey Cattle Federation and decided to leave the membership fees unchanged.

I am delighted to announce that John Gordon of Don Haven Guernseys Ontario will be the next President and that Mr. Ray Watts of Guernsey Island will be the Vice President. Dr. John Mozier (American Guernsey Association) has been elected Chairman of the Executive Board.

Other members of the Executive Board are: Lt.-Col Chris Watson (EGCS), Mr Jim Lichtwark (GNZ) and Reuben Kotze (SAGB). The Secretary is an automatic member by virtue of his office.

The next World Conference will be held in Canada in 2010. An invitation from RGA&HS to hold the 14th. World Guernsey Conference in Guernsey Island in 2013 was accepted by your Board.

The function of the Executive Board was discussed. It was resolved that the Executive Board should become more proactive and should meet once a year and make use of video conferencing facilities. It was further resolved that the Board should become active in providing direction and assistance to the Secretary.

Your Board decided to appoint Digby Gribble (EGCS) and Seth Johnson (AGA) to provide lists of bulls available for export ranked in each country's index order and to keep these lists updated on a regular basis.

An informal meeting has been held with the purpose of developing better communication between Guernsey youth programmes and young Guernsey enthusiasts around the world. A representative of each of those countries present at the conference has been nominated as a contact person.

Your directors wish to thank all those who organised the 12th World Guernsey Conference and tours and also all those who took part in the conference itself.