

STATES OF JERSEY

Corporate Services Sub-Panel Proposed Importation of Bovine Semen

FRIDAY, 20th JUNE 2008

Panel:

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan of St. Helier (Chairman)

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier

Connétable P.F.M. Hanning of St. Saviour

Witness:

Mr. R. Perchard

Mr. D. Hambrook

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan of St. Helier (Chairman):

I will just call the meeting to order. The evidence of Mr. Robert Perchard. Good afternoon, Mr. Perchard.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Good afternoon.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

The first and general question we have asked most of our witnesses is, in general, what are the implications of not lifting the ban of importation of bovine semen, in your view?

Mr. R. Perchard:

That is right. Before we start, you sent me 8 questions and I presume we are going to go through these, are we?

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

We will go generally but we can vary away from them a little bit if there are things you want to bring to our attention by way of evidence, by all means. They will probably come out during the course of it. This is really just as guidance for us.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Perhaps before I do, can I just make a few introductory remarks?

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Please, yes.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Just to say that I am a dairy farmer, a cattle breeder of some 30 years. I come from a farming family steeped in cattle breeding with younger family members following on, I hope. I have travelled extensively and visited countries around the world and seen the Jersey cow overseas. I have been a Society Council member. I was Chairman of the Breed Improvement Committee for a number of years. I spent hundreds of hours trying to help to develop the breed on the Island and I was Vice-President of the Society as well. I was responsible for building the new R.J.A. & H.S. (Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society) headquarters building; also we show cattle and we have bred 4 Island Champions. I do not profess to be an expert. I just come to you as an interested breeder and I have heard submissions from other people who I respect highly that I would defer to. I am talking especially about Mr. John Le Feuvre in this instance whose evidence I thought was so impressive. What I would say is that the people who are bringing this forward, and I do not include myself in that because I am not on the council any longer, have only got the best interests of the Island Jersey cow at heart. They are not on some sort of kamikaze mission. These people are dedicated. They are concerned for the future viability of the breed, the integrity of the breed and everything they do really is motivated towards that objective. I would say these people are the true custodians of our breed. They have shown it by what they do; not by what they say. A thought that occurs to me, perhaps a strange thought, but thinking about the human population of Jersey, the people of Jersey, had we some 200 years ago closed our barriers to immigration but allowed thousands upon thousands of our most talented, best looking and hard working people to leave the Island, I just wonder what sort of an Island we would have today! I think it is a credit to the breeders of the past and the present that the integrity of our breed has been retained to the extent that it has been. You asked me about the first question; what would be the implications as you see them of not lifting the ban on the importation of bovine semen? I have prepared some bullet points if I may go through them. First of all, you would have a dismayed and demoralised industry. The leadership of that industry, who you have heard submissions from, I know, their advice would have been ignored and having been ignored, what would you replace them with? Where would the leadership come from? Is there the capability and the willingness, among others, to take the breed forward? We must not forget that people are a vital resource as well. You asked me the implications. You would have an industry that has been shown not to wish to help itself. There would be the threat, I think, of milk shortages in the future, not too far in the future as well, I would propose because the demographic profile of our industry shows that many of the breeders are over 50 and, as I said in my submission, the structure of the industry will have to change. The only way is for a small number of larger herds. That is the only way we will keep an industry alive, I am afraid. There are just not the

young people wanting to come into this industry despite the fact we are told there are. There are not the people and the economics dictate that we will have to rationalise our industry. It is happening all over the world. This is not peculiar to Jersey. We do not need to think we are isolated from these effects. The failure to take steps to increase our efficiency would mean that over the longer term, we would accept that retail milk prices will be higher in Jersey than they would otherwise have been. In the same way, there would be increased subsidy dependence because if the States are going to keep on prohibiting the use of imported bull semen, basically the responsibility is theirs to keep the industry alive and if the industry is not able to increase its efficiency, this subsidy safety net which I have referred to in my submission, by logical presumption, will have to be provided or else the industry will just fall apart. So I maintain that although there will always have to be some level of subsidy to the Jersey cow if we are going to keep Jersey brown cows in green fields, the additional level of subsidy would have to be higher. This is against States policy. We are told by the States that they will be reducing subsidies in line with trends elsewhere around the world, so as I once again said, this is a dilemma that the States have. Another effect is that breeders may decide to defy the ban. There is even a possible prospect of a legal challenge to a continuation of the ban. Certainly, the outlook for breed improvement on the Island would be pretty bleak. I made a case for the failure of the bull proving scheme in my submission. Will there be a bull proving scheme? Will there be initiatives to help our breed? If so, who is going to run them and how is it going to be done and how is it going to be funded? One point of view is that the semen bank or the cryogenic preservation store of frozen semen is there as the panacea to all our woes. I am afraid this is highly problematical and is not a solution. Herds like ours have been unable to continue using the test bulls from the bull improving scheme because of the effect it has had on our herds and we have been using the bulls that have been proven from that scheme. This is what Jim Allan called "further use" in his model which we followed for some 18-odd years. The further use was to use the bulls that were proven to improve to breed to produce the next generation of sons but we are so desperate that we are using those bulls on our cows to breed daughters as well and the problem is that those bulls have gone out from the Island. They have been used up already. The semen is finished. In one case, a bull I wanted to use, I had identified the merit in his production; I found the semen had been exported by the Overseas Aid Committee to Rwanda. There are also fertility problems with some of the bulls that are in the semen bank and our herd's fertility and the conception rates of our cattle is suffering as a response. Most of the bulls that are in the semen bank are proven now to reduce production or to have negative physiological traits. It is a pity that Professor Hall is not here because I wanted to just pick on something that I felt he hinted at the other afternoon. There was a suggestion of a collective breeding herd. Do you mind if I expand on that?

Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

Ask the question because we can put it to him. Ask the question anyway. It is recorded, so he can answer it.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes, I would very much appreciate an exchange with him but I will just put forward some thoughts if I may. I do not know what he had in mind but possibly some scheme where breeders send cows to a certain herd, I do not know. Whatever, I think the discipline in making that happen would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Such a thing would ...

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

I was going to ask you to just expand on that. Why do you think that is the case? Why discipline? What would it require that would be difficult?

Mr. R. Perchard:

I think people have had the experience with the Bull Proving Scheme and this would be a different type of ...

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Bull proving scheme.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Scheme, yes; a genetic evaluation and selection scheme.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

I think they call it open nucleus ...

Mr. R. Perchard:

Whatever. I just think, for one thing, they may not want to do it. They may want to do their own thing and look after their own herds in a sort of closed environment because that is what I would have to do, I think. Just sort of batten down the hatches, breed from within and basically, your herd is not going anywhere; you are just setting yourself in aspic. Funding would be a requirement as well and we have seen that the plug was pulled by the States on the bull proving scheme. The bull proving scheme was our answer from the last vote and it was funded by the States and now the funding has gone; the whole thing has just evaporated. Is there going to be more funding again? You are talking serious amounts of money to make these things work. Tied up with the idea of discipline is Jersey agricultural politics. We know what Jersey agricultural politics are like. I want to know who the people who would back this are; the breeders, who would want to lead it having had their efforts frustrated so many times before and also, who would support it? There is no guarantee that breeders would support it but those are minor considerations. Above all, which bulls will be selected in the breeding programme? I have brought a copy of the M.D.C. (Milk Development Council) Breeding Booklet which I will leave with you. This is supplied to breeders; this is September 2007, the most up to date one still, I think. This is the list of the

bulls available through AI. As I said, a lot of these never even had semen drawn off of them. These are sires that have been through evaluation but a lot of them never had semen taken. With many of them there are fertility problems or the semen has been used up and there is just nowhere to go. We really have a serious issue with bulls. I know we have heard talk about great cows and great females and we hear examples raised about cows that are winning medals and there was mention of that the other night. It is true. The Island has some fantastic females and some great cow families and this is our treasure trove, but we do not have the bulls and there is not the variation of bulls; there are not the proven bulls to put on these cows to mate for the next generation to produce bulls for the future. They are not there. You can ask any breeder. In fact, this RJA catalogue (which I will leave with you) is the latest set of bulls in what is now the bull proving scheme; a very much watered down version; 3 bulls have been selected to be test bulls, to be used with a view to breeding females to eventually find out how these daughters milk and then get an index for that bull, a P.T.A. (Predicted Transmitting Ability), they call it, or P.L.I. (Profitable Lifetime Index). Now, of the 3 bulls' pedigrees I am showing you here, 2 of them have a sire that is proven to reduce milk yield; not just a little bit but this one here, Classic Impact, is minus 237 kilograms of milk. That is a significantly high figure for reducing milk yield. La Pepiniere Renegade is minus 268 kilograms. This is where we are with our breeding. We are trying to prove bulls, the parentage of which are significant reducers of milk yield. Mr. Le Feuvre spoke about going back to the 1970s and 1980s for the bulls he is using and okay, that we had some safe bulls there but they have probably nearly run out anyway, from the semen bank. You know, by doing this we would be putting our breed into a time warp. I think that is my answer to your first question. **[Laughter]**

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Shall we move on?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I have a specific question to one point that you said if it did not go through, there would be a possible legal challenge from people who wanted it. What would you challenge?

Mr. R. Perchard:

I am not saying anything is afoot; I do not know, but I think the advice we are being given by the legal experts is that the ban on liquid milk is not really defensible. If it was challenged, there is every possibility a challenge would succeed and the old idea that there is a derogation on milk if semen was not imported, I think that is highly doubtful and there is no guarantee whatever that a challenge would not, in my opinion, from what I understand, succeed.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

What do you say to those local people in the industry who say, "As soon as we import bull semen, we are going to have milk imports, liquid milk imports and if we do not, we are to get a legal challenge"?

Do I take it that you are saying if we do not import semen, we are going to get a legal challenge anyway but from the other direction?

Mr. R. Perchard:

It is possible. I cannot say at this time but surely the safest way to protect the future of the industry is to do everything possible to increase its chances of remaining viable and that way, you will be able to keep down the price of liquid milk. You can reduce that subsidy dependence; not for 5 years though, admittedly, but I think as long as the industry is making steps to help itself, that surely is the best defence.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

You are saying the best defence against liquid milk imports is to get more efficient yourself.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Certainly.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Keeping the price at a reasonable level.

Mr. R. Perchard:

It has to be.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Can we move on to the more specific questions? You say you have concerns with the arguments being used against importation. We are saying to please outline your concerns. I mean, we have probably talked about one or 2 of them but there may be more.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes. I have some bullet points on this one and, if you do not mind, I will go through them. We just covered the issue about the protected milk market. This is a central plank of what Mr. Quenault said. I just do not buy it, I am afraid there is not a protected and sacrosanct liquid milk market. There is already milk coming in, some type of omega 3 milk into M and S. I have been printing off the submissions from the Internet but my printing pile of anti's is higher than my printing pile of pro, but I think it is possibly a question of quantity over quality. One issue raised is the health threat from imported semen. I think we have been reassured by the States' vet the other evening. There is a world trade going on every day in semen and it is properly managed. It works. To throw up this thing that it is all of a sudden bringing unknown diseases or nasty diseases, it is ...

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Clutching at straws?

Mr. R. Perchard:

Well, yes. [Laughter] Yes, very clever. I do think we must overlook that argument. We have heard about 100 per cent milk recorded herds in Jersey and not elsewhere. I think Derrick Frigot dealt with that one very well. I do not need to cover that ground. What is important, not just the milk recording, it is the information that milk recording provides in terms of the evaluations and the indexes that bulls and cows get out of it. That is why farmers do it, you know. Not just to know how much a cow is giving or how much butter fat or protein, although that is important. They are interested to do this, so it will provide information which is analysed by technology, computers, to form indices that are then used to inform breeding decisions. These indexes show, and you saw it graphically the other night, presented to you; I am sure you have had it lots of ways, the status of the Island Jersey on an international platform. It is also backed up by export figures really, you know, our export market is not there now. People do not come to the Island to buy our stock. If I could just go on to Dr. Funk's letter; Dr. Funk from the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, I think that is a letter that is worth responding to, in particular, if I may. What he says is that the argument of the protagonist is not underpinned by scientific evidence. Now, that just is not correct. I think you have had it this week, the scientific and factual case for importation is there. He also says that milk production might undoubtedly be lower in Jersey and he quotes that it could be husbandry. Once again, my point is the genetic evaluations in these indexes that we derive; they are there to see over and above the way the animals are kept. They can isolate the husbandry, the way the animals are fed, out of it and these indexes identify genetic merit. So husbandry will differ on the Island but there is no disputing the fact that the genetic merit of our cattle does not match up with those in the UK or overseas.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Are you saying that the variables are eliminated by the data?

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes, that is precisely what it is and that is science. Dr. Funk is calling for a scientific evaluation. This is scientific measurement. It is scientific proof that our cattle are under-performing compared to their peers elsewhere. He also talks about the interactions of genes with each other which is highly complex, and that is true, but he does say, and I take issue with him here, it seems that improved Jersey herds, that must mean herds that have used bull semen, produce more milk but with lower cream content. This is from Dr. Funk. Clearly that is wrong. You have just seen a table from Derrick Frigot regarding the UK which absolutely contradicts that as a statement of fact. He also says the high fat, rich creamy milk, of the autochthonous - it is a hard word to pronounce, it means the original population of Jersey cows – the autochthonous Jersey herd has distinguished it from other breeds and has acted as a Unique Selling

Point. He is saying that the cows from Jersey Island have got high fat, rich, creamy milk and it is a unique selling point. It is not really, that is what the Jersey breed trades on right around the world. So it is not something that the indigenous Jersey population can claim. Denmark and New Zealand, for example --

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Not unique to Jersey Island?

Mr. R. Perchard:

No, in fact Denmark and New Zealand have got higher butter fats than Jersey Island. So has the U.K. (United Kingdom) as we saw. Then he talks about *Chikhi et al*, the study in 2004 about inbreeding, which I do not know if you want to talk about that? Shall we go on to it now?

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Please, yes.

Mr. R. Perchard:

That is question 6, we will go to question 6. This is a discussion about the size of the gene pool for viability and whether it should be 5,000 or whether it could be less, and *Chikhi et al* studies show it could be much less. It could be in the hundreds or even less. I think we are talking about 2 different things here. We are talking about a dynamic economic breed in one case, on the other hand you are talking about something of scientific, zoological interest and the 2 things -- while it is possible to have a viable population, as we see with the Rare Breeds Trust, for example the Chillingham White cattle of just a few dozen, or hundreds, that is a different thing from having a vibrant economic animal for a breed that is going to be productive and have an impact economically. They are talking about inbreeding. Now, this is interesting. I did refer in my paper to - and the question took me up on it - the lack of variation in bulls, which is perhaps not quite the same thing. I am drifting there. Let us go to inbreeding. *Chikhi et al* spoke about the level of inbreeding on the Island and what the implications are in relation to the rest of the world, the Jersey breed around the world. The finding was that the Jersey cow on the Island is not inbred, or not dangerously inbred at the moment. I would accept that. It could be argued that there is some closing of the breeding on the international breeding stage for Jerseys. Nevertheless the problem is that, with our reduced herds at the moment and the probable future decline in numbers, coupled with the fact that we have hardly got any good bulls to use, all the breeders are going to be using what is available and within a very small number of generations we will see inbreeding kicking in quite seriously in Jersey. So I think at the moment it may be okay but, give it 10 years even, I think, we will be seriously in a corner with inbreeding. One thing that Dr. Funk talks about is the cryo preservation store or the sperm bank. I absolutely agree with him. This is an invaluable resource, it will probably have applications that we cannot even think about at the moment in terms of

the genomics and so on. It is something we must continue to do. No argument with that. But where he finishes up, he says that: "Such a decision, i.e. importation, must be based on scientific evidence through which it is possible to balance the complex pros and cons. By doing this we will undoubtedly instil confidence in the decision." I fully support that and I think the problem for Dr. Funk's argument really is the evidence is the other way. Just a few more points on the arguments from the other point of view. I have said about fixating on individual cows and generalising as to the general genetic health of the breed. Such a cow won the John Ibbotson Cup and gave 10,000 kilograms of milk, therefore the breed is fine. We have good cow families and cows, believe me, but, as I say, it is bulls that are our problem. We have fantastic opportunities to utilise our good cow families with judicious use of imported bull semen. One correspondent said: "The sole reason for importation is to increase milk yields." Once again, it is not. That is nonsense. It is not just to increase milk yields, it is also to increase the other traits that the cattle need or used to have. The problem now is that we have a cow that we have to feed well to try and get yields from and they tend to get fat, to put it bluntly. You hear talk about refinement, cleanness of bone. That means a cow that will - you used the word "athletic" I think the other day, that was quoted. It is that kind of thing. It is the ability to ingest large amounts of food, convert it into milk without putting on too much body condition. That is what a dairy cow needs to be nowadays. I would advise you -- the written submission by Ian Anderson from Australia, if you have not had a chance to read that, it is a very wise, well argued, well thought out paper. It talks about those other traits, apart from milk yield that he finds -- he was here in May for the conference. He has been all over the world. He talks about the other traits as well. It has been said that it will take 10 years to see the effect of importation. That is not true, again you will see it after 4 to 5 years. Poor management has been blamed, coupled with poor feeding. We are told that the farms basically are incompetent, I think. You know, that is the reason that herds like Mr. Houze's, Trinity Manor, our top herds if you like, why none of them can really go beyond 5,000 litre average production. They must be incompetent because our management is not up to the task. I do not know how these people feel about that.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

I think you do.

Mr. R. Perchard:

I am trying not to show it. I showed it a bit last night in my rather impassioned question. Mr. Quenault, I did not want to mention names but he says that he has a 6,000 litre average. I suppose I could have a 6,000 litre average for a while if I reduced my herd in half, you know. I do feel that we have a glass ceiling of 5,000 and we just cannot get through it. Poor feeding quality, feed quality, this is another reason given. Once again, I do not really think that that argument is valid. I know in America they have alfalfa hay, which is fantastic, but that is not the explanation for the difference. What we do in Jersey is to compensate for any shortcomings in the quality of our feed by feeding extra concentrates. That is nuts, dairy nuts. Our concentrate usage per head is higher than the U.K., compared to the U.K. it would

be ...?

Mr John Jackson (Dairy Advisor):

A couple of hundred kilograms higher.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes, so basically we are feeding more concentrates to compensate. There is another point of view which says that higher genetic merit cows will need more feed and be no more efficient. Once again, I am sorry, the facts do not really support that. Yes, they may eat more, they may need to be fed more, but that does not mean they will be less efficient. That is what a high genetic merit cow is. It is one that has been evaluated to convert feed efficiently. So, once again, that is a fallacy. There is talk, or scaremongering perhaps, about a proliferation of different breeds around the Island. We only have to look at our neighbouring island of Guernsey to see where they have been importing semen, with beef as an option, for several decades, and look at their herd. They have not ruined their Island, they still have wonderful countryside. I just think that these arguments are desperate. We talk about beef calves. I mean, I do not even think beef is an issue. Regarding the supposed difficulties of calving, the Jersey cow is known world-wide for her ease of calving, that is one of the advantages of the cow around the world. She can be used for beef crossing, but, believe me, the future is not beef. The future is going to be in breeding females for export. There is a huge opportunity for redeveloping and refinding that market. Another argument is that the younger generation do not want importation of semen. We have heard this. Now, I know of 2 people who have voiced opposition, 2 younger people, but I also know of younger people who are in favour. So I do not really think that is an argument either, that carries any weight. The truth of the matter is we do not really have many young people coming into our industry at all. The industry will need to be cognisant of that and to restructure itself or allow itself to be shaped because that is the way the world is going, as I said before. We have -- I am going on now to the last few points that have been raised. Selective use of horror stories. A photograph in our local paper of a cow with a hanging udder, and we were told this was going to be the effect of importation. Well, that photograph strangely was the daughter of a bull called Highland Magic Duncan, who also sired the world renowned cow Duncan Belle. So this cow was a sister of that fantastic cow. So it only goes to show that breeding is not an exact science but he chose the worst example there because if breeding is anything this cow, Duncan Belle and her family have had an important affect worldwide and if anything animals bred to that bull will be better -- will be greatly improved. He just showed one example, a bad example, really, because it was the exception to the rule and there is no logical support for it. There is talk about mistakes being made in semen batches. This is another claim. But there will be safeguards in place, simple D.N.A. (Deoxyribonucleic acid) type testing of one straw per batch. You know, those things can be done quite simply. Other people have said that the Milk Marketing Board is a problem and we should get our marketing sorted out. Get the economics of the industry right. I do not disagree with that. I am not going to apologise for the Milk Marketing Board at all. I have been a critic of

theirs. I do agree that they must improve as well but you must attack this on all fronts. How can you be selective? This is where their Roadmap for recovery is. You have got to give some credit, you know, to the industry for trying. So, yes, there is work to do by the industry but that is not the only problem. Finally, the export market. One correspondent said: "Our semen exports are very valuable to us, our cattle are in such demand all over the world." I am sorry, not true. We had 250 international breeders visiting the Island last month. How many of them got their cheque books out and placed orders for stock or semen?

Male Speaker:

None.

Mr. R. Perchard:

None, okay, thank you.

Mr David Hambrook (RJA&HS):

There was interest in genetics were those cows bred to international bulls.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Is that right? One other correspondent said: "The export market is unviable due to transport costs." This is export of young stock, heifers. Once again, that is not true. I think Sarah Le Feuvre made that point very ably. So that is my thoughts about this tall pile here.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Thank you. I have got 2 or 3 questions. The viability of the local dairy industry at the moment, and you say it is going to take 4 or 5 years to bring it back to --

Mr. R. Perchard:

To begin to see it, yes.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Given the vulnerability of the industry. Even if importation was permitted, would this timescale prove too much for some? Are we likely to lose some in the industry anyway, and would our dairy industry still remain vulnerable once we have done it?

Mr. R. Perchard:

We are very vulnerable. I think I gave -- in my submission I gave the economic case for importing and we are extremely vulnerable at this time. As I said, it almost has to be underpinned by subsidies. We have got Kite Consultancy working now telling Jersey Dairy how much subsidy the industry needs. Is

that right? I think so. Gauging milk price, well it is the 2. The 2 go hand-in-hand. Milk price and subsidy. But it is not one or the other, it is the 2. There is a supposition I am afraid that this will have to be underpinned by public money.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

It has been said by a witness that it is not surprising that we are getting bad milk yields recently because of a particularly bad year of silage production where you have someone -- I am talking about Mr. Quenault's submission where he is saying that the silage quality is bad in Jersey -- I think you will know what I am talking about here. What would you say to that.

Mr. R. Perchard:

I think - I covered that earlier to an extent - that possibly at times the forage produced in Jersey is not of the very top order, but it is usually of a decent level. I think there is much greater use of maize silage on the Island nowadays and maize varies a lot less, the range. I think I am right, Mr. Jackson, in this? The range of quality of silage within maize is a lot less than grass. Grass can vary a great deal. But I do not think that everybody made bad grass silage last year. On the contrary. There might have been some bad ones. But the thing is, even when you do get good silage or bad silage, I do not find, for my own experience as a farmer, that there is that much difference in the yields anyway. I think the cows are going to give what they are going to give.

Connétable P.F.M. Hanning of St. Saviour:

Can you quantify that difference, in terms of yields, roughly?

Mr. R. Perchard:

The difference between ... sorry?

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Good silage and bad silage. You say you will get a variation.

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes, well basically what we do if we have -- if you make bad silage you compensate by feeding extra concentrates. You feed more dairy nuts. Which is concentrated high quality feed, 21 per cent protein, 13.5 megajoules of energy, rich food and you have to probably give one to 2 kilos a day extra, per cow, to compensate for the poor quality forage and then you finish up with a ration that is roughly equivalent. That is how we do it, you see.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

So you are saying, in fact, that because the silage might have been poorer in some instances that in fact

with proper husbandry it does not result in a lower yield?

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes, it just puts your costs up.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It results in a more expensive yield?

Mr. R. Perchard:

Yes.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Certain people have said that they are not confident about herd books generally, the overseas Jersey herd books they are not confident. Do you have any experience of that? What is your belief of them?

Mr. R. Perchard:

Well, the experience I have had is in travelling and meeting breeders - I will talk about breeders first of all, and I think I have heard somebody else say this this week - the loyalty that these people have is quite humbling. I have been to a farm in Ohio in the U.S. (United States) where their house is like a shrine to the Jersey cow, they can show you framed pedigrees back to the first importation and they have got cows in their herd originating from that time. I think we do a great disservice to --

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Because they were bucking the trend, were they not, those overseas breeders originally?

Mr. R. Perchard:

In importing Jersey cows? Probably they were, they were innovators, which is great, you know. But -- I think we do a great disservice to the farmers who care for the cattle overseas to just say that they are a load of cheats. I think it is preposterous. I also know that the herd books, like Derrick Frigot said, go back to the beginning but the controls in place are also very strong. All animals going into these herd books are D.N.A. typed and before D.N.A. they used to be blood typed. So they are validated. These pedigrees -- you can depend on them.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

The last question that I have is a much more technical. I am not sure, Mr. Perchard, if you are properly qualified to answer it. It is to do with the beta casein type A2 gene that it is thought that the local herd has.

Mr. R. Perchard:

That is right. It is an interesting question. I must confess I am not an expert on it. I did look up a little bit about it in preparation for this meeting but I am given to understand that the coloured breeds, the Guernsey and the Jersey, have a higher frequency of the gene for beta casein type A2 than the Holstein. The Guernsey breed seemingly to a higher extent than the Jersey breed. Certainly around the world the Jersey breed is using this A2 factor in its marketing. Whether the Jersey population is higher than say the New Zealand or the Australian, I am not qualified to answer. In both cases it is over 50 per cent, well over 50 per cent. But in Australia, for example, the Fairbrae Milk Dairy, they are marketing Jersey Gold A2 very successfully. The Fleurieu Dairy in South Australia once again is majoring on this. So this factor is present in these foreign populations. In New Zealand at the Klondyke Dairy JustA2 milk is selling well over there as well. So I do not think that it is something that Jersey Island cows have got and Jerseys elsewhere lack.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

I think the more general point was that it may be arguable that the Island Jersey here may have certain unappreciated characteristics in a similar way to this A2 gene, that may have been lost from overseas populations as a result of selection. What would be the effect of the widespread use of imported semen if these characteristics existed, for example? We do not know what they are. It is a very hypothetical question.

Mr. R. Perchard:

It is hypothetical indeed. Unless we can be a little bit more specific of what these mystery characteristics are or are going to be, I think the question has got -- you have to wonder --

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Do you feel that the reserves of the existing semen storage that we have is a safeguard, possibly, to finding something that has been lost overseas? I mean, if we store this around?

Mr. R. Perchard:

Certainly the semen bank is a resource that with the genome project in cattle could be valuable. If it were the case -- genetic engineering, let us not kid ourselves, is going to happen whether we like it not. We have to feed this burgeoning population that the earth has. So I think we have not seen anything yet. What we are doing is probably going to be considered antiquated in 20-30 years time. It is very likely that if there are any genes they may be able to be utilised in a way we cannot even begin to understand.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Any other questions?

Mr. R. Perchard:

I have just got a couple of concluding remarks, if I may. Four little bullet points If the States do not vote for importation they will be consigning the Island Jersey further and further out of the mainstream of world cattle breeding to become a back water. A curiosity, not important for anything other than being a snapshot of the past. They would also crush the spirit of those aspirational people who have worked tirelessly for decades leading the industry, trying to keep up with international breed improvement and make the Jersey cow relevant in the modern world. They will effectively turn breeders into zoo keepers who will be content to settle for second best, safe in the knowledge that there will be a subsidy cheque in the post at the end of the month. It has been said that the Jersey cow is our living heritage. If the States do not act now they will be condemning her to be our living relic.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

I am sure you are wanting to make a contribution. Would it be appropriate to make it in writing if you wanted to make a point on ... because really we are not here to take questions from the floor.

Mr. D. Hambrook:

No, it was not a question, Deputy. Robert showed me the questions about beta casein and I did say that I had some information that was pertinent to Robert's reply.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Could we have that in writing, perhaps?

Mr. D. Hambrook:

It is one sentence. When Jersey Island Genetics placed 11 bulls on tests in other populations around the world as part of the marketing programme we went through this beta casein testing. The D.N.A. samples that were already held in Island were shipped to Holland --

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Sorry, could I stop you there just for a second. Would you mind just taking the seat so that we can hear what you saying into the recording, because I do not think we can, and your name, please.

Mr. D. Hambrook:

David Hambrook for the R.J.A. (Royal Jersey Agricultural & Horticultural Society). If I start again. Robert had asked me details relating to his question on the beta casein. The first thing this morning we did research, because we had tested some Jersey Island bulls on this basis. Jersey Island Genetics, the trading arm of the Society, have placed a number of unproven and proven bulls on market sale in other populations and as part of that marketing process we were asked to test the bulls for the beta casein

traits. Of the 11 bulls that were tested we have a similar number of 11 genome type and 12 genome type, which indicates that the Island population in this small number - we are looking at 11 bulls from different cow families on different farms - the relationship is not different to what you would expect to find in any other Jersey population.

Deputy P.J.D. Ryan:

Thank you. Thank you for that. We are going to have a little break here now for something to eat.