

A submission to the Corporate Scrutiny Panel regarding the proposal to import bovine semen.

From John Le Maistre.

You may know that I am currently the President of the Jersey Farmers but I am not writing to you in that capacity. The Union does not usually comment on matters concerning the dairy industry leaving that to the breed society namely the RJA and HS and the JMMB. I am however a dairy farmer and as such am keen to see an improvement in the development of our breed through the importation of semen.

I will not repeat the arguments put forward by those supporting the proposition but can assure you that I have read and understood them and concur with them whole heartedly.

I have also read the arguments put forward against importation and whilst I accept there are limited risks from importation the risks are far outweighed by the risks of not importing. We cannot allow our local 'Jerseys' to become increasingly inefficient in comparison to 'Jerseys' from overseas. If this is allowed to happen, the disparity between the price of milk locally and that of imported milk will only widen, this will make the importation of milk in the long term inevitable. The importation of semen initiative is only one part of a strategy put forward by the JMMB to reduce the cost of locally produced milk which includes; the reduction of processing costs through relocation of the Dairy, improvement of on farm efficiency (including breed improvement), managing milk supply to the dairy and seeking good returns from the market place by added value products both locally and in the UK. All of the above need to happen for the dairy industry to succeed. To restrict the breed improvement element will be effectively asking the Industry to compete with one hand tied behind its back.

One point that does not seem to have been put forward is that no one will be forced to use imported semen. It appears that there are about six hundred cows in the ownership of those breeders who do not wish to import. This number would be enough to maintain a breeding stock of non imported semen cattle. They will, among themselves be able to keep their herds free from any imported genetics if that is what they wish. They would be able to breed their cattle in the manner that they think fit. All I and some others are asking is that we be allowed to breed our cattle in the way we think fit.

John Le Maistre.