

15th June 2008,

Ian Anderson

Victoria Australia.

Re: My Opinion as to why Jersey Island Should remove its Semen Importation restrictions.

An open letter to the RHJ&S, members of parliament, and the scrutiny panel.

Who am I?

I'm Ian Anderson a fourth generation Jersey breeder from Australia. My family has been breeding Jerseys continuously since 1884, and I'm proud to be part of the oldest stud in Australia.

Even though I'm only 41 it's been my pleasure to travel the world and observe the major populations of Jerseys first hand. The just completed 18th World Jersey Cattle bureau meeting in Jersey is the fifth such conference that I've attended. These conferences held every three years around the world offers someone like me the unique opportunity to access the strengths and weaknesses of each breed population. The Jersey cow is highly adaptable and has evolved and changed to fit the needs of each of the countries in which we find it.

I'm proud to say that this has been my third visit to Jersey Island, a place that had such an influence on the herd that I manage today. My late father and grandfather were keen enthusiasts when it came to using Island bloodlines. The 'Rosella' cow family was always known to have been established through the direct purchase of the 'ships cow' in the 1880's. Right through to the 1970's my family would continually purchase sons or grandsons of bulls imported to Australia from the Island.

In 1975 my late father Bert Anderson keen to strengthen the herd's link to the Island purchased Dreamers Margarethe Royal and imported him to New Zealand as quarantine restrictions would not allow him to come to Australia. When these restrictions were lifted in 1979, my father, my late uncle Jock Anderson, and Alan Taylor imported a number of animals over the next 6 years. For us the most influential bull was Dainty Juliets Designer who had an immediate impact on the herd. A feature of his daughters were their correct bone structure, particularly loin, hip and pin settings along with the increase of 500lts milk over their herd contemporaries. For us in Australia he was perhaps five years ahead of his time. A number of my prominent cows in the herd today have him the pedigree some 25 plus years ago. The breed in Australia started to appreciate these functional traits when genetics from the United States started to be used here in the late 1980's.

In the 1980's when a similar consideration with respect the importation of semen to Jersey Island took place my father made a submission supporting the restriction, based on his own personal opinion. Now today I'm again making a submission expressing the view that for the future prosperity of the breed on the Island that those breeders should be given the ability to select bloodlines from around the world to enhance and strengthen their female lines.

Breeding the next Generation

With 3000 cows on the Island, I don't believe the population is large enough, and through what I've seen over my 3 visits have a nucleus of quality cows capable of reshaping the Island population. History has demonstrated that any herd can have elite cows, but what we look for as breeders are female lines that consistently breed well generation after generation. I believe that too many of the good cows that I seen last month are probably from average cows and as a result are not going to have an ability to breed consistently going forward. It's a shame when some breeders in 2008 are using bulls born in the 1980's to sire the calves to be born in 2009. Why??; because they know what to expect, and they have probably given this family its best chance to survive for another generation. I sympathise with these breeders in that the young bulls just don't come up to

standard. Their options are limited. You need clusters of quality cows to build a base to push a breed forward. I believe that the Genetics on the Island have exhausted their ability to continually improve the population. The families on the Island desperately need genetic material from outside the Island to breed the next generation.

My own experience

I took ownership and thus the responsibility for the breeding decisions for my late father's Kings View herd in 1989. Decisions needed to be made. This herd was extensively Island bred. Do I continue with the past breeding or do I move forward? The choice was to use genetic material which enabled me to develop my cow families forward. I'm proud of this and I would like to feature my Aileen cow family which has produced outstanding cows in each of the last 5 decades. Every herd has like examples, but this family has a close link to the Island. Two prominent cows in the herd today are the Highland Duncan Lester full sisters in Aileen 15 and 21. The best 4 young cows in my herd today are daughters of these two cows.

Aileen 15 and Aileen 21

Sired by Highland Duncan Lester

Dam. Aileen 12 6/08/91

Sired by Densondale Delights Sam (bred by Lloyd Wilson NZ)

G.Dam Aileen 11 30/07/89

Sired by Dainty Juliets Designer (Imp Jersey 1979)

G.G.Dam Aileen 8 15/03/86

Sired by Granada Lessons Viscount (Son of Lesson's Heritor II)

(Dam sired by a son of The Mounts Orange Boy II)

G.G.G.Dam Aileen 3 18/08/74

Sired by Belgonia Golden Double (Dam was a daughter of Folly's Jingo Imp II)

G.G.G.G.Dam Aileen 6/10/68

Sired by Belgonia Designs Jester (Dam was a daughter of Greek Jester Imp II)

I've traced the pedigrees of the last two bulls, (who are from mother and daughter) back to the 1930's to establish the sires used to breed these bulls. I found multiple crosses of Aim High, Baron Design and Design's Ruler, all imported bulls from the Island of Jersey. A point to consider is the impact the Island of Jersey had here to establish not only these elite sires but many more in Australia. Similar investigations in the other populations of Jersey cows around world would yield equivalent findings. Jersey Island should be extremely proud of this.

Qualities which the Island cattle desperately need

The cow listed above 'Aileen 11' born 1989, in all honesty would easily satisfy being 95 plus percent Island blood. And although she had many strengths, this cow lacked two extremely important functional characteristics, that being Bone quality and Udder texture. This was the reason why she was not joined to 'Island Blood', as I wasn't confident that these qualities existed in the Island herd.

While walking through the herds on Jersey last month I endeavoured to find the hardest working cows in each group. These were not necessarily the best looking cows in the herd, but they needed to be respected because they were the most efficient feed converters. The common trait which all

these cows possessed was clean flat dairy bone. Unfortunately there were not enough cows which displayed this fundamental trait.

Why Import Semen to the Island

The Island cow needs to be transformed into a modern productive Dairy Cow. The other populations of Jerseys around the world are now superior regardless of the measure that you use in comparison. Where once Jersey Island was seen as the 'Benchmark', today it could be considered as a 'Museum'. The 'Genetic gap' between Jersey Island and the rest of the world could be as much as 30 years. The decision makers need to understand, is pride so important, that you're prepared to watch the Island cow die a slow death. Time is running out. The population needs to be transformed. I don't believe that the Island has the right genetic base to do this. The options for the Island are clear, do nothing and continue to watch the herd decline, or introduce superior genetics and revitalize the Island population. It's clearly evident to me in 2008 that certainly Bone quality and Udder texture needs to be improved.

Guernsey Island

With a free day a number of us decided to take the ferry to Guernsey to view first hand a sample of its 1500 cows. None of us really knew what to expect, and in fact most of us were curious to view first hand the quality of cows on the Island. We might be passionate about the Jersey cow, but we all appreciate a good Dairy Cow regardless of her breed when we see them. One herd in particular was outstanding, the old cows right through to the young cows. As good if not better than what I'll expect to see in Australia. A credit not only to the breeder, but to the Guernsey cow. So what is the difference? He's been able to import semen to strengthen his family lines. The result was clear to all of us who had the pleasure to visit his herd.

Purity of the breed

Much discussion has taken place with respect to where is the breed pure. A herd like my own has only survived for over 120 years by making the right decisions at appropriate times to ensure that it continues to move forward. Always high in that consideration is using Genetics that not only improves the Functionality of the herd, but also maintains its known pedigree status. At this point in time Jersey Island can make the decisions which ensure like me the herd improves and also meets a predetermined standard.

Where to from here

I believe that for the future of the Jersey Breed on the Island the restriction on the importation of semen should be removed to enable these breeders to access bulls to improve the Island population. A process should be put in place to ensure that the bulls imported meet a standard. This should be determined by RJH&S, seeking direction and information from other societies from around the world. An example of this is Jersey Australia who each year list a number of Jersey bulls available from New Zealand who do not meet our standards for entry into our herd book. The Australian Jersey Journal Dec 2006/ Jan 2007 page 2 gives an example of this.

Conclusion

Finally I would like to say that it's important that the current breeders be given the opportunity to shape the direction of the Island cow. Like generations before them they have the responsibility to progress the breed. They are the people who have most at stake. The time has come to release these restrictions so that they can be once again proud of their 'Island Cow'.

Thank you for allowing me to make this submission

Yours Sincerely

Ian Anderson.