

30<sup>th</sup> May 2008

**PROPOSED IMPORTATION OF BOVINE SEMEN**

Members of the Panel

I am a working Dairy Farmer with around 400 head of cattle, which includes 260 milking cows making me either the largest or second largest herd in the Island, and since my business will be directly affected by your findings, I think it is important that my views on the matter are conveyed to you.

From a farmers point of view, it is most frustrating that I am unable to source the best pure Jersey semen available in the World, this would make my business much more profitable and my working life more pleasant as I would have more efficient, more functional and more dairy looking animals than the one's I have got today. It also angers me that if the anti-importers get their own way I will be forced into breeding my cows their way, even though they would have a choice should semen be imported.

Although these points are mega important to me they are miniscule compared to the effect that a No vote would have on the Island as a whole. The fact of the matter is simple. Without imported semen it will be impossible for Jersey to preserve its self-sufficiency in milk supply. In less than 5 years, farmers who supply around 20% of the milk today will not be in business. They will either have retired, or given up due to their inability to justify the capital investment required to keep their farms going. Those of us who are left will be expected to fill the gap. I think I speak for most of the large herds when I say that we have more than enough cows to look after already and the only way we could envisage increased production is with enhanced genetics and the same amount of cows.

Therefore if we are prevented from importing semen, importation of milk is inevitable, and the day that the first litre of milk is imported into the Island at a much lower price than we can produce it for, will spell the end of the Dairy Industry locally, and you will end up in a situation whereby Jersey, the Fountainhead for all the Jersey cattle in the World would be one of the few places you wouldn't find them. A situation I'm sure no one would want.

Please don't be swayed by the Anti Importers who incidentally are mostly bystanders with no stake in the industry. Whilst the Pro Importers arguments are based on hard facts, theirs is based on here-say and emotion. They will tell you that the cows abroad are either not pure or have very poor confirmation, they won't have seen it for themselves but someone will have told them. Whilst their information on this subject will have come to them third hand, I have seen it with my own eyes, and over the last several years have seen thousands of cows in scores of herds overseas and I know and am 100% confident that these tales of poor confirmation are untrue. In fact the cows with the worst confirmation are our own, the overseas delegates who attended the conference over here last week were less than complimentary about what they saw in our herds. As far as the purity of overseas populations is concerned. Purity is protected by Pedigree, and since all these other population's Herd Books are very nearly as old as our own, and I am sure we have no worries on that score.

In conclusion, my opinion on this matter is the same as the people who produce the majority of the milk in this Island, and surely the people whose opinion matters the most.

**ALLOW US TO IMPORT SEMEN. IF YOU DON'T JERSEY WILL BE ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN THE WORLD WHERE YOU WON'T FIND A JERSEY COW.**

If it is possible I would like to meet the panel to discuss further my opinions.

Yours sincerely

Richard Leith