

Zimbabwe – the Jersey came and went

The first Jerseys arrived in what was then Southern Rhodesia at the turn of the 19th century. They were probably progeny of the first Jerseys imported into South Africa from the Island of Jersey in 1881.

The first bull to be registered in the South African Studbook on behalf of a Rhodesian was Fountain's Duke of Rhodesia No. 35 in 1908. Registered by C.C. Macarthur of Salisbury (now Harare), this was probably the first bull to be imported from the USA. Five Jersey females, also from the USA were registered at the same time.

Over 40 years later, these few animals were joined by two groups of pedigree Jerseys from the UK. The first consignment arrived for auction in October 1951, a move largely instigated by Mrs. Brigid Newmarch.

Founding new herds in 1950s

New herds were founded: Lord Malvern's Soprano herd and J. Haarhoff's Destiny herd. Then in 1956, Mrs. Peggy Pattullo imported first a Jersey bull and three cows from England, and later a bull from the Island of Jersey.

Mrs. Pattullo was married to Hugh Rankin Patullo, who was posted to North Africa in World War 2, but returned in poor health and was advised to move to a warmer climate and so, in 1950 the family moved out to Zimbabwe to farm at Anglesea near Bulawayo. Two years later, Patullo died leaving his wife with a farm to pay off and three children to educate.

Her love for the Jersey cow was fostered when she acquired some cows to provide fresh milk for her children. The basis of the herd was English stock and later imports from England and the Island of Jersey formed the foundation of the herd. The herd became very famous and topped the Jersey breed milk records for Rhodesia from 1967 to 1981, milking up to 120 cows.

In 1970 Anglesea was judged the Best Farmed Farm in Matabeleland. Due to failing health in 1981 Mrs. Pattullo sold most of her Jerseys with the exception of her 'old ladies'. However, the herd gradually expanded and latterly her Jerseys

were the very necessary interest that kept her going. She died in 1993.

Two Jersey clubs were formed

The Jersey arrivals were followed by a great deal of interest in the breed all over the country. Two clubs were formed: the Mashomaland Jersey Cattle Club and the Matabeleland Jersey Cattle Club, registrations using the South African stud book.

In 1980 the Jersey Cattle Society of Zimbabwe was formed after the country gained independence. The two former clubs were dissolved and registrations are now done through the Zimbabwe herd book. In 1995 the president of society was Dave Myerscough.

In 1994 there were 29 members, not all of them active breeders. Some 2,000 Jerseys were registered with the herd book, but there were also many Jerseys in mixed herds or with breeders not interested in registration. The milk recording scheme was run by the Zimbabwe Dairy Herd Improvement Association and involved some 1,225 Jersey cows.

AI was first used on farms in the early 1960s, and genetic input came from semen imported mainly from the USA as well as from Canada. After the country's independence, white people had to adjust to being an ethnic minority in a country with an African government. Many white people emigrated in the early 1980s, being uncertain about their future, but many remained. Political unrest and the illegal seizure of farms resulted in a further exodus commencing in 1999. So nearly every farmer in one way or another has been badly affected. And it's not that there isn't enough land for everyone as there are acres and acres of undeveloped land which could easily be utilized. (Sources: S.A. Jersey, 1995; WJCB, 1994)

Only two herds left in the country

Peggy Pattullo's daughter Joan Dodman, the last secretary of the Zimbabwe Jersey society, in 2010, reports that the society has ceased to exist and that there are only two Jersey herds left in the country. *"It seems as though there are only two herds left of pure Jerseys (approx 75 milking cows), one of those belonging to my brother and myself. We try to keep going despite so many*



"Mum [Mrs. Peggy Pattullo] with one of her prize cows at a local show." (Joan Dodman)

odds being against us. We must be one of the few farmers left on the land; however 7/8ths of the farm has already been taken away from us. We are trying to concentrate on the Jersey herd as those animals we keep nearby and as yet, have not been poached, slaughtered or stolen. We are currently doing about 1,000 litres a day and Dairy Board Zimbabwe takes our milk. They are giving very attractive bonuses for good milk: somatic cells and total bacterial counts. We are working hard on this as this seems to be the only way we can make our dairy viable. The other herd of pure Jerseys belongs to Jan Tinks, south of Bulawayo; they do their own processing and also make lacto. There are also a few people who have Jerseys and Holsteins."

Moving the Jerseys to Mozambique

Mozambique is a new Jersey country and with a number of Zimbabwe farmers that moved across the border it should soon establish itself as a growing Jersey population. During 2009 we also saw the first shipment of 221 Jerseys from South Africa to Mozambique.

Irvin Reid was one of 13 white farmers invited with their families to Nigeria in 2005 after land seizures in Zimbabwe. He now has a dairy farm with 300 Jersey cows, some of among 800 imported from South Africa to start cattle farms in the region. (Information from Johannes van Eeden, 2010)

