

# Europe

## Norway – a large country farming few hectares

The land area of Norway is more than seven times larger than Denmark, or just as big as Germany. But with nearly 70% of the country covered by mountains, ice and lakes, fewer than one million hectares are farmed.

In 1900, the Norwegian Ola Bjelland initiated the first Jersey import to Fister of the Rogaland County in south-

western Norway. (Source: Jersey-Feet i Norge, 1985)

However, other records indicate that the breed arrived in Norway much earlier – in southern Telemark and the area around Drammen. This is understandable when one realizes that the founder of the Torreby herd in Sweden in 1890, wholesaler Nils Georg Sorensen, was born in 1833 in Dröback, Norway, which is not far from Drammen. Furthermore,

Sorensen and another wholesaler John Kärrberg had 10 Jersey yearling bulls, two heifers and one cow for sale, at the 17th Swedish Agricultural Meeting at Gothenburg in 1891, of which Sorensen owned eight of the bulls. And we also know for a fact, that Torreby prior to 1896 had sold animals to Norway and Finland. (Source: Mejeribrugets Dronning, 1996)

### Ola Bjelland bought a few in-calf heifers

Ola Bjelland was informed by his father – whose knowledge was gleaned from the Norwegian-American magazine Scandinavian – of the importation by Denmark of Jersey cattle and the good experiences achieved on Gaardbogaard.

Bjelland had just set up a dairy farm, but before making a final decision about purchasing Jerseys, he went to Denmark to get his own impressions of the circumstances. As a start, he bought three in-calf heifers on Gaardbogaard, followed the next year by a bull.


Although he baptized a newborn heifer calf Victoria, the first importation did not turn out well: two of the animals died from Piroplasmose (cattle tick fever). Bjelland, however, did not give up, and he replaced the rest of his old stock with more purebred Jerseys from Denmark.

Prior to World War 1, he imported two more bulls from Denmark. Bjelland kept his own private records of his stock due to the fact, that at the time there were no official milk recording associations in Fister. From his farm, several animals spread to other farms in the neighbourhood, but only Bjelland and later on his son kept a herd of purebred Jerseys. (Source: Jersey-Feet i Norge, 1985)

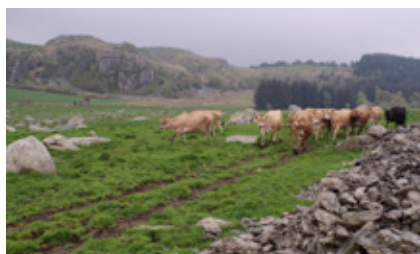
### Jerseys were spread by marriage

Soon after, the Jersey breed was also to be found in Jæren, in the Rogaland County. This happened when Bjelland's sister got married in 1902 and received a Jersey heifer as a dowry from her home to take to her new home, Aasland in Time.

Maria Bjelland and her husband Kristian S. Aasland from then on became keen Jersey breeders, and several farmers in the neighbourhood took an interest in this new breed. So the following year,

Country	Norway	
First importation of purebred Jerseys	To Rogaland in 1900	
Name of the national Jersey association (in English)	Norsk Jersey (Norwegian Jersey)	
Year of formation (possibly end year) of association	1937	
Date of 1 <sup>st</sup> herd book (1 <sup>st</sup> edition or earliest)	September 1946	
Size of Jersey population, latest figures (registered and total)	1,360 milk-recorded cows 1,500 total (ref. Ingun Schei, TINE Rådgiving)	
Jerseys as a % of the national dairy cattle population	0.68 % (ref. Ingun Schei, TINE Rådgiving)	
Average herd size	20 cows	
Average production	100 tons	
Average 305-day production	5,625 kg milk 5.9% fat 3.9% protein (ref. Ingun Schei, TINE Rådgiving)	
Breeding program with bull testing?	No	
Number of bulls tested per annum	N/A	
General management	90% in barns with collars; grazing in pastures from May until September. Grass silage and concentrate in the barn from October until end of April Few herds use milking robots and TMR	
% of organic herds	N/A	
Use of sexed semen	Increasing	
Names of the oldest herds	N/A	





*The Undheim herd in 2009.*

Christopher Budde and Abel Braastein from Jæren went to Jersey Island, where they bought 17 heifers and one bull.

This purchase is on record in the 1903 annual report of RJA&HS: “Norway has bought a small trial lot of 17 head, where it is hoped the same success will attend the breed as is the case in the neighbouring country of Denmark.”

Not all animals, however, were registered and not until 1922, were Jerseys tested in a milk recording association. But we do know the names of the pioneer farmers, who kept one or two Jerseys in their barns. All females were served by the Jersey bull housed by Olaus Bollestad and later on moved to Abel Kyllingstad. It is also on record that the Jersey bull served native cattle in the neighbourhood.

### **A Danish bull imported via Sweden**

In 1937 the Danish-born bull Adam was exported from Sweden to Norway. Adam was bred by Th. Danielsen and sold to the Swedish estate Hjuleberg. Adam's arrival was linked with the beginning of Jæren Jerseyfeavlslag, formed on March 16, 1935 by 30 dairy farmers with an interest in the Jersey breed.

At that time, the Norwegian government supported a development in which each county had its own cattle breed. Consequently, the Jerseys were not officially accepted as a breed until 1950 in the 'Jersey centre' of Gjesdal-Time in the Rogaland County, but from then onwards Jersey breeding in that area was subsidized by the department of agriculture.

In 1961 a public approval was achieved for the Rogaland County as a whole, so the association was renamed to Rogaland Jerseyfeavlslag. Finally in 1983 all Jersey breeders in Norway became organised in the Norges Jerseyfeavlslag.

The year before World War 2 Jæren Jerseyfeavlslag exhibited 153 purebred and crossbred Jerseys at the first Jersey cattle show to take place in Norway. Mira a six-year old cow owned by Kverneland (the manufacturer of equipment for ploughing) won first prize. Her sire Olemann was born in 1924 on the farm belonging to Ola Bjelland.

In 1944 the Jersey animals 'under control' in Norway numbered 885. At a meeting in 1945, the members of Jæren Jerseyfeavlslag proclaimed its future goals: 'Pure-breeding, milk recording tests and formal equality of the Jersey breed'. A stud book was published in 1947 and the result of many years of incomplete registration, was that almost all crossbred Jerseys were accepted for the book. Adam was registered under herd book number one. No animals in the book trace back before 1908. Another idea in 1947, was to import semen from Denmark. This was an urgent issue because Adam had to be replaced with either new bulls or semen. Three bulls were therefore imported from Sweden, yet AI wasn't introduced until the 1950s.

### **The Jerseys had a big official show**

The state adviser Einar Kullerud acted as a judge at the first official show for Jerseys on June 28, 1950. At this event 364 cows and heifers plus four bulls were exhibited, purebred as well as crossbred.

At the cattle show in Stavanger the following year, the breeder society had selected 10 females, of which six were daughters of Adam. To Ingebret P. Kyllingstad it was quite an occasion, as on his farm in Gjesdal they had bred Jerseys ever since the arrival of the first animals in 1903. The cows in the Rogaland County as an average in 1952 produced 141.1 kg fat against an average of 121.3 kg for the country as a whole. In 1961 Norway was milk recording 1,148 purebred Jersey cows.

During the 1950s and 1960s more imports came from the UK and Sweden and between 1969 and 1985, 40 bulls were imported from Denmark. Since then, all semen used in Norway has been come from Denmark. Live animals have also been exported from Norway to the Faroe Islands. (Source: Jersey-Feet i Norge, 1985)

From 1960, the NRF (Norwegian Red Cattle Society) had a big influence on the milk payment and AI activities in Norway. Farmers were paid for kilograms of milk only, with no butterfat or protein payment at all, and the number of AI stations was dramatically reduced resulting in the NRF having the only two AI stations in the country. NRF then also controlled all AI activities in Norway.

Jersey inseminations have fluctuated throughout the years depending on the prevailing milk price. In the 1960s, about 1,400 inseminations using Jersey semen were carried out and in the 1970s this had risen to an annual figure of about 2,500. Fat and protein payments were introduced in the early 1980s and by 1986 a total of 5,341 inseminations were done. Again, the influence of the NRF changed the payment system and in 1992 there were only 2,200 Jersey inseminations.

Jerseys represent less than 1% of the country's 300,000-plus dairy cows, but the popularity of the breed is increasing due to a major change in milk pricing in 2003. From 2003 the Norwegian Jersey farmer has used the exact same active bulls as in Denmark, as the two national Jersey organizations agreed on a common breeding program.

In 2010, Norwegian Jersey celebrated its 75th anniversary. Ola Undheim, Norwegian Jersey president from 1971 to 2003, was given Honorary Life Membership for his exceptional work to promote the breed, to fight for the breed and for fair milk pricing – the same year the first animals were selected for genomic tests in the hope that Norwegian animals could contribute to the common Nordic breeding program.



*Ola Bjelland of Norway, with his first Jersey cattle, imported from Gaardbogaard in Denmark 1900.*

