



New Spring 2002 Indexes

There are no major changes on our new indexes as you can see, except the extraordinary rise of Highlander. Between the last proofs that we published (Nov 2001 proofs), Highlander gained more than 800 second crop daughters and saw his milk index increase by more than 600 lbs. This is really a remarkable performance. Highlander is known for his high protein % (+1.8), very good udders and a medium size.

Please note also the good stability of two bulls that have been quite popular over the past year: Joachim and Jaborandi. While both show exceptional components, it is Jaborandi who holds the record for components (+.17P, +.63F). Jaborandi will please those who prefer a small to medium size cow, while Joachim is a more typy bull and will produce larger cows. Look at the picture of Mesange, Jaborandi's daughter, at the beginning of her second lactation.

Spring Breeding Season is here!
Please place your order now so that you can get it
in a timely fashion.

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Normande Dairy Bulletin

The link between breeders interested in the Normande breed

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Report from France on the Normande breed

by Les Hansen, Professor of Animal Genetics, University of Minnesota

I was VERY impressed with the breed. I thought the udders might be bad, but they are not. Furthermore, the udder quality (texture) is outstanding. However, they place heavy emphasis on SCS (13%) in the breed's selection emphasis plus another 8% on udder, so the desirable udders (I said desirable, not show ring pretty by U.S. standards) and udder quality shouldn't be a surprise. The rumps, and therefore the udders, of the Normandy breed are very long from front to rear. Consequently, what the breeds lacks in rear udder height and width is probably compensated for by greater length from front to rear.

The real shocker is the size of the population. They had 258,963 cows on test in 2000, with excellent pedigree information. That compares to 163,368 Jerseys on test in the U.S. in 2000. So, that is a 58% greater population size on test than the U.S. Jersey. (In total, there are about 600,000 Normandy cows in France.) Also, the number of Normandys on test in France is 16 times the number of Brown Swiss on test in the U.S. and 22 times the number of Guernseys.

The Normandy's progeny test program is coordinated and centralized. Their selection program is very sophisticated. Annually, they select 400 young sires based on the breed index. That index has weights on production (51%), functional traits (31%) and type traits (18%) and is: 51% production, 13% SCS, 10% fertility, 8% longevity, 8% udder, 4% frame (width, depth, length, but not height), 3% leg set, 3% muscularity (this is probably mostly body condition)



Mésange – 2nd lact. by Jaborandi

I like the "feel" of these weights to achieve profitable milk production (certainly a more functional approach than our U.S. dairy breed associations use for their indexes). The positive weight on muscularity (probably mostly body condition) seemed "wild" to me. I say that as the longtime coach of the U of MN's dairy cattle judging team. I witnessed a demonstration by a Normandy breed classifier and they prefer a cow to have thighs that are convex rather than concave. In the U.S., we crave a cow that is "incurving" in the thigh, "razor-sharp", and we dock her if she doesn't look like she is "suffering enough". **The Normandy approach — selecting for a cow that milks like crazy but doesn't look like it — probably makes more sense.** From personal experience, I know the ringside (mostly commercial dairy producers — not registered breeders) loves it at county fairs when I place fall yearlings high in classes that carry some "bark". I think commercial dairy producers have been ahead of geneticists and the show ring crowd on this one in the U.S. The Normandy's weight on the index for muscularity

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NEWS

Upcoming Trips to France

Space Show, Rennes, Brittany, Sept 10-16, 2002

Tuesday, September 10th will be the Normande day at the Space Show this year. As usual, progeny from the newly graduated top 6 bulls will be shown along with a top-notch interregional Normande show. Visit to the Space Fair will be followed by farm visits in Brittany and Normandy, with a strong focus on genetics and farmstead cheese making. Farm visits to continue after the Space Show through Saturday September 14th. Please contact me for more information.

International Normande Conference/ National Normande Show, Paris Ag Show, Feb 23/March 2, 2003

Please mark these dates on your calendar. This is a unique opportunity for you to visit Paris, Normandy and become familiar with the breed. In addition, you will meet fellow Normande fans from around the World. Both events only take place every three years, so don't miss your chance. This week-long trip to France will include a 2-day conference, farm

visits in Normandy, as well as attendance at the Normande Show and the phenomenal Paris Ag Show. Each year, a French region is named "guest of honor" and next year Normandy will foot the bill. Usually air fares are very reasonable at that time (\$400.00 round trip) and we manage to make this experience rather affordable to you. Contact me for more information.

DHIA records

Many of you now have F1 in milk. Some have finished their first lactation already. It would be so helpful if you would send me your records. Please send the on going DHIA records with the last controls as well as the individual cow sheet that features the past lactation(s) records. Don't forget to highlight those that are Normande crosses. Mention of the sire is also welcomed information. Please be kind and take a few minutes of your time to send this information to me. It is very important for all of us.

Heifers, stock for sale

I often receive requests for heifers ready to freshen or stock of any age from would-be Normande breeders. And once in a while, I find out that some of you are selling or have sold some of your Normande crosses. My thanks to all those who have called to indicate that they had heifers or young bulls for sale. Please continue to call and note that there are some very nice crosses of all stages for sale around the country. To buyers and sellers alike, be sure to keep me informed of what you are looking for or what you have to sell. Recent sales have brought similar prices to pure Holstein prices.

Embryos

Full-blood embryos out of a very good Diametre daughter with an excellent udder. Some embryos out of Immortel, Iceton and Indiscute are still available but supplies will not last. Embryos are 3/4 top French Dairy and can be used as a good start-up for any pure-bred herd. Contact me for more information.

It is now about four years since Normande Genetics began bringing the top French Normande sires into the U.S. As a result, a number of F1 cows are now entering their second lactation, and many more are currently calving their first calves. It is good to see that by far the majority of their owners are happy with the breed and will continue to use Normande in the future. While the owners' objectives may differ, with some aiming for the pure breed and others preferring to cross-breed, the first results are more than encouraging. The Normande is truly doing a smooth landing in America. Please note that I invite all of those who have Normande F1 on DHIA to send me their results.

This past winter, I had the privilege to take Professor Les Hansen, Department of Animal Genetics at the University of Minnesota, to the Paris Ag Show and then on to Normandy so that he could see the cows first hand. Returning from his trip, Prof. Hansen wrote an insightful report. I thought you would be interested in reading his impressions of the Normande breed as well as his take on the issue of crossbreeding. Excerpts from his text have been reproduced below.

Please note that your next opportunities to go to France will be this September for the Space Show and a tour focused on farmstead cheese making or else next February for the International Normande Conference along with the National Show, two events you should not miss. Finally, this is, of course, Spring Breeding Season. Please prepare your orders as soon as possible, for time is flying.

Have a good breeding season,

Jerome Chateau