

Overseas Report by Terry Blasche and Sam Graham

German Anglers

Firstly, we would like to thank Claus-Peter Tolsden (RSH) for his generosity during our time in Germany; he drove us around and provided accommodation and meals during our stay.

It was exciting to meet many young farmers keen to develop the German Angler breed and we look forward to keeping contact with these farmers in the future.

The cows presented to us on the 10 farms we visited had very good body capacity, sound feet and legs with good locomotion. The cows had good udders, with high back udders, good teat placement and teat length. The breed average production in 2012 was 8134kg milk, 4.71% fat 383 kg fat, 3.61% protein 294 kg protein. The breed has also achieved good health traits reflected by the average calving interval of 381 days.

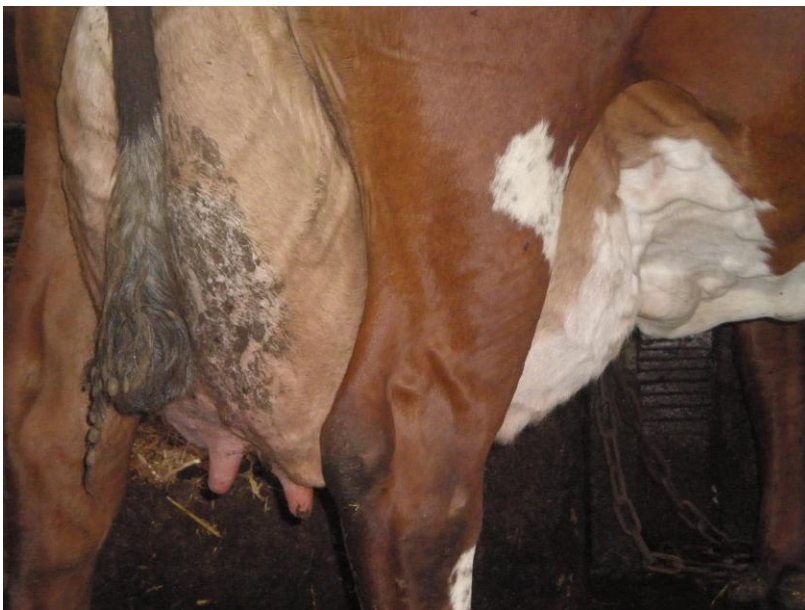
A few herds we visited were also able to parade a cow that had produced over 100 000kg lifetime production. These cows had very impressive production.

Cows that stood out to us were sired by Baldo, Impalu, Haithhabu and Elkor. We also saw a few nice young heifers by upcoming sire, Lloyd.

The German Angler breed is a similar numerical size to Australia, with 11 000 herd recorded cows. Claus-Peter is involved in formulating the breeding plan of around 90% of these cows. He also classifies the cows.

Around 350 heifers per year are exported, but the main impact the breed is having around the world is through their proven bulls being exported.

Germany has genotyped over 100 proven bulls and they are keen to test some cows to establish a genomic database and they are open to collaborating with Australia.



An EX 90 Baldo daughter

Danish Red

Again, we would like to thank Jakob Voergaard (Viking) who drove us around to 5 farms on the first day we were in Denmark. We then hired a car and thankfully GPS was able to locate all the other farms (10) we visited after this.

Most of the herds we visited in Denmark had their cows in barns, under a TMR system. We were still able to inspect these cows and were impressed by their quiet temperaments. The cows presented to us had good body capacity, and were probably the best uddered line of cows that we saw during our trip. They had strong fore-udder attachments, good back udders, strong centre ligaments and good texture. In 2010 the breed average (38 500 cows) production was 8648kg milk 4.3 % fat 371 kg fat, 3.5 % protein 307 kg protein. They have a high reliance on AI (93%).

Cows that stood out to us were sired by David, Ascona, Facet, Bangkok, Fastrup and A Linne. We also inspected a few freshly calved heifers by new sires Cigar and Balfa that looked promising. We saw Excellent classified cows to 92 points. An Ascona (91 points) and Degn (91 points) also stood out.

3 of the herds we visited had bred the current top proven bulls Fastrup, Facet and Fergus (genomic) and we were impressed by their cow families. Many more farmers were keen to breed the next generation of top proven bulls, and we saw many offspring from extensive use of ET programs on high genomic/ NTM cows. New guidelines have ensured the restriction of Holstein genetics in future progeny test bulls to be capped at 12.5% from 2013.

It was also a privilege to learn from Jakob Voergaard during our trip. He outlined strategies Viking is using to reduce the risk of inbreeding within the future red population. Also, the importance of genomics to allow the rate of genetic progress of the red breed to continue to match the rate of Holstein genetic progress, to ensure the red breed population will remain a comparable and viable economic alternative in the future.

Swedish Red

Many people looked after us in Sweden, and we had a fantastic time. A special thanks to Eva Hultman (Vaxa) who drove us around for 4 days, and families from the Torpane, Brogardet and Arbelunda herds who also hosted us during our stay.

During our trip, we found the cows in Sweden to be the most even in body size. The cows were very quiet (Sam helped milk cows at the Torpane herd). Strategic use of good udder rated bulls had a noticeable impact on younger cows sired by A Linne, Facet, Foske, Tosikko and Gunnarstorp . Older cows that stood out were sired by Bjurist, Arbelunda, OBrolin and Asmo Sale.

In 2010 the breed average production (116 400 cows) was 8741 kg milk, 4.35 % fat 380 kg fat, 3.5% protein 308 kg protein.

We also met many younger farmers who had begun a young SRB membership, which had around 50 members, and we look forward to networking with them in the future.

Eva Hultman is a real asset to the red breed in Sweden as a breeding advisor and classifier. We inspected some fantastic herds which had benefitted from her advice and were reaching their production, type and health goals. Many of these herds were producing over 10 000 kg average milk.

We also attended the Swedish Red AGM and did a short presentation on the impact of the SRB in our herds. During the AGM, changes were made to the herd book to allow cattle with a maximum of 12.5% “other genetics” to be registered in the herd book.



Gunnarstorp dtr

Finnish Ayrshire

We finished our trip with a quick visit to Finland. Thank you Seppo Niskanen (Viking) for hosting us during this time. We went to the Hollola AI station and saw some of the highest rated NTM genomic sires during this time. We also visited the Asmo Nucleus herd, where they buy the highest NTM genomic heifers from around the country, and enter them in to an extensive ET program.

The following day we inspected these heifers and 4 nearby herds. Daughters by Asmo Sale, Ullimulli and Tosikko stood out to us, with good udders and body capacity.

The breed average production (143 000 cows) for Finnish Ayrshire during 2011 was 8574kg milk, 4.3% fat 388 kg fat, 3.4 % protein and 295 kg protein.

Finally we want to thank the Australian Red Dairy Breed for the Young Members Travel Scholarship which allowed us to make this worthwhile trip.

Also, thanks to our wives, Shannon and Rachel, and our Dads for keeping the farms going back home!