

The Kenya Holstein Friesian Cattle Society

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As far as is known, the first Friesians imported into Kenya came in 1908 to the Government Stock Farm at Naivasha. Then in 1920 several bulls, cows and heifers were imported from South Africa, carrying mainly Dutch, but with some Holstein bloodlines. Not many more animals were imported until 1938 when 5 bulls and 8 cows from the Carnation herd in the USA and 11 bulls and 3 cows from the Oldamster herd in Holland arrived. After the end of World War II importations built up, with animals coming from Holland, New Zealand and Germany. Today, the Kenya Holstein Friesian is an excellent commercial cow, giving a lot of milk in her lifetime. Holstein Friesians/Boran crosses are dual-purpose animals suitable for the semi arid areas.



Artificial Insemination

Kenya was one of the pioneers of Artificial Insemination, starting in 1935 in Naivasha.

The Central Artificial Insemination Station at Kabete was founded in 1946 and bulls for the Station were imported from Holland, USA, Germany, Britain and Sweden.

With the advent of liquid nitrogen for the storage of semen, semen was imported through CAIS from progeny tested bulls from all the above countries, as well as Italy and Israel, in larger doses. Frozen embryos have also been imported. This has helped build the breeds' genetic base to international standards.

In 1972 CAIS inaugurated a Contract Mating scheme, identifying the best local cows as bull dams inseminating them with the best progeny tested bull semen from other countries worldwide to produce bulls for Kabete. This scheme has been most successful and the entire Holstein Friesian bull Stud at CAIS is now locally bred and some of the bulls have sired very useful progeny.

Services to Breeders.

The Kenya Livestock Breeders' Organisation, (which is under the umbrella of the Agricultural Society of Kenya) based in Nakuru, maintains the Kenya Stud Book, with breeding records going back to 1921. This is an invaluable resource. The KLBO is also the home of the Dairy Recording Service of Kenya, which milk records all dairy and dual purpose breeds and has a butterfat and newly introduced protein testing facility. Milk recording has not been as consistent as pedigree registration, with first the Kenya Milk Records operating from 1949 until the mid 1980's , becoming for all practical purposes defunct by 1993.

The first computerized milk recording scheme was started by the Kenya Holstein Friesian Cattle Society in 1993 and was incorporated in the Dairy Recording Service of Kenya in 1994, when Government handed over the remnant of KMR to KLBO.

Now DRSK needs many more committed members so that results from milk recording can be of real value for research into progeny testing to help breeders improve their herds. Few farmers do butterfat and protein testing, which is growing more and more important, with some milk processors asking for a minimum butterfat percentage in the milk that they buy from the farmers, and some even pay more for quality milk.

Few breeders appreciate the fact that butterfat percentage is more heritable than milk production and need to look hard at the figures produced by the semen importing companies. If they want to improve the overall quality of their milk.

