

A note on the performance of imported and Home-bred Danish Jersey cows in Elmarj dairy unit in Libya

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INTRODUCTION

The demand for dairy products in Libya increased substantially after the oil boom and imports are required to fill the gap between demands **and** national production. Many modern large dairy units have been established and high yielding temperate dairy cows were imported. The performance of exotic breeds of dairy cattle is generally depressed in developing countries compared to their origin. Information on the performance of Jersey cows in Libya is scarce. Consequently, the performance of imported cows was studied and compared to that of home born exotic ones in Elmarj dairy unit in Libya.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Elmarj dairy unit was established in 1976 on the outskirts of Elmarj city in Eljabel Elakhder in Libya. Pregnant Danish Jersey cows were imported in patches. They were housed in shaded open corrals. They were offered roughages ad libitum and concentrates according to milk yield and body condition. The cows were machine milked twice daily in excellent parlours. Calves were allowed to suckle colostrum, separated from their dams and housed individually. They were offered fresh, milk by pail, a calf starter and a good quality roughage. They were weaned at three month old and housed in groups. A good recording system is maintained in the farm. The records were collected and used to calculate some important traits. The data was statistically analysed according to Snedecor and Cochran (1965).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the performance of imported and home bred Danish Jersey cows at Elmarj dairy unit in Libya.

Age at first calving was lower for imported cows and was close to the recommended two years for efficient milk production (Bath *et al.* 1978). It was close to values for British and Danish Jersey cows in Elgoba farm (Elimam 1996). This was because they were imported pregnant from a country where calving at early ages is the norm.

Calf birth weights were lower in home bred cows and were generally better than in other developing countries. It was 17.1-18.62 kg in Rajistan (Malik and Chaudhady 1976) and 19.6 kg in India (Pandya 1978). Calf mortality rates and twining rates were lower for home bred cows.

Milk yield (305 days) were lower for home bred Lows and were generally better than that in many developing countries. It was 257.4 kg in Nigeria (Adeneye and Adobanjo 1978).

Results showed that the performance of home bred Danish Jersey cows in Elmarj dairy unit was lower than imported ones. However, it was generally better than that for the breed in many developing countries. The performance of home bred cows could be improved by improving nutrition, management, environment and health and hygiene.

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