

Complete Curtis

Massia family delivers a complete package with new red bull Apina Curtis

In Apina Curtis, the popular Red Holstein Massia family has a new representative in the world of AI. With Kian and Lentini in his genes, this descendant of the excellent Massia 21 offers more than 300kg of milk and good fat and protein with positive percentages.

The Massia cow family is one of the most popular Red Holstein families in the Netherlands. Like Match 2, Tocar, Mister Delta Metallica and Apina Guido before him, Apina Curtis comes from a long line of Massias. As the prefix in the name suggests, the genes can be traced to the Apina breeding enterprise owned by brothers Wim and Theo Bleser from Epen in the province of Limburg. "It all began with the Tulip daughter Massia 14, an in vitro embryo produced from Andries daughter Massia 13," recalls Theo Bleser. Massia 13 had high ratings in the cattle indices for years, and was therefore an attractive prospect for AI.

Apina Curtis daughter Patricia VG87

Some time later, because of her high scores, her Tulip progeny was also highly regarded by the Blesers in terms of AI. "The popularity of Massia 14 dates back to the high indexing era. At that time she was inseminated on numerous occasions using bulls with high index ratings. We may have bred from this cow too much using the index ratings. With hindsight, the pairings with Lentini and Lightning were the best." Apart from the bull Apina Guido, the combination with Lentini also produced two heifer calves in Epen: the famous Massia 20 and Massia 21. At the Delta testing operation in Laren, the first of

these two and the one featuring more white markings, Massia 20, was awarded the maximum score for a heifer of VG89 points for type as well as a high lactation score.

The second, the dark red Massia 21, stayed behind in Epen. As a second calf heifer she was awarded the score 'Excellent'. "Her best feature was quite simply her frame." Theo speaks matter-of-factly about this heifer, a Lentini daughter, and her frame score of 92 points comes under discussion.

"Massia 21 was long and deep bodied. The style and suppleness of her build came from her father. She also inherited the fat percentage from her father: in one generation this went from 5% to 4% fat."

Massia 21 eventually calved three times. The Lentini daughter had her best lactation score when she was just over three years old, as a second calf heifer. She produced 11,622 kg of milk with 3,62% fat and 3,42% protein in 305 days to earn a lactation score of 108 – figures which made this Massia descendant another attractive prospect for AI.

"She was flushed a great many times, first with Daan then with Jargol, Canvas and Beautiful. The best results were with Goldwyn, Shottle and Kian."

Chico and Curtis

As a breeding technician at CRV, Eric Lievens had already come into contact with several offspring of the Massia family. He therefore got to see the pair of full sisters quite often.

"If you compare Massia 20 with her full sister Massia 21, the latter was even more massive. Massia 21 was perfectly formed in terms of her bone structure. She was extremely broad with a very broad rump as well. The rather coarser legs were a minor point. So Kian was well suited to this cow."

Eric Lievens contracted Massia 21 with Kian, from whom a total of 25 sons were tested by CRV. From this mating with Kian, two ET bull calves were born on the



Apina Massia 21 EX90 (s. Lentini). Production: 3.05 305 11,622 3.62 3.42

same day. The CRV breeding technician still remembers his first view of the full brothers Apina Chico and Apina Curtis well.

"Curtis had the typical coat, the more compact, strong build from his father Kian. Chico was extremely large, long and very red, and looked far more like his mother and Lentini. At that time marker technology was not yet available to us. So which one to choose? I was interested in testing both, and so I bought them both." Chico too got good figures: 151 NVI and a total of 108 for type.

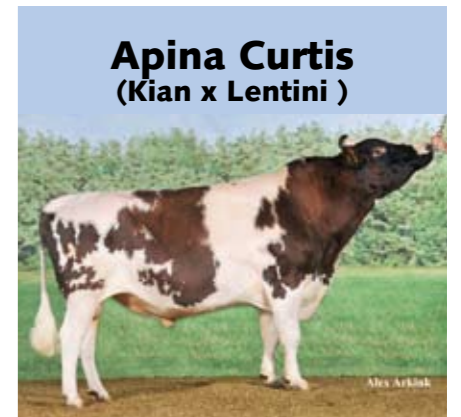
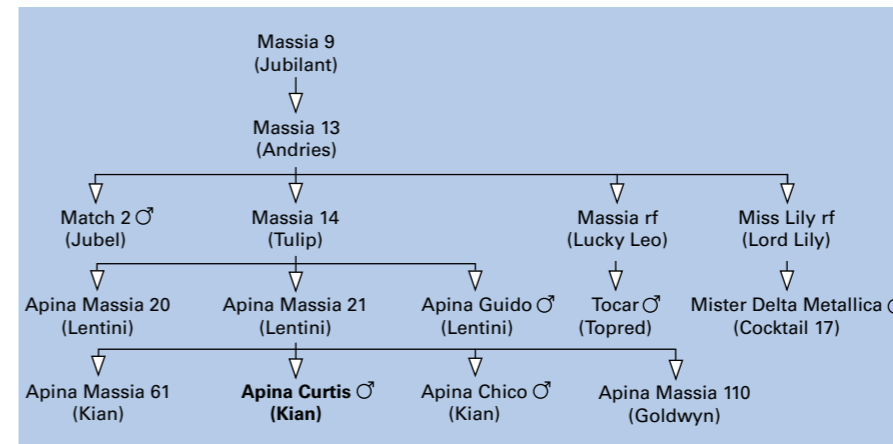
Kian was well suited to Massia 21, as Theo

also acknowledges. "It was Lentini, for his part, who had first given the Massias their type traits. Kian subsequently contributed to some of the quality. A bull like Kian needs a cow with genuinely good type traits in order to be able to deliver good results."

Theo himself has another full sister of Apina Curtis, Massia 61, in milk. She has been contracted with Schreur Moonlight by CRV. "She is a very persistent producer."

Post-quota breeding

The milk production, the favourable fat



Apina Curtis (Kian x Lentini)

Production Proof 172 daughters in 151 herds (DairyCo breeding+, Interbull April 2009)

Kg M	% fat	% prot.	Kg fat	Kg prot.	PIN	PLI
+309	-0.10	+0.11	+19.8	+18.5	£39	£147
Longevity:		+452 days (exceptional)				
SCC:		3 (average)				
Calving ease:		99 (average)				
Temperament:		103 (good)				
Milking speed:		101 (average)				
Type Merit:		+1.61				

Strong daughters

Two Dutch dairy farmers selected a Curtis daughter group and saw 30 of the daughters.

"Curtis breeds large, long heifers, with strength and good capacity. The breadth and quality of the udders and the good attachment of the fore-udder are striking. They are remarkably persistent when it comes to production. You see the daughters giving plenty of milk."

Apina Curtis made his successful debut in January and now in April makes progression due to a big leap in longevity (up to +452 days) and gains for all his type traits (now 112 Final Score).

and protein and type traits of maternal grandfather Lentini, the protein from his sire Kian: the characteristics inherited by Apina Curtis all add up. Eric Lievens sees opportunities for Curtis in enterprises which are already moving in the direction of post-quota breeding. "The potential for milk production of over 300 kg and positive inherited characteristics in terms of protein, combined with good type traits, make Curtis a suitable partner for many cows." In any event, interest in the Massia family in terms of AI is undiminished.

Annelies Debergh