

The CRV Avoncroft, based in Kidderminster, is part of the globally operating organisation CRV. This is the third in a series of articles about CRV. We take a look at the breeding programmes worldwide.

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# Varied selection has something for everyone

Holstein, MRI, Jersey, Fleckvieh – CRV has breeding programmes for many different dairy and dual-purpose breeds in countries across the world. But all the studs share one ethos – health and efficiency.

TEXT INGE VAN DRIE

**S**he excels in lifetime production, delivers milk with high components and is the brood dam of an extremely successful cow family. Veneriete Sylke illustrates the power of CRV's Holstein breeding programme like no other cow, according to the company's Jaap Veldhuisen.

The OMan daughter herself is still alive and kicking. She just passed the 10,000kg of fat and protein milestone and, in around 4,000 days, she produced 118,262kg of milk at 4.88% fat and 3.58% protein – equal to 10,010kg of fat and protein.

More importantly, one bull after another is bred from her cow family. A few years ago sires such as Delta Antidote (by August) and Delta Bonaparte (by Bonanza) made a huge impact. And they have passed the baton to high-flying sires, such as the red-and-white leader Delta Jacuzzi (by Livingston) and Delta Reloader (by Finder). Jacuzzi and Reloader are recent acquisitions from CRV's Holstein breeding programme. Every year the organisation tests 35 black-and-white bulls and 15 red-and-white bulls, which are largely recruited from the company's own nucleus breeding programme after a rigorous selection process.

"Only one in every 60 genomically-tested bulls is selected for semen production," says Mr Veldhuisen, who is head of product development genetics at CRV.

## Satellite farms

At the Dairy Breeding Center, in Wirdum, 12,000 embryos are produced each year. These embryos, extracted from the best cow families in the Netherlands and abroad, are being transplanted into recipients at more than 200 Delta Satellite dairy units in the Netherlands, Flanders and the Czech Republic.

Depending on the size of the dairy unit, these commercial herds each receive between 20 and 40 embryos per year. Based on the results of a genomic test, CRV buys back the best calves. The other calves stay at the units and often result in a major leap forward in genetic progress.

So these satellite herds improve the quality of their cattle and also contribute to the improvement of the CRV's bulls on offer. Every year CRV tests around 3,000 bull calves that are born from these embryos. The breeding organisation buys approximately 120 bull calves from this group, of which 50 bulls are tested each year.

But it does not stop there. CRV has breeding programmes for many different dairy and dual-purpose breeds in countries all over the world (see illustration). For example, there is a breeding programme for the dual-purpose breed MRY, another for breeds that perform well under tropical conditions, and one geared to help producers who manage their herds on grass-based systems.

These breeding programmes have one thing in common, according to Mr Veldhuisen. "Efficiency and health are the common thread in these programmes. Every bull that we test must fit in with that," he says. "We want to breed bulls that sire healthy cows that produce milk efficiently, thanks to a high lifetime production, high components and good feed efficiency."

"Within the Holstein programme, we further distinguish several segments to serve all producers worldwide: lifetime production, protein, health, type and grazing. For example, a bull like Double W Ranger fits well in the type segment. Producers can make the best genetic mix to suit their breeding goal." In addition to the Dutch Holstein breeding programme,

# CRV's breeds all over the world



## Holstein

Easy to manage, long lasting cows with fewer problems, that produce milk with high fat & protein and with excellent feed conversion



## Jersey US

Long living and attractive Jerseys that convert feed efficiently into component rich milk



## Tropical

Robust breeds that produce and perform well in tropical condition



## MRY

Strong, problem free, red-and-white dual purpose breed with high protein milk



## Fleckvieh

Robust, healthy breed that excels in fitness and efficiency and is suitable for crossbreeding



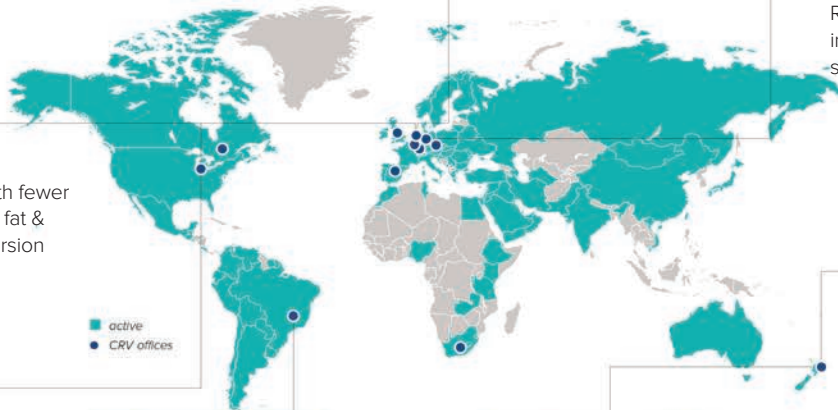
## Friesian NZ (grazing)

Superior, robust Friesian breed that converts grass efficiently into valuable milk



## Jersey NZ (grazing)

Efficient and fertile Jersey breed that produces valuable milk



there is a US-based breeding programme in which around 10 Holstein bulls are tested each year. The emphasis there is slightly more on kilogrammes of fat and protein. "Bulls like Peak Hotline and Peak Jerod Abel come out of that programme," adds Mr Veldhuisen.

## Grazing systems

Holsteins also play a role in the grazing-based breeding programme in New Zealand. Approximately 80 Friesian and 30 Jersey bulls are tested each year, plus about 40 so-called kiwi cross bulls, bulls with both Jersey and Holstein bloodlines. "The grass-based system requires a slightly different type of cow," says Mr Veldhuisen. "The European Holstein cows are too big and too heavy for their management systems," he adds. "Producers who work with a grass-based system prefer slightly smaller cows. Fertility and calving ease also play an important role. For that reason, a bull like Batenburg Stellando was quite popular in New Zealand."

Holstein is the main dairy breed for CRV, but the breeding organisation also has developed breeding programmes for producers who prefer dual-purpose

breeds. The Dutch MRY breed for example, with 10 bulls being sampled each year, produces strong, problem-free, red-and-white cows with high protein.

## Fleckvieh sires

The Fleckvieh breeding programme is even bigger. Each year CRV tests around 40 Fleckvieh bulls in Germany and Czech Republic. The organisation has contracts with producers and breeders and buys some of the test bulls from auctions. The number-one Fleckvieh bull in the UK, Ducati, originates from the CRV breeding programme just like the highly popular Haribo and Wobbler.

The most important Fleckvieh populations are in Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, and France. CRV's Fleckvieh breeding programme uses all these populations to ensure that it sources the best available bulls. "The aim is to improve protein yield and animal fitness and health while, at the same time, maintaining meat performance and to increase lifetime performance," says CRV's Tobias Lerner. "The objective is a high functional longevity with an average lifetime performance of 30,000kg of milk. A good example of the focus on health and efficiency again." |