



“We should have switched to Jerseys much earlier”



Stan and Debby de Wildt in Beuningen (The Netherlands) took over the dairy farm in 2016. Due to the phosphate reduction, they had to reduce the number of cows, so less money came in from milk. They had enough land, but they did not want to finance phosphate. The purchase of Danish Jerseys was the answer. The barn is filled up again and the boxes are large enough for the new breed in the barn. The little Jerseys with their high percentages and the De Wildt family work together to their full satisfaction.

Old situation

“In the old situation we had 124 dairy cows in the barn, in fact everything was too small for these large Holstein cows. Our first approach was to achieve more profit, an additional advantage was that the Jerseys fit much better into the old barn”, Stan says. “Due to the phosphate reduction, we had to go back to 95 dairy cows and there was too little money from milk, where there was enough land to convert grass into milk. We looked for efficiency in feed intake”, Debby says. “We were very excited by stories about Jerseys, the accountant and the bank were reluctant.”

They searched for practical experiences and came into contact with Gijs Winters from Etten, where HF had been replaced to Jersey with full satisfaction. They also visited the company of Jan Willem Elsenga with manager Pieter de Vries, where HF was compared with Jerseys imported by themselves from Denmark. “We asked a lot of questions and learned a lot at both farms. In Excel we made all kinds of calculations ourselves to compare HF with Jersey. Afterwards, it turned out that there is a program available to calculate your own situation”, Stan says. “With all the calculated information, we went to the bank to substantiate our plans for Jerseys. In the end, the bank also agreed.”

Switch to Jerseys

There are 2 milking robots on the farm. Switching step by step was not practical due to the size difference between HF and Jerseys. “That’s why we wanted to adapt one robot at full capacity with Jerseys”, explains Stan. “We came into contact with Niels Jørgensen from Danish Jersey Export in Denmark. We clearly stated our wishes: at least 6% fat and 4% protein. Kilos of milk are easier to manage than the percentages. In July 2019 we bought 51 animals. Together with our feed supplier, we have worked hard to ensure that the conversion in terms of ration, barn and robot runs smoothly. Fat and protein skyrocketed, the kilos of milk went down as expected.”



The De Wildt family with one of their first Jersey calves.

Due to the high demand for lactating cows, all Holsteins were sold by an intermediary for good prices. The results in the first 6 months with Jerseys are higher than estimated. Reason to continue. “Once again, we went to Denmark and bought 64 animals, including 25 pregnant heifers that will calve soon”, Debby tells.

Currently there are 85 Jerseys in production, only heifers that had to get used to the new conditions. The average production is 19.8 kg/day with 6.40% fat and 4.23% protein. That is an increase of + 1.92% fat and + 0.72% protein compared to the old situation. “We currently receive 46 cents/kg of milk, excluding VAT and after-payment. We are very happy with that! The feed balance will also increase. We want to look at those figures over a full year so we can show the correct figures”, Stan says. “We want to grow to 120-125 Jerseys, then we will have both robots at full capacity. It is quiet in the barn and the cows are having a great time. The results are better than expected. We should have done this much earlier”, Stan and Debby conclude.

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- pros and cons**
- + Solution for old barns where Holstein no longer fits
 - + Lower phosphate class
 - + Substantially higher %
 - + Lifespan
 - + Super claws
 - + Calving ease
 - + Fertility
 - + Calm character
 - + Feed efficiency
 - + Higher profits
 - Residual value
 - Sales of bull calves

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