

The Canadian Ayrshire

Ayrshires were introduced to Canada in 1821, and an Ayrshire Breeders' Association has existed since 1870. Its prime objective is making accurate registrations, establishing breed standards and improving the productive efficiency of the breed.

The Ayrshire breed is famous for its hardy, vigorous qualities. It has performed well in the past under adverse conditions and has an established record for longevity, symmetry and high-quality udders, firmly attached – qualities that make it saleable and profitable.

Through the years, Canadian Ayrshire breeders have developed a strain that is more upstanding and angular than the original from Scotland. They have continued to emphasize quality udders along with style and balance, keeping the breed in continued strong demand on the international market.

The high solids content of Ayrshire milk makes it ideal for processing into dairy products and for consumption in fluid form and blending with other lower-composition milk to provide products that meet consumer demands. The 1984 national average for all cows on the official testing program is 5 631 kg (12 388 lb) milk and 228 kg (502 lb) butterfat, i.e. 4.05 percent in 305 days on twice-daily milking. The average protein is 3.41 percent.

Over the last 25 years, the average milk production of the Canadian Ayrshire cows on an official milk recording program has increased by more than 50 percent. This is an impressive achievement and represents the most significant improvement in all the Canadian dairy breeds. Progressive Ayrshire breeders have recognized the importance of both type and production and their efforts have been rewarded.

The Ayrshire breeders in collaboration with the artificial insemination centres, have succeeded in testing more young sires than breeders in other Canadian associations in relation to the size of its population. This bodes well for the future of Ayrshires.

