



American Milking Shorthorn Society

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THE NATIVE BRED PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN MILKING SHORTHORN SOCIETY

Until 1949 the United States had one unified herdbook for recording Shorthorns. However, within this book there existed two distinct elements. One, the Milking Shorthorn group, focused on the Shorthorn as a dual-purpose breed, specializing neither in beef or dairy but serving both functions for the general-purpose farmer. The other section focused on beef production.

Both sides were closed herdbook. However, the Milking Shorthorn group had a program where by grade Shorthorns could be upgraded to herdbook status after five generations meeting minimum production levels. This applied to only females. Starting in the 1920's this program was similar to one used in the Coates herdbook beginning earlier in the century. However, no animal with known non-Shorthorn blood could be entered in the program.

After the division the American Milking Shorthorn Society and the American Shorthorn Association followed different paths. In the late 1950's AMSS introduced New Zealand Milking Shorthorn blood. One of these bulls was part Illawarra. While Illawarra was mainly a Shorthorn derived breed, there were other dairy breeds used in the development. While the bulls that supplied the semen were registered as full blood Milking Shorthorns, the reality was this was the first known introduction of genetic material into the breed that was not pure Shorthorn. In 1964 limited introduction of Holstein blood was admitted into the AMSS registration system. This was the second acknowledged infusion of non-Shorthorn blood into the breed. In 1969 the Illawarra breed itself was introduced from Australia. At the same time limited Ayrshire blood was blended in. In the early 1980's the Norwegian bull K. Schie was admitted into the AMSS herdbook as a fully registered animal. The ASA had its own genetic blending programs.

In both organizations groups of breeders wanted to maintain as close to 100% Shorthorn blood as possible. In AMSS this led to the creation of the "Native Bred" program. This inventory intended to identify and protect Shorthorn cattle that traced as much as possible to Coates Herd Book One.

The initial design traced animals back to 1949, the Year of the division. The logic being that no outside blood had been introduced before this time. It was soon realized that this ignored the problem of animals that may have attained herdbook status through grade-up programs in either the Coates Herdbook in the U.K. or the herdbook in the United States. Another possible source of outside blood through the Red Lincoln was also recognized coming through other nations' herdbooks. As a result the pedigree searches became much deeper.

The policy currently requires that to qualify as a "Native Bred" all U.S. ancestry must trace to the original U.S. herdbook or, if from animals imported later, to Coates Herdbook One. At this time, no more than 500 animals in the U.S. are known to qualify for the "N" designation. While research is ongoing and the number may well increase from the discovery of new herds, the total number is still, at this time, critically low.