



The dairy cattle industry in the Czech Republic

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Cattle breeding and organised milk recording have enjoyed a long tradition in the territory of present-day Czech Republic. The first official milk recording system was implemented in 1905. The first breeding organisations in the Czech Republic were established following the founding of various agricultural societies in 1769. In 1890, an associated cattle cooperative began to keep herd books. Gregor Johann Mendel, the founder of modern genetics (born in 1822) established many of the rules of heredity, which are now used as the laws of Mendelian inheritance and represent the building blocks of ICAR's and Interbull's work. In 1990, a breeders' association was re-established as the main driver of genetic improvement in the Czech Republic.

In 1996, this became the Czech Moravian Breeders' Corporation (CMBC), created for the purpose of serving farmer needs. As of early 2019, the Czech Republic had a total of 1,415,770 cattle, including 364,263 dairy cows and 226,255 beef cows. The number of beef cows has increased over the last couple of years, with the majority of dairy cows comprising Holstein (60%) and Fleckvieh (37%) and other breeds making up the remaining 3%. There has been a notable increase in milk production over the last twenty years. In 2018, milk yields from Holstein cattle reached 10,059 kg/milk and in the case of Fleckvieh, 7,591 kg/milk.

The proportion of recorded cows in the CR is one of the highest among ICAR countries, with 347,950 cows recorded in September 2018, representing 96.4% of the total number of cows recorded. The country also boasts the highest average herd and company sizes among ICAR members. The Czech Republic uses the AZ4, A4 and AT4 milk recording methods as specified in the ICAR Guidelines. The milk sector has a central position within the food supply chain, generating a source of regular income. For the year 2018, raw milk production totalled 3,078,390 tonnes and 2,978,411 tonnes in sales. The Czech Republic is also an active exporter, engaging in the international trade of milk, yogurts, whey and live animals.

As a premium breeder, the Czech industry also exports animals and genetic material to many countries. The CMBC provides a wide range of services for domestic and international breeders. As an umbrella organisation, it oversees animal identification and registration as well as its ISO-accredited milk analysis and DNA laboratories. Its DNA laboratory is accredited by ICAR for parentage verification and genotyping of the most common animal species. Other services include genetic evaluation, linear classification of dairy cattle, technical herdbook maintenance, and data processing with regard to all aspects of cattle breeding. The CMBC complies with regular ICAR audits under the ICAR Certificate of Quality programme for dairy and beef cattle. The company is a founding member of Interbeef and has been a member of ICAR since 1991 and Interbull since 1994.