



Czech Republic Fleckvieh Show

Dual purpose Fleckvieh cattle are strong milk producers and produce fast-growing weaners. **Dr Johan Kluyts** went to the Czech Republic to judge these cattle at their 11th National Exhibition.



ABOVE: The Grand Champion Cow of the Fleckvieh National Exhibition, a one-day event, which attracts 12 000 visitors to the small town of Radešinská Svatka.

LEFT: A class winner with a young admirer. Fleckvieh are known for their good temperament. PHOTOS: JOHAN KLUYTS

The Czech Fleckvieh Breeders' Association invited Dr Johan Kluyts of South Africa and Dr Daniele Vicario from Italy to judge the 11th National Exhibition on 6 September in the town of Radešinská Svatka. With a population of 600 inhabitants, the town lies about 50km north-west of

bovine products is 60ℓ fresh milk, 13,3kg cheese, 5kg butter and 9,4kg beef. The average herd size is 247 cows-in-milk. There are 1,3 million head of cattle in the Czech Republic: 384 000 dairy cows and 168 000 beef cows. The national dairy cow herd has a 45% Fleckvieh component while the beef herd is 44% Fleckvieh.

The Czech Fleckvieh Breeders' Association, with its offices in Zdar nad Sazavou, is 22 years old with 324 members. Its herd book lists 140 000 registered cows from 650 farms.

BREEDING GOALS

Czech breeders prefer a dual purpose cow with strong milk production. Specific breeding goals are: 6 500kg to 7 500kg of milk per lactation, a 3,5% protein content, 26 to 28 months age at first calving,

'THE CZECH HIGHLANDS ARE EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD FOR MEAT AND MILK PRODUCTION, FOR POTATOES AND FOR FORESTRY.'

Brno and 150km south-east of Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic.

The country has a population of 10,3 million of which 2,9% are directly employed by the agricultural sector. The total land area is 79 000km² and the total agricultural land area is 42 540km². Annual *per capita* consumption of

a 380-day ICP, longevity of five lactations, bull ADG of 1,3kg plus, cow liveweight of 650kg to 750kg and bull liveweight of 1 200kg to 1 300kg.

In 2007, the association established a subsidiary company, Cattle Market Ltd, that focuses on trading of cattle for breeding and slaughter.

Although the National



TOP LEFT: Judges Dr Johan Kluyts (South Africa) and Dr Daniele Vicario (Italy) confer as they inspect cattle at the Fleckvieh Show in the Czech Republic.



TOP RIGHT: From left: The Czech Republic's assistant minister for agriculture, Dr Jiri Mach with Dr Johan Kluyts and Roman Sustacek, dairy farmer and president of the Czech Fleckvieh Breeders' Association.



ABOVE: Reserve Grand Champion of the show. The Fleckvieh cow is a balanced dual purpose cow of a type preferred by European farmers.

Show is a one-day event that takes place on alternate years, about 12 000 people attended. The show is held on the town's sports grounds and, except for the judging ring and a small pavilion, there are no permanent structures.

Judging was attended by Dr Jiří Mach, assistant minister for agriculture in the Czech Republic; Josef Matějka, agriculture minister of the Vysočina region; and Bruce Holmquist of Canada, president of the World Simmental Fleckvieh Federation.

MOUNTAIN MEADOWS

The translation of *Vysočina* is highlands, an appropriate name as the region occupies most of the Czech-Moravian Highlands, an upland area with rolling hills and more than a thousand small settlements. This area is exceptionally good for meat and milk production (15% of the country's cattle are raised here), for potatoes (more than a third of potatoes harvested in the Czech Republic come from *Vysočina*) and has the highest forest production.

CONFERENCE AND COMPETITION

Before the show started Dr Kluyts delivered

a presentation on Simmentaler breeding in South Africa and Namibia at an international workshop on Simmentaler/Fleckvieh breeding.

Only cows in milk (95) divided into four age groups (first, second, third, and fourth or more lactations) consisting of a number of classes in each age group were shown.

Winners from each class competed for age group honours in the semi-finals and the four semi-finalists competed for the prestigious National Champion Cow award.

Age group winners received a certificate, a cow-bell and a

Moravian crystal vase.

Media (TV, radio and newspapers) coverage of the event was extensive. In true Czech tradition, the top handlers each received a bottle of *slivovice* (Czech *mampoer*).

LOCAL FARMERS AND PEOPLE

Roman Šustáček, president of the Czech Fleckvieh Breeders' Association farms on 2 700ha with 850 Fleckvieh cows, 450 currently in milk. Animals are stabled in sheds and fed farm-grown forage.

Significantly, the farm is almost completely self-sufficient in energy, relying heavily on so-called

green energy. Every roof is covered in solar panels and biogas is produced from used bedding, leftover feed and manure. The liquid fraction from the biogas production is used as fertiliser and the solid residue is dried and re-used as animal bedding.

Czech people are outgoing, sincere and passionate about their country, their cattle and their beer. This is a country everyone should visit at least once.

• Contact the Simmentaler/Simbra Cattle Breeder's Society on 051 446 0580 or at info@simmentaler.org.za