

# Welcome to Denmark



It is a great pleasure to host all of you, and we are so pleased that Holstein breeders from almost all member countries have registered as a delegate for the twenty seventh Holstein Conference. For the past couple of years we have spent a good deal of time to prepare this event.

In Denmark we have a long tradition with Friesian, Shorthorn and Holstein cattle, and today the difference between the red and black-and white Holsteins is small as far as production and genetic potential is concerned. For many years we have worked hard to improve our breed.

Last year the Danish Holstein Herd Book celebrated its 125th anniversary, and the Danish Holstein Association was founded back in 1949. Since we have made structural adjustments, but we still try to have a close connection to all Holstein breeders.

## Local Holstein clubs are essential

We have 14 regional Holstein clubs. Each of them is represented by the chairman on our board. The local clubs arrange meetings, social gatherings, and tours. The clubs are often involved in shows and other breeding activities. In close cooperation with AI Centre Dansire the Danish Holstein Association discusses and agrees on breeding goals and standards for breeding values. We are also involved in marketing the Holstein breed, and we keep our members updated about activities and the development of the breed. This gives a responsibility to be open-minded towards what happens in the global Holstein world and to provide well-balanced information to all breeders. We are serious about this responsibility.

The structure of AI centres has changed over the years. In 1936 we had the first Danish centre with artificial insemination. The following year we had six and in the period 1947-1957 we had 106 AI centres which is the highest number recorded. Development has continued and today we are back to one AI centre – Dansire. Breeders claim better genetics and reduced costs and from January 1, 2008 Dansire has merged with the Swedish AI organisation, Svensk Avel.

In cattle breeding you get what you go for! We go for optimized genetic progress for all breeders. We go for live born calves and longevity. We go for minimized costs in relation to breeding better genetics with lower risk for poor health and fertility.

## Registration and sustainable breeding goals

Denmark has a unique registration program. Relevant information and data from breeders, advisers, AI-technicians, veterinarians, classifiers, and many other service-related persons or organisations is collected, stored, and processed in our Central Cattle Data Base. This gives unique opportunities to calculate relevant breeding values and to develop useful management tools. Next step will be data registered by hoof trimmers to be used to calculate relevant breeding values for feet and legs in order to develop a healthy and trouble free cow.

Since the 1950'ies up through the 1990'ies Danish Holstein imported semen from many bulls for our breeding program. We made progress and today we have national Holstein herds of international genetic quality due to continuous usage of data and improved genetics. Today we are not only recipients of Holstein genetics; but we are also donors and we export lots of semen of highly proven sires to a number of countries such as Germany, Sweden, Holland, and in the near future also to France and the UK. AI organisations in many countries have realized the potential of the Danish pole of proven genetics. Consequently genetics are moving across country borders – from breeder to breeder. Everybody has something to contribute and to gain.

Danish Holstein and Danish Red Holstein invite you to find how we manage the Holstein breed and how well our breeders develop, improve, and manage their herds. Our Holstein breeders are confident for the future, and they develop their dairy operations to be part of that future.

Enjoy your stay in Denmark!

Peter V. Laustsen

President of the Danish Holstein Association