



December 2023

Newsletter Number 12

Dear Red Breed Enthusiasts,

Two thousand and twenty three is drawing to a close with most northern hemisphere cows now safely indoors for the winter, while on the other side of the globe they are enjoying the last glimpses of spring. For many, farm trading conditions are not easy as milk price has eased, but the cost of inputs has remained high. However, we look forward with confidence and hope toward the new year and the opportunities which lie ahead.

Perhaps you should reflect on the challenges for the member breeds of the IRDBF, which are driven by volunteers who keep their organisations functioning after they have finished the duties of their own farm businesses. We live in an era when volunteers for any community purpose are becoming a rare thing and this exposes a weakness to the Red cow because we are a conglomeration of small breeds, most of whom do not have the critical mass to employ full time managers and field staff. So I salute those who willingly give up their free time and devote it to the improvement and promotion of the Red Dairy Cow!

I especially thank our New Zealand friends who are presently laying the foundations to host an IRDBF conference in their lovely country in 2026. It is early work as yet, but I want to encourage them and the IRDBF directors have made themselves available to assist in any way they can to ensure it becomes a vibrant event in "The Land of the Long White Cloud".

This issue we read about the Angler Reds in the far north of Germany and in history was once part of Denmark. Please read the breed perspective presented by Claus Peter Tordsen, followed by the farm profile of IRDBF director Lorenz Engelbrecht.

German Red Angler

Many readers know the German Red Angler. Around 12,000 cows plus their offspring are currently kept in Germany. The largest proportion of the population is at home in Angeln. The Angler cow takes its name from the Angeln region, where it was first mentioned 5,000 years ago and was therefore kept and bred. In addition to the modern population, there are around 400 cows and 12 bulls of the old type, most of these animals are kept on organic farms, they are characterized by higher fat percentages and are therefore often used for cheese production. The cows are smaller in frame and less demanding, which is why they are also used as suckler cows in landscape conservation. Breeders of this breed of red cattle receive state support to preserve the genetic resource.



Heifers from the old Type

The Verband Deutscher Rotviehzüchter e.V. advises and represents the entire Red Cattle population in Germany. The current breeding program is carried out by Rinderzucht Schleswig-Holstein. Around 9,000 cows are registered in the herd book. Genomic selection has been carried out together with Viking Genetics for several years. The best young cows and young cattle are mated in a targeted manner. Every four months, two genomic young bulls are added to the range of bulls on offer; these make around 2000 inseminations and then wait for their daughters' values. With German Red Anglers, as with the other Red cattle populations, special attention is paid to functional traits in addition to milk production, where fat and protein values are important. The polled gene and protein quality (A2A2) are also becoming increasingly important.

In the almost completed year 2023, the German Red Angler focused on the animal shows. In April, the animal show in Süderbrarup, which only takes place every 5-6 years, was held in Süderbrarup. 60 show cows and a progeny group of the bull Voxy were presented. At the shows, the focus is on conformation. Compared to other Red cattle populations, size and harmony play a major role in Angeln. Many German Red Anglers stand together with Holsteins in mixed herds and must be able to keep up in terms of conformation. In June, the national show was held in Alsfeld, where a collection of Red cattle was shown. Red cattle cows from various regions of Germany were presented. The largest breed block at the national show consisted of Holsteins, but cows of the Fleckvieh, Brown Swiss and Jersey breeds were also exhibited. It was important for the German Red Angler to attract attention as a medium size alternative with good feet & legs and udders in order to win new fans.

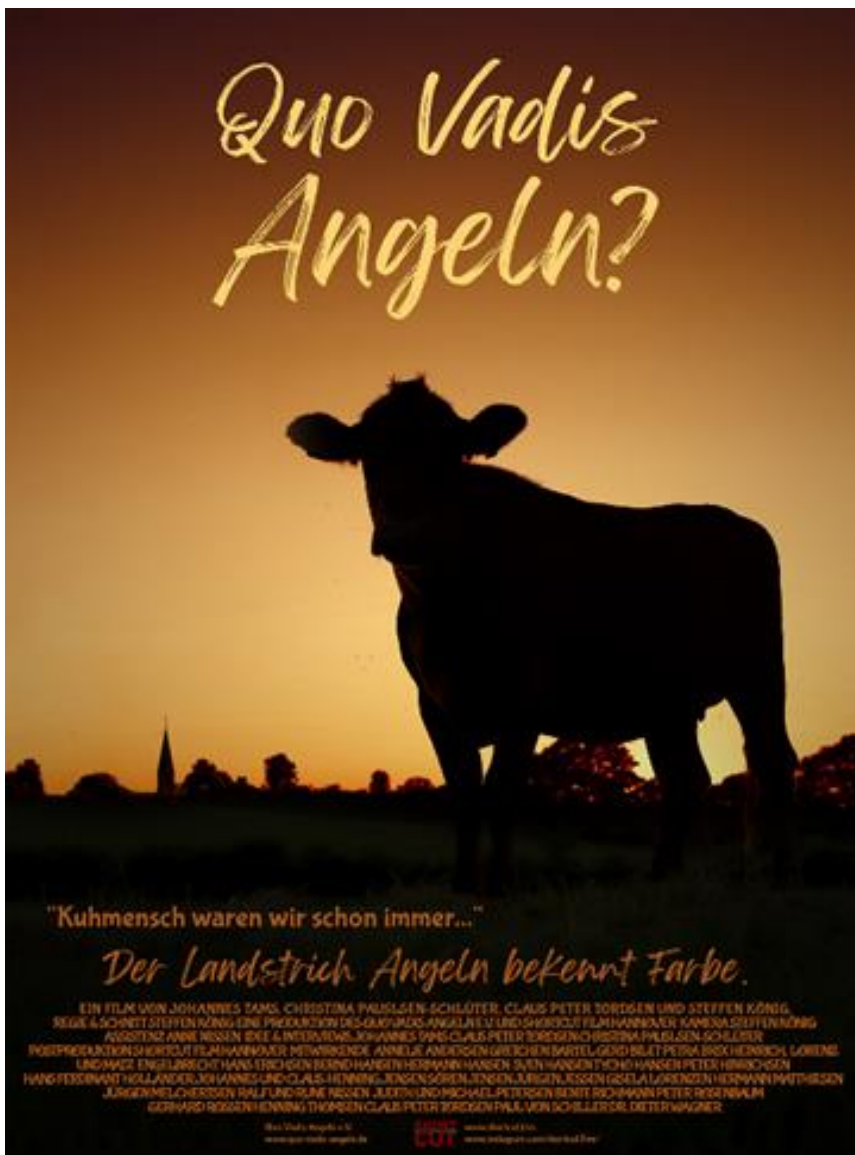


Rana (sire: Kollund) from Michael Petersen became a present for her lifetime production

Longevity is another important aspect of Angler breeding, and this year, many cows were honored that have already produced over 100,000 kg of milk in their lifetime. With the cow Riha, an R Facet daughter was recently honored, who reached this hurdle after her 7th calving at the age of only 9.5 years and thus achieved a new record. This year, the cow with the highest lifetime production has produced 141,000 kg of milk. The increase in cows with longer lifespans is important for profitability.

A project is currently being carried out on red cattle in which the nutrient and climate efficiency of the red cow is being investigated. Over the next two years, animals that already have genomic values will be examined with regard to their fatty acid composition. The aim is to determine the fatty acids of 1500 cows in 12 months at each milk check in order to derive an estimate of methane production. We expect the results in 2025, which will hopefully show that our red cows are particularly climate-friendly.

In terms of marketing, new markets were opened up again this year. Embryos from Red German Angler were exported to the USA for the first time. Semen was also exported to Switzerland in addition to the traditional markets. In the live cattle segment, customers from Austria bought several calves and pregnant heifers. At the domestic auctions of Rinderzucht Schleswig-Holstein eG, the Anglers had a high proportion of sales this year, with many animals being sold to other German regions.



In recent years, many Angler farms have been filmed with the aim of capturing the structural change in agriculture in the Angeln region. As a result, the documentary film "Quo vadis Angeln" is now available on DVD. The film shows the development of our farms and contains valuable statements from all generations about their connection to agriculture and their Red cattle. It contains many beautiful landscape shots and the film has now been provided with English subtitles.

Cover from Quo vadis Angeln

Information and photographs are provided with the compliments of Claus Peter Tordsen, of RSH

Farm Profile:

Hello and "Moin, Moin as we say" dear Red Cattle breeders worldwide. I would like to take the opportunity today to introduce our farm in the December issue of the newsletter. My name is Lorenz Engelbrecht and I live with my family in Grundhof near Flensburg in the Angeln region. This is in the very north of Germany, right on the border with Denmark.

Our farm has been in the family since 1698 and has been passed on to the next generation ever since. I took over the farm from my parents in 1998 and, together with my wife, I am the 10th generation to run the farm. When our son, who has also completed his agricultural training, wants to take over the farm in a few years' time, he will be the 11th generation.

We currently farm around 95 hectares and keep 140 dairy cows plus all the female offspring. The herd consists of 75% Anglers and 25% Holstein Friesian.

The bull calves are mainly sold at 4 weeks of age and go to the calf fattening unit. Only some of the bull calves, which have an interesting pedigree, remain on the farm for rearing. These are then genomically tested for their performance traits in consultation with Rinderzucht Schleswig-Holstein eG (RSH).

Depending on how well they test, it is decided whether they will be purchased for the insemination station or whether they will be reared as jumping bulls and sold to other farms.

All young cattle are reared and inseminated with sexed semen so that they calve more easily.

The best 30% of the cows receive sexed semen, the middle 40% receive conventional semen and the weakest 30% are inseminated with beef bulls, mostly Belgian Blue.

Since the beginning of genomic selection in the Angler population, the entire female offspring on our farm has been genomically tested. As the marketing of female breeding cattle is another branch of the business in addition to milk production, genomic selection is a decisive selection criterion for those who remain for breeding or are marketed as calved heifers via the RSH auction.



Zimtziege dam of Bambus P

Genomic selection can also be used to find potential, previously undiscovered bull dams from unknown bloodlines, with whom an ET flush with a suitable sire can be carried out in order to gain new so-called outcross bulls for the relatively small Angler population.

According to the principle, we discovered the young cow 590 with the name "Zimtziege" in our herd in 2019, which was tested as a calf with an RZG of 129. She embodies the breeding goal that we want to achieve with genomic selection. High willingness to perform combined with good conformation and a long productive life.

After mating advice, she was bred as a young cow to the bull VR Babus from which we got 5 pregnancies. 4 bull calves and 1 cow calf were born.

The highest tested bull calf had an RZG of 126 and was also polled. It was purchased, reared and licensed by the RSH. He bears the name "Bambus P" and is being used by RSH in the current insemination season. Another VR Ulian son out of "Zimtziege" was tested this year with a gRZG of 134 and was also purchased by the RSH.

This cow not only inherits high performance but also has show potential is shown by her successes at regional and national level. At the show "Süderbrarup am Abend" she was reserve champion and at the German Dairy Show in Alsfeld she achieved a 1b place.



Show winner in Süderbrarup

Another exceptional cow in our herd is "Nadine". She is a VR Facet daughter and is now 12 years old. She is in excellent health and passed the 100,000 kg mark in September. What makes her special is that she comes from an old cow line on our farm. "Nadine" was the lead cow in the herd for many years and still has very good feet and legs and is already pregnant again.

Thanks to early records, her pedigree can be traced back to the year 1859. Her lineage includes many cows that have reached a ripe old age and therefore shone with long productive lives.



Nadine was honoured from the breeding committee

Another "Lorgard" daughter from the same line is also close to the magical 100,000 kg mark with currently 95,000 kg of milk.

All in all, we attach great importance to trouble-free, functional, unobtrusive cows with a long productive life on our farm. And if they also look pretty, that's a nice side effect. With cows like "Zimtziege" and "Nadine", breeding is fun and with the help of genomic selection, we can quickly find the young cattle that will form the next generation in our herd, with which we earn our money. After all, that's what we ultimately want.

The cows should feed our family for as many generations as possible after us.

Thankyou very much to Lorenz and Claus Peter for their work writing these profile and producing the supporting photographs.

I do hope you all enjoy the annual celebration of the birth of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who embodies eternal hope and a life of service to others.

Graeme Hamilton