MEDIA RELEASE

Dairy SolutioNZ develops new heat tolerant cow to thrive in low tropics

Hamilton, New Zealand-based Dairy Solutionz Ltd has led an expert genetics team to develop a new dairy cow breed conditioned to thrive in lower elevation tropical climates and achieve high milk production under heat stress.

Derek Fairweather, Chief Executive of Dairy Solutionz Ltd, said, "Our new composite breed will be used on the large-scale dairy farm systems we are constructing in partnership with governments and land owners in countries such as USA, Colombia and Ecuador."

Dairy Solutionz will open its first dairy demonstration farms in Colombia and Ecuador before the end of 2014.

The genetics project was supported with Callaghan Innovation funding to develop the new composite breeds, some of whose origins are based on years of research at the University of Florida.

Researchers at the University had originally bred a recently discovered 'slick locus[1]' (originating from Senepol cattle) into American Holsteins. This gave the new American composite breed an improved ability to regulate its body temperature while maintaining milk yield under heat stress.

"The Dairy Solutionz team has now taken the slick locus and introduced it into New Zealand pasture genetics for the first time as part of what is now a seven year program. The new composite animals will be branded as Kiwipole™ ,dairy cows. The company has a range of cows and bulls all containing DNA proven as holding the slick locus.

"The point of difference for Dairy Solutionz's New Zealand, world-first composite Kiwipole™ dairy cow is that it has great heat tolerance coupled with the best pasture genetics in the world. This creates an animal ideally suited to maximise production in grass-based, tropical dairy systems," explained genetics consultant to Dairy Solutionz, Dr Vish Vishwanath.

Earlier this year, research performed by Serdal Dikmen and the University of Florida indicated up to two litres per day improved milk yield per animal through better heat tolerance. "Multiply this increased milk yield over a large or national herd and the end result is a very significant prize," said Mr Fairweather.

The first Kiwipole™ bulls - Kiwipole™ Slick Grazer son of Scotts Comanche, Efficient, Supreme and Super are ready to make to order. Many cows have been bred with Kiwipole™ genetics over the past few seasons and Dairy Solutionz has begun a three-year proving programme.

Since 2007, Dairy Solutionz has worked with its international partners to design and integrate best-of-breed technologies into its large-scale offshore pastoral farms.

"Over the past seven years, dozens of New Zealand agritechnology companies have partnered with us to develop turnkey solutions to create unique, highly productive tropical dairy farms in key locations around the world. We're excited about opening our first demonstration farms within the next few months," said Mr Fairweather.

Derek Fairweather with Kiwipole™ Slick Grazer, he is 50% Scotts Comanche a high ranking crossbreed to provide pasture efficiency and fertility, with 25% American Holstein to match export milk pricing for local volume, and 25% Senepol for heat resistance and the slick locus. Interestingly his dam, who is 50% American Holstein and 50% Senepol has been producing milk at volumes greater than the New Zealand average cow at over 6500l last season, indicating the Senepol should be considered a very good dual purpose breed.