

French 'Cheese' Breed Comes To The U.S.

**MICHELLE
RANCK-KUNJAPPU**
Lancaster Farming Staff

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — U.S. dairy farmers may soon be traveling to the coastline of France to bring home new genetics.

The Normande breed's high milk components, sturdy build, and calm temperament are turning heads as the breed begins mingling its hardy traits with U.S. breeds.

The animals are a dual purpose breed from the Normandy coastal area in France.

According to Jerome Chateau, president and founder of "Normande Genetics," the breed has been in the U.S. for 30 years. Chateau imports and sells semen and embryos to the U.S.

A native of France, he has grown up seeing the animals.

"The breed has improved tremendously in the past 30 years," he said. Although Normandes are not new to the U.S., however, they were viewed as mainly a beef breed, so the lines that were imported were the "least dairy" animals.

In France the bull calves are subjected to a five-month growth and feed conversion test. Little more than the top third pass the beef test, said Chateau.

Of the 400 bull calves that enter the test every year,



This picture, taken in France, shows the Normandes in their typical French pastoral setting.

160 move onto progeny testing, the dairy portion of the testing, and 20 "graduate," said Chateau.

The beef test ensures that the breed is "kept from drifting into a very dairy model," he said. "The progeny test is so the breed stays dairy, also. There is no such thing as a beef Normande and a dairy Normande in France."


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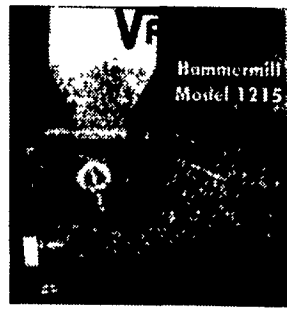
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