

Ciao Bella: Lowlines in Italy

A lot of time, hard work and a significant financial outlay over the past seven years has been spent by Vitulus on developing a market in the EU. All this hard work has finally come to fruition and exciting times are ahead for the Lowline Breed and the development of the EU market.

In 2003 the first shipment of Lowline embryos were collected. In 2006 these were sent to England to George and Waid Helyer. Now in 2010 another shipment of 27 embryos is departing with more embryos to the Helyers as well two new studs in England and one in Italy.

A recent agreement between Vitulus Lowline Stud and Italy's largest independent semen distributor has seen the recent sale of 12 embryos and two hundred straws of Lowline semen heading to Northern Italy. The independent AI Company is headed by one of Italy's most experienced dairy personnel with 35 years experience working as a sire analyst of the Holstein Breed. Their company also markets semen from their own Holstein bulls and import semen from the USA and Canada.

A huge opportunity is seen for the Lowline semen to be used in the dairy industry where there are literally thousands of small dairy farms facing the same problems that Australian dairy farmers that being low milk prices and increasing production costs. Dairy farmers are looking for "an efficient new option". It is envisaged that the Lowline dairy cross animal will produce a wonderful product for the Italy's very popular veal market.

Meat production in Italy currently accounts for around 25% of GDP. The Italian supply of veal and meat does not cover the national demand of both products. Veal calves are kept in closed barns for the whole fattening period and they receive a milk replacer diet to obtain a so-called white meaty with a pale pink color due to a low content of myoglobin in the muscle tissue. The demand of veal meat in Italy is only partially covered by the internal production. The veal calves reared and slaughter in Italy represent 67.6% of the total demand while the remaining (32.4%) is covered by importing veal meat mainly from Holland and France. Only one third of the animals slaughtered in Italy are born in the country. The others are imported mainly from France or Eastern Europe.

Vitulus is Latin for 'little calf' and it so it would seem appropriate that we are finally able to export to one of the biggest producers of little calves in the EU.