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TECHNOLOGY AND TAILORED COWS

The high quality of Brazilian meat that is praised worldwide is the result of investments in genetic improvements.

The Brazilian bovine genetic is nowadays one of the most developed and promising in the world making its meat an international success.

Besides hosting the largest commercial herd in the world - around 200 million head - and one of the world biggest exporters - Brazil is active in genetic services in certain breeds.

In order to maintain a permanent improvement of the national herd, local companies are developing techniques such as DNA analysis, in vitro fertilization, cloning and embryos selection.

The good results pave the way for the export of such technology.

According to the Brazilian Trade Bureau, the total revenue of bovine semen exports rose from US$ 480 thousand to US$ 909 thousand in the last two years and its volume increased from 105 thousand to 163 thousand doses.

Brazil turned to breeding animals to increase its profitability counting on the resource provided by its semen and embryos stocks.

In the Brazilian farm of 'Mata Velha', one of the 'temples' of Zebu race, in the city of Uberaba, thousands of elite animals are a permanent source of reproductive material.

The demand for the Brazilian bovine genetic is associated with the adaptation of livestock breeds such as Nelore, dairy Gir and Guzera, as well as the North American Zebuino Brahman to Brazilian tropical climate.

Around 80% of the national herd is composed by those races originated from India and improved in Brazil.

In the farm of 'Jacarezinho' located in the city of 'Valparaiso' its main focus is breeding Nelore and Braford (South African origin) races - with 19 thousand head - aiming the improvement of productivity and increase of beef exports.

Figures

The recent advances in genetic engineering are the engine of this market.

The use of modern in vitro fertilization techniques result in the generation of up to 60 calves per cow. The previous technology allowed at most the birth of 15 calves per cow.

According to the Brazilian Society of Embryos Technology (SBTE), in 2007, 396 thousand of cattle embryos were made in the world by in vitro fertilization and 198 thousand of them were in Brazil.

The performance of the Brazilian industry is even more evident in the city of Uberaba, one of the main centers of genetic cattle in the world.

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There are in the city five insemination centers, 15 breeding centers and 60 farms for genetic production.

It also houses the headquarters of the Brazilian Association of Zebu Breeders (ABCZ), which holds, among other activities, the register of Asian breeds in Brazilian farms.

Since the beginning of last century, when Brazilian farmers traveled to India to buy bulls and cows, Brazil has become a reference in livestock technology and control information of the national herd.

These activities are at the root of the Brazilian meat and milk production high performance.

In 2003 the ABCZ created the “Brazilian Cattle” - a program to promote its livestock around the world gathering 18 companies - confirmed the international demand for Brazilian genetic technology.

Last year first experimental embryos exports yielded US$ 95 thousand.

Between 2004 and 2007, the revenue of the sale of semen in the international market increased from US$ 378.8 to US$ 653.4 thousand.

A Government survey indicates that 7,381 purebred pregnant cattle were exported in 2007.

Zebu

The Brazilian genetic bovine material is already in the Chinese market.

The exchange between technicians and veterinarians of both countries has been growing.

A mission of Chinese scientists was in the city of Uberaba and ratified a term of technical cooperation for transfer of technology with the Brazilian Association of Zebu Breeders (ABCZ) in 2005.

During that trip, the Chinese scientists visited farms and insemination centers to collect information in order to fasten the present bilateral negotiations.

China wants to import semen and embryos of dairy Zebu breeds as well as beef cattle taken in account its will to increase its supply of milk and meat at its domestic market.

The Brazilian bovine genetic material will make possible the projects launched on 2005 by ABCZ and the Research Institute of Yunnan aiming the establishment of a model farm in China for developing dairy Gir (a kind of Zebu cattle).

That being so, the prospects for cooperation in agro industry, as well in other areas, offer a positive scenario for the development of commercial and economic relations between Brazil and China.