



## *Gelbvieh Cattle*



The Gelbvieh (pronounced Gelp-fee) breed is one of the oldest German cattle breeds, first found mainly in three Franconian districts of Bavaria. Starting in 1850, systematic breeding work began in stud herds. By pure breeding, the “red-yellow Franconian cattle” were developed from several local strains, including Celtic-German Landrace and Heli-Brown Landrace cattle. These local strains have been further improved with intensive breeding work since 1870. This solid-coloured breed of red-yellow cattle enjoyed great popularity as milk, draft and slaughter cattle.

Several societies for improved breeding of the cattle were founded. The societies aimed at improvement through standardizing the indigenous breed by selecting the best bulls, pure breeding for a single colour and improvement of performance in work fitness and milk production. In 1897, the Breed Society for yellow Franconia Cattle for Middle and Upper Franconia in Nurnberg was founded. It was followed by the Breed Society for Gelbvieh in Lower Franconia, based in Wurzburg and founded in 1899.

Since World War II, Germany has used a stringent selection program to repopulate its cattle herds. Only three percent of the registered cows are used to produce potential bulls. These cows are selected on structural soundness and conformation.

Bulls from these select cows are performance-tested, and the top half are progeny-tested. The progeny evaluation includes gestation length, birth weight, calving ease, growth rate, slaughter weight, carcass quality, and confirmation, as well as udder soundness, fertility and milk production in daughters. Semen is released only from bulls that prove their superiority in progeny testing.

In the 1960s, Red Danish cattle were introduced to the herd book to improve milk production. Leness Hall, then director of International Marketing for Carnation Genetics, first saw Gelbvieh cattle in 1969. He worked towards importing Gelbvieh semen into the United States and was finally able to get 43,000 units imported into the States in 1971.

Gelbvieh cattle came to Canada in 1972, the same year the Canadian Gelbvieh Association was formed.

Gelbvieh cattle offer a unique production package. Gelbvieh are one of the few breeds combining maternal traits with performance and carcass merit.

Gelbvieh calves are widely recognized for excellence in growth, muscling and marketability, while Gelbvieh females are known for milking ability, fertility and quiet temperament.