

Ivaniskey First to Export Blonde Embryos to Australia

Report by William McElroy



Above: William & Ruth McElroy pictured at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, with Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, getting ready for the first ever export of blonde Embryos to Australia

The Ivaniskey herd owed by I & R McElroy & son, Dromara Co. Down are currently exporting Embryos from some top bloodlines within their herd of pedigree British blondes to Australia. This is the first time that a consignment of embryos from the UK has ever been exported within the breed to Australia. A large quantity of Embryos from Ivaniskey Ur for Me, Ivaniskey Sabrina and Ivaniskey Vanessa were selected. These cows have been successfully flushed by Paragon Veterinary Group to our stock bull Doncombe Aga Khan. A large quantity of Semen from Aga Khan is also being exported.

William said, after launching our website WWW.IVANISKEY.COM, in 2010 we have had a number of enquiry's from livestock breeders in the UK and various countries throughout the world. Bob and Jan Andrews based in Australia who own the Old Kentucky Blonde herd at Wangarratta were one of the first herds to contact me regarding the breeding within our herd. After a number of emails back and forward, we both joined the world of Skype, which allowed us to speak face to face through the internet and discuss the type of breeding that the Australian market requires.

In January this year, I decided to go and see what the Australian breeders had to offer. So a month later I set off to see some of the top herds out there. This trip was partly funded by a grant from British Livestock Genetics. During this trip I visited numerous Blonde herds, the quality of stock really surprised me as some of the conditions in which the cattle have to survive, is mainly just sand with little grass.

In April I attended the Old Kentucky Northern Invitational sale hosted on the Andrews farm in Wangarratta, with various breeders offering animals for sale. Sheena Kennedy a blonde council member met up with me for this sale. One animal that took our fancy was a one and a half year old



Above: William viewing livestock in Australia

heifer "Old Kentucky El grace". This heifer was sired by a bull called hustler, which had impressed me at one of the farms I had visited earlier. El grace showed excellent style and conformation for her age and was jointly purchased by The Kennedy family, Overton Blondes and ourselves, Ivaniskey Blondes. Our aim is to keep the heifer in Australia and flush her to various sires that we picked over there and then import the embryos to the UK and hopefully within a few years we will be able to offer UK breeder's new genetics for their herds.

Shortly after In May 2011 the Andrews family decided to take a trip to the UK to visit some of the top herds in England, Scotland, and Ireland. It was during this trip that Bob and Jan decided to select animals from which they could flush and then export the embryos back to Australia for their herd.

Bob and Jan chose three cows at the Ivaniskey herd to flush, those being Ivaniskey Ur -for-me, who is a daughter of Ivaniskey Ruthybaby and is sired by Ballygrainey Jack. Over the years she has done extremely well in the show ring, being awarded Champion and Interbreed champion at many Agricultural shows throughout her show career. A daughter of Ivaniskey Ur-for-me sold for £4250 in 2009



Above: Ivaniskey Ur for Me

who is a daughter of Ivaniskey Sabrina and sired by Blackwater Jockey. Like the other two cow's she has had a very successful show career and won many awards.

Bob Andrews also selected our Stock bull Doncombe Aga Khan as the sire for all the embryos. Doncombe Aga Khan was purchased in



Above: Ivaniskey Vanessa

good conformation, high growth rates, and good locomotion. His progeny have done well at shows and sales throughout the UK and have taken both breed and interbreed championships. His first daughter offered for sale took female Champion at Carlisle. All Semen taken by the AI Services has been completely sold out and the bull has now returned to the centre for a further collection of semen to be taken.

Right: Doncombe Aga Khan

Another cow selected was Ivaniskey Sabrina whose dam is Ivaniskey Olga and is sired by Ashtonlodge Jet. She is from a very milky line of breeding cows within the herd. Her brother Ivaniskey Uel was the Supreme Blonde Champion at the Perth bull sales in February 2004. Olga is one of the oldest cows in the herd and is continuing to breed a consistent line of good offspring.

The third cow selected was Ivaniskey Vanessa,



Above: Ivaniskey Sabrina

Carlisle in 2007 and was bred by David and Sue Knight. Aga Khan to date has done extremely well in the show ring, having won 29 Championships, 13 of these being beef interbreed titles. These Include the "Royal Ulster Reserve Interbreed Champion in 2007", Best NI Blonde Stock bull in 2008/09 and 2010/11 and on both occasions he went on to take reserve best Blonde bull in the UK. Aga Khan is proving to be a very consistent breeder, with his progeny showing great potential,



Bob and Jan Andrews have also requested a large quantity of semen from Aga Khan for export. NI Blonde Cattle Club Chairman, Alistair Martin said this Export order is a great boost for the blonde breed. The trip to Australia has helped to forge links with Australian Breeders and will open new lines of breeding and communication in both Australia and throughout the UK he said. Caroline Jackson breed secretary of The British Blonde Society also said, we as a society are delighted with the outcome of this trip, and we look forward to forging stronger links with the Australian Breeders in the future.

Many thanks must go to British Livestock Genetics for helping to fund this trip and to the British Blonde Society for all their help and support.



Above: Bob and Jan Andrews pictured left with Ivan and Ruth McElroy during their visit to the Ivaniskey herd.



Above: Bob and Jan Andrews Old Kentucky Stud, Wangarratta, Australia

