

# Questions to Ask a Heritage Breed Dairy Farmer

1. Why do you have this breed of dairy animal?
2. Is there a dairy tradition with this breed in my area?
3. How many breeding age females do you have?
4. What percentage of them do you milk?
5. Why? (understand that with some breeds this may be only a couple of their total number of breeding age animals.)
6. Who else milks animals of this breed? How far away are they?
7. What families/bloodlines tend to be milky? Is there data to back that up? (DHIA generally)
8. How far away are animals in that family/bloodline from my farm?
9. What are their prices?
10. What style of dairy management do you employ (100% grass fed, confinement, grass-based, hay/grain, etc.)
11. What is your average daily milk yield (in # or gal depending on how you think)?
12. What is the lactation like in this breed? (lots of milk and then dry up after bred, long level lactations?)
13. How long is the average lactation?
14. Are you certified organic, naturally grown, humane? (if you are this may be important, if not this question is optional)
15. What is their temperament?
16. Would you recommend this breed to someone at my skill level as a farmer?
17. What do you think of the long-term plan for this breed?
18. Is the breed association stable?
19. What is the average cost of replacement females?
20. How available are bulls from milky lines? (AI or natural)
21. How well do these cows take to AI? (if you plan to use it)
22. etc.