

Changes in the conformation of Polish Red cattle during 1996-2003

S u m m a r y

Polish Red cattle until quite lately was acknowledged as the only native breed to Poland. They are found in the Carpathian Foothills and in some parts of Mazuria, the Bialystok region and the Narew River Valley. The aim of the study was to examine recent changes in the conformation of Polish Red dairy cattle. Polish Red heifer cows that first calved during 1996-2003 were investigated. In this period, height at sacrum increased regularly in the analysed population from 128 cm in 1996 to 132 cm in 2003. Together with the change of frame size, the present animals are characterized by wider (5.2 pts) and deeper chest (6.0 pts) and better developed rump (5.2 pts). Fore udder extension and udder width have clearly improved. The scores for rear udder attachment deteriorated. Based on the present results it is concluded that Polish Red cattle show appropriate conformation and for all dairy type and conformation traits analysed by specialists obtained good scores. However, Polish Red cattle are changing their character from the primitive to dairy type as they have been improved by crossing with other dairy breeds.