

2013 Update:
**Report on a Project to Evaluate New French Salers AI Sires for Use in
Australia and New Zealand**

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During the 2006 International Salers Federation World Conference held in the village of Salers, France, a group of Australian and New Zealand Salers breeders got together to form a partnership to import semen from leading French Salers bulls.

The goals of this group of Salers breeders included:

- Evaluation of the suitability of the selected French AI sires for use under Australian and New Zealand conditions, including Breedplan data.
- Injection of significant new genetics into the local Salers breed.
- Simultaneous evaluation of several new bulls to reduce the risk associated with selecting just one.
- Increased purchasing and negotiating power to help import semen at an economic price.

Sires were selected from animals listed in the French 2006 Salers Actualités AI magazine. These sires had semen available for immediate purchase which had been collected under export quarantine and health test conditions. Each of the 26 listed bulls was considered, and those of potential interest were evaluated further by inspecting the bull where possible, its herd of origin, and any available progeny. For help with this I need to make special mention of Alain Havy, who was the Chef de Projet Sud/Sud-Ouest, Service Aptitudes et Sélection des Races Allaitantes. Alain spent a lot of time taking us to several properties in the Salers region to look at different bulls and their progeny.

A bulk order of 500 straws from 6 bulls was negotiated with Alexandre Osio at Sersia, France. Agrigene in Australia and Brenco in New Zealand acted as agents for Sersia and assisted the venture by importing the semen and dealing with the relevant paperwork. The French bulls from which semen was originally selected were Sancy, Ringo, Numero, Texas, Variegeois and Nomade. Four of these sires; Sancy, Ringo, Texas and Variegeois are still listed in the 2012 Salers Actualités AI magazine. I have posted a copy of this document on this website for people to access. While it is mostly written in French, there is an explanation in English of the trait recording features that the French measure in selecting the bulls. For breeders interested in obtaining AI semen from French Salers bulls listed in the 2012 Actualités AI magazine, Chris McIllroy at Agrigene in Wangaratta, Victoria, is still the agent for Sersia and can import straws from France at competitive prices (<http://www.agrigene.com.au>).

Semen arrived in Australia in 2007 and we and other Salers breeders in Australia and New Zealand have been using it in AI programs since that time. In the table below I have listed the current information available through the Trans Tasman Group Breedplan for each sire. Most of the figures are still of low accuracy, although with daughters from

these sires now starting to add calves to the Breedplan database, the accuracy will improve significantly over the next 1-2 years. It is interesting to compare the Australian Breedplan data with that from France in the 2012 Salers Actualités AI magazine. The French recording system is different to ours, but the comparisons are informative for those interested in making the effort.

2012 TRANS TASMAN SALERS GROUP BREEDPLAN EBVs

	Gest. Len. (days)	Birth Wt. (kg)	200 Day Wt. (kg)	400 Day Wt. (kg)	600 Day Wt. (kg)	Mat. Cow Wt. (kg)	Milk (kg)
RINGO IHJ PV846	Statistics: Number of Herds: 5, Progeny Analysed: 42, Number of Dtrs: 4						
EBV	-0.7	-0.7	4	-7	1	-4	2
Acc	69%	89%	87%	83%	77%	65%	36%
SANCY IGH PW773	Statistics: Number of Herds: 5, Progeny Analysed: 33, Number of Dtrs: 1						
EBV	0.9	3.1	14	15	27	17	3
Acc	72%	86%	83%	78%	72%	53%	29%
TEXAS IHR PX623	Statistics: Number of Herds: 2, Progeny Analysed: 17, Number of Dtrs: 1						
EBV	-1.5	0.8	2	-1	9	18	-
Acc	58%	78%	76%	68%	65%	49%	-
VARIEGEOIS IHM PZ583	Statistics: Number of Herds: 2, Progeny Analysed: 15, Number of Dtrs: 3						
EBV	0.5	-0.2	3	2	2	-3	2
Acc	63%	75%	71%	57%	61%	55%	43%
NUMERO IGG PS013	Statistics: Number of Herds: 1, Progeny Analysed: 12, Number of Dtrs: 1						
EBV	-1.1	0.1	7	9	13	9	2
Acc	54%	76%	72%	64%	64%	49%	29%
NOMADE IHS PS043	Statistics: Number of Herds: 1, Progeny Analysed: 10, Number of Dtrs: 1						
EBV	-0.8	-2	-4	-4	-5	-7	3
Acc	52%	72%	68%	60%	56%	44%	21%
Breed Average EBV for 2010 Born Salers Calves							
EBV	-0.3	0.6	6	8	12	10	4

In 2011 I was able to make another visit to the Salers region of France and spent 2 days visiting Salers breeders who had AI progeny from the same 6 sires that we had used in Australia and New Zealand. This was the most informative visit that I have had to the Salers region as I now had a good idea of what the progeny from each of the 6 AI sires were like, and could obtain meaningful information comparing the relative merits of other sires. I also found that the French breeders were very interested in our Australian and NZ experiences, and were keen to exchange information.

Our personal experience with the 6 sires highlights the tremendous genetic variety available within the Salers breed. For us, Sancy is a terminal sire with large growth figures and frame size. We thought that Numero and Nomade were probably the best “all-round” packages, and this was supported to some degree by the French breeders that I talked to in 2011. It is interesting to note that semen from these 2 bulls has all been sold and is hence no longer available. Ringo is a solid performer with calves that are probably

more suited to vealer markets than feedlots. Texas and Variegeois are completely different to the other 4 bulls, and produce high quality daughters. The French breeders we met that were using these bulls were concentrating on maternal traits, and although not reflected in the Australian Breedplan data yet, we have found that daughters from these bulls tend to have top calves.

In conclusion, we have had positive outcomes from our project to add elite French Salers genetics to the Australian and New Zealand herds. We have found that progeny from these AI sires sell well to our customer base, and that the diversity of genetic traits has significantly strengthened our breeding program. The biggest negative from the venture has been the reintroduction of horns to our previously mostly polled herd. However, even the traditional French breeders are starting to move on this issue, and polled Salers genetics is now starting to gain favour in France as well.