

## INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that breeds of cattle indigenous to the tropics are inefficient as producers of meat and milk. Various Government departments in the tropics have tried to overcome this problem by adopting one of three different breeding policies. They have either tried to adapt temperate breeds of cattle to tropical conditions, pursued a policy of crossing imported breeds with indigenous cattle, or have tried to select high producers from native stock. The last policy appears to be the most practical but requires a great length of time in order to obtain any genetic gain. Attempts to adapt temperate breeds of cattle to the tropics have proved to be a failure in many cases, and it was not until recently that this fact has been fully appreciated.

Originally it was believed that the degeneration of imported cattle into the tropics was partly due to their greater susceptibility to disease, and partly due to their inability to thrive on small quantities of poor roughage, which is all that is available in many tropical areas. More recently it has been realised that these are only contributory causes for the lack of adaptability of temperate cattle to the tropical environment. It is now known that the fundamental reason is the inability of imported cattle to adjust themselves physiologically to the hotter climate.