

INTRODUCTION;-

Cattle were first brought to the West Indies soon after their discovery in 1492. These were mostly unimproved animals. The first European settlers, who were chiefly Spaniards and Portuguese, brought in livestock from their own countries, which are known in the West Indies as "Creole" stock. These cattle had a proportion of Zebu blood, due to two reasons:-

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- (a) There was constant migration of cattle from North Africa to Spain and Portugal.
- (b) The Settlers often brought cattle from the Spanish and Portuguese possessions on the West Coast of Africa.

The present day indigenous scrub cattle of the West Indies are derived from indiscriminate crossings of the Bos Taurus breeds and the old creole stock, together with some more recent Bos Indicus importations.

Pure-bred Bos Taurus stock are useless except under very suitable conditions of climate and management. However, they are maintained in most of the islands for cross-breeding with other types of cattle in efforts to produce good dairy animals.

Milk production is not high, and only limited supplies are available. Most of the islands have tried to correct this by adopting various breeding policies. The effects of these are numerous and varied, and they gave discouraging as well as encouraging results. These policies and their effects will be indicated, as each island is separately discussed in the following pages of this project.