

# Dairy Cross Breeding



**Points:** Can cross breeding be used in organic farming to increase profit and reduce the amount of drugs used to prevent or treat disease?

**Explanation::** Hybridisation of cattle breeds leads to heterosis of animal characteristics. This could be beneficial to organic producers. It may reduce susceptibility to disease and fertility problems without causing major yield reductions.

**Results:**Productivity and Profitability: Information on disease incidence is limited from organic farms. However economic values for traits of interest were similar for breeds across systems. The Holstein was the best performer irrespective of system (organic or conventional). Some crosses showed useful heterosis within health traits (see notes )and all showed improvement in somatic cell count but Ayrshires and Ayrshire X Shorthorn were better suited to organic rather than conventional systems.