The Australian Friesian Sahiwal (A.F.S.) is being developed by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries as a dairy breed adapted to a tropical environment. Resistance to cattle tick (Boophilus microplus) is of major importance in Queensland where acaricide residues, in dairy products may jeopardise the future of the industry.

At Kairi Research Station A.F.S. heifers are ranked and selected on tick resistance. Monthly tick counts indicate that these heifers carry less than 20% of the tick burden of Friesians. A.F.S. cows have not been sprayed with acaricide for 18 months while Friesians must be treated monthly. Tick resistance is most important in the selection programme but milk production is the criterion by which the new breed will be judged and accepted by farmers.

The lactation records of 32 A.F.S. cows supplemented with 1.5 tonnes of maize meal over 300 days and grazing green panic-glycine (Panicum maximum var. trichoglume - Glycine wightii cv. Tinaroo) pastures were compared with similarly fed Friesians. The A.F.S. cows produced an average of 3250 kg of milk per lactation. This was 70% of the milk, 88% of the butterfat and 74% of the SNF produced by the Friesians.

Twelve unsupplemented A.F.S. cows gave 2860 kg of milk which was 79% of the unsupplemented Friesian production. This performance by a few selected A.F.S. compares favourably with the 3300 kg average production of herd recorded cows on the Atherton Tableland. Breed development has now reached the stage where A.F.S. cows are being compared with other breed types on co-operating dairyfarms and bulls selected on tick resistance are being proven in these herds.