



Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs

Stockjudging Guide

Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs

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INTRODUCTION TO STOCKJUDGING

The four elements in any Young Farmers' Club stockjudging competition are (a) the competitors, (b) the stock, (c) the judges and (d) the scoring. In addition, of course, facilities should be adequate allowing ample room for the proper parading of stock, reasonable conditions under foot for both person and beast and adequate lighting, preferable natural. The area should be level, and if on a concrete or tarmac floor, adequate precautions taken by the use of sand or sawdust to give the animals good footing.

COMPETITORS – The importance of any adequate training for competitors in stockjudging competition cannot be overemphasized. Competitors must be aware of the standards upon which the stock is to be judged and should have had ample opportunity for practice. At the same time, they should have been given instructions in reason-giving with again plenty of practice. Too many competitors arrive at competitions without the necessary grounding, and as a result find the experience frustrating, perhaps even frightening, and certainly unrewarding.

STOCK – Stock classes in a judging competition comprise four animals designated A, B, X and Y, the animals being suitably labeled or marked. The animals used must be carefully selected, preferably by an independent stock selector who is neither the owner nor the official judge. Classes must be judgeable. The practises and club competitions can be relatively easy, while district and national competitions must be more difficult. It is helpful if there is an obvious first and last with perhaps less between the middle two animals.

JUDGES – Official judges for Young Farmers' Club competitions must be very carefully chosen. They must have a clear understanding of what Young Farmers' stockjudging competitions are about, be consistent and also have a knowledge of reason-giving. They must also be able to explain clearly either with or without the animals present, their reasons for placing the class. There are many excellent judges available today who are the products of the Young Farmers' Movement and the Association draws its judges from a list of people proved at district and area level.

SCORING – In the first instance, the judges must place the animals but, in addition, must indicate out of a maximum of 12 points, the points difference between each two animals, e.g. if the class is placed A, B, X, Y, and the judge feels that there is little to choose between A and B, he might only award two points of a difference if there was a substantial difference between B and C, he might award six points and not so much difference between X and Y although more than between A and B, he might award four points. The computing scale takes account of both the official placing and the points difference and awards points out of 50 to the competitors according to his placing. In Reason Giving, competitors are awarded marks under the headings of accuracy of statement – a maximum of 25; comparison – a maximum of 15; style – a maximum of 10.

BASICS OF JUDGING

PREPARING TO JUDGE

Ensure you have a shirt, tie and white coat. Wear it at all times and keep it buttoned up. Be smart, look the part.

BEFORE YOU START

Establish what has to be judged? Are you judging animals for breeding or for the butcher? Establish how long you have to judge the class. Read the judging card to establish the criteria against which you will be judged

STAND BACK

Have a good look from a distance at the group. Understand what you have to judge, its general appearance, type, etc. First impressions are often the best. Make a judgment by eye and confirm by careful handling. When judging livestock for slaughter refer to carcass quality and killing-out percentages. Don't rush in.

GIVING REASONS

The aim of reason giving is to demonstrate to the master judge your reasons for placing the class in the way you have.

- Establish how long you have, usually two minutes are allowed.
- Memorise your reasons, as much as possible.
- Picturing the animals will help.
- Stand up straight and look the judge in the eye.
- Speak clearly and slowly enough for the judge to follow.
- Describe the stock fully, and refer to any distinguishing features (eg white face). As you deliver your reasons compare as much as possible, going from first to last using the same style for all animals in the class with emphasis on the important areas, and start at the head working your way back. This means that you are less likely to get confused and allows the judge to follow your reasons more easily.
- Use the full time allocated, the clearer your reasons, the better your chances.
- Thank the judge when you have finished – whether you enjoyed the experience or not. Judges rarely remember if you thank them, they always remember if you don't!

Example of a presentation

Starting

"Mr / Madam Judge.

These are my reasons for placing

this

class of ... in the following order."

(always check your order matches your card)

List your reasons....

... and finishing

"Those Mr / Madam Judge are the reasons why I have placed this class in

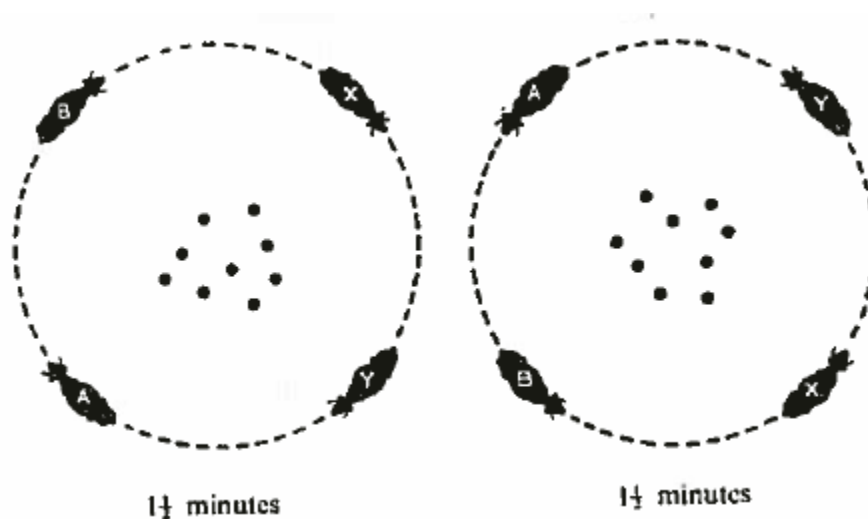
the order a, b, x, and y."

PARADING STOCK

DAIRY OR BEEF CATTLE

The cattle should be trained to lead if possible, and the following is then the standard procedure

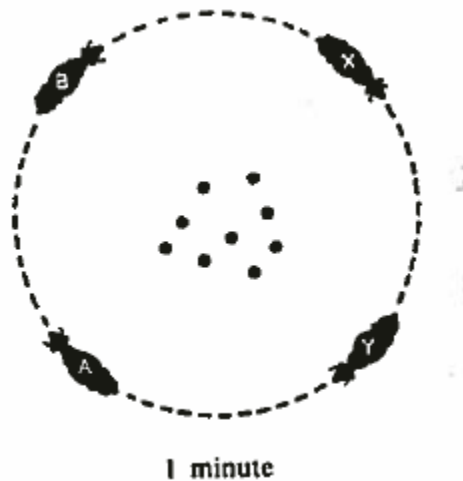
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- The animals move around in a circle, with the competitors standing in the centre. (One and a half minutes in one direction and one and a half in the other).



- The animals are drawn up parallel, and the competitors are allowed to hand them. (Four minutes)



- The animals should move in a circle again. Handling ceases and the competitors stand some distance from the animals to make a final decision. At this stage, the competitors fill in their judging cards and complete any notes required for the giving of reasons (one minute).
- The foregoing is the standard procedure and is timed to take a total of eight minutes.
- Where the animals cannot be led it may be necessary to alter the procedure somewhat, but it is important that at one stage they should be tied up for handling and also that the competitors should have the opportunity at another stage of seeing them parade in the ring or yard.

SHEEP

With sheep, arrangements are somewhat different from those with cattle, and the following is suggested as a standard procedure: -

- The competitors stand around the edge of the pen or ring and the sheep are let loose. (Three minutes).
- The sheep will then be caught and lined up parallel and the competitors are allowed to handle the sheep. (One minute).
- The Competitors again stand around the edge of the pen, and the steward drives the sheep around the centre. At this stage the competitors make their final decisions, fill in their cards, and take any notes required for giving reasons later. (One minute).

REASON GIVING

The aim of the reasons is to demonstrate to the master judge your reasons for placing the class in this way. Scoring for reasons is based on accuracy of statement (25), comparison (15) and Style (10).

Scoring of Judging Competitions

The results of his placings are recorded by the competitor on a card printed as illustrated. It is an advantage to have different coloured cards for different classes, and about twelve colours are available from the Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs' Office in Edinburgh. A separate plain card should be used by competitors for notes for reasons. Immediately judging of animals in the ring is completed, the score cards are collected by the stewards from the competitors and handed to the scorers.

It saves the time of the scorers if the teams or names (depending on the nature of the contest) are arranged alphabetically before recording takes place. The Score Sheets are made out as follows.

JUDGING SCORE SHEET

Breed	Class	Official Placing	A. Brown	J, Cook	S. Smith	T. White
			No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4
Aberdeen Angus – Males	1	X ₆ Y ₂ A ₄ B	40	47	46	41
Aberdeen Angus – Females	2	B ₃ A ₄ X ₅ Y	38	35	39	42
Shorthorn – Males	3	A ₈ X ₃ B ₁ Y	43	41	33	29
Shorthorn – Females	4	Y ₇ B ₂ X ₃ A	34	38	39	34
		Total	155	161	157	146

JUDGING SCORE SHEET – X, Y, A, B is the official placing for class 1 and the numbers 6, 2 and 4 indicate the difference in merit between animals. A correct placing of the four animals in a class give the competitor 50 points, with deductions for each difference from this. The points for all possible placings are given in Ready Reckoners which are available from Headquarters.

REASONS SCORE SHEET

Name of Competitor	No of Competitor	Class 1			Class 4			Total
		Accuracy (25)	Comparisons (15)	Style (10)	Accuracy (25)	Comparisons (15)	Style (10)	
A.Brown	1	20	12	87	18	9	7	74
J Cook	2	19	163	16	21	10	7	76
S. Smith	3	15	10	6	19	12	4	66
T. White	4	16	9	7	17	8	10	67

REASONS SCORE SHEET – It is sometimes convenient to give scores for reasons on a separate sheet but this depends on the nature of the contest. In the example shown there are two classes of different animals for which Reasons are being taken and by adding the six marks awarded to each competitor. A total is obtained which should be transferred to the master score sheet.

MASTER SCORE SHEET

Name of Competitor	No of Competitor	Total Judging Score	Total Reasons Score	Overall Score	Placings
A. Brown	1	155	74	229	2 nd
J Cook	2	161	76	237	1 st
S. Smith	3	157	66	223	3 rd
T. White	4	146	67	213	4 th

MASTER SCORE SHEET – It is now a simple matter to add the Judging and Reasons scores as they are brought in from the rings and Reasons Judges, the overall score obtained, and the placing calculated. In the example above it will be noted that there are only four classes for judging and two of them for reasons taking but, of course, this can be extended to the required number, and indeed a column added for the Team Score if this is required.

In a large contest with many entrants and a number of classes to be judged it is convenient to divide the competitors into groups before the contest commences. The main features of this division is that the number of groups is equal to the number of classes to be judged, and the groups are so formed that members of the same team are not in the same group.

The names are grouped in the teams and written down. Taking the first in each team the names may be numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., to (say 36) if there are 36 teams entering. The second in each team is then numbered 37, 38, 39, etc., to 72. The third name in each team is numbered 73, 74, 75, etc., to 108.

Suppose that eight classes of animals have to be judged. Then the competitors are divided into eight groups – number 1 to 14 will be Group 1, 15 to 28 Group 2, and so on. In Group 8 there will be only 10 competitors, numbers 99, 100, etc., to 108.

A Steward (the Group Leader) should be put in charge of each group and given full instructions regarding the order in which his group must progress from class to class. Group 1 should start at the first class, Group 2 at the second, and so on. In the second stage of judgement the groups all move on to the next class, with Group 8 moving to Class 1.

Before a large contest commences it is vitally important that all competitors should know their numbers and the number of their group. The Group Leaders should be fully instructed regarding their duties.

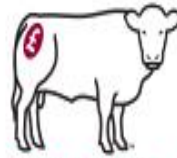
Scoring should take place in a reasonably quiet place away from the actual judging. Scorers should check each other's work carefully and although it is essential to produce the results quickly it is even more essential to have them accurate.



BEEF

CATTLE

Finished beef



Better Returns Programme

Before you start

Stand back and have a good look from a distance at the group. Get a general impression of the animals to judge, appearance, type, distinguishing features, etc.

Be methodical: start at one end and work your way to the other end inspecting and handling as you go. Remember, you should always handle the loin on the left hand side, as the kidney hangs loose on this side.

What to look for

Always look for length, width and depth of fleshing throughout.

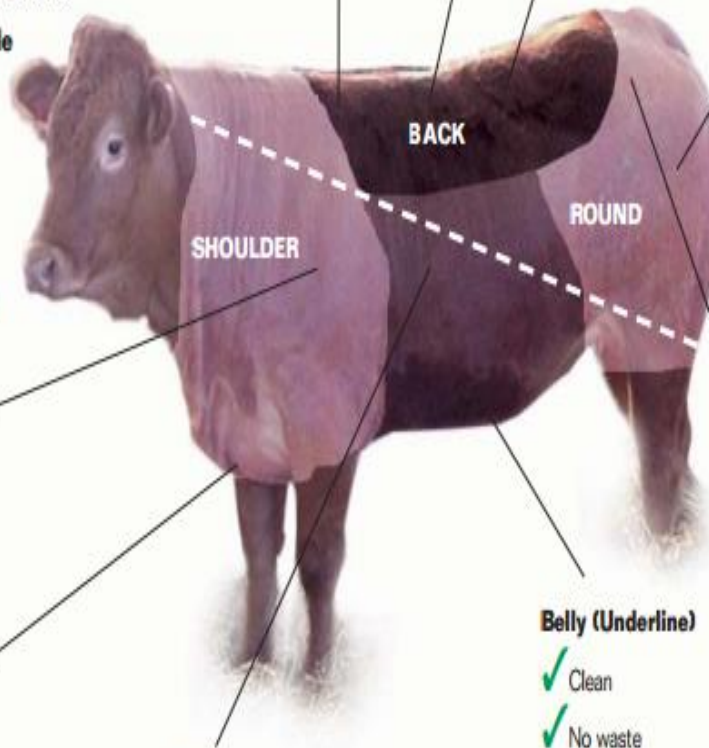
Above and below the dotted line:

As much as possible above the line

– good quality, expensive cuts

As little as possible below the line

– lower quality, cheaper cuts



The shoulder

- ✓ Broad and deep
- ✓ Well-developed
- ✓ Well-fleshed
- ✗ Lacking flesh
- ✗ Narrow

Brisket

- ✓ Light
- ✗ Broad, full or wasteful

Ribs

- ✓ Well sprung and trim
- ✗ Soft and fat

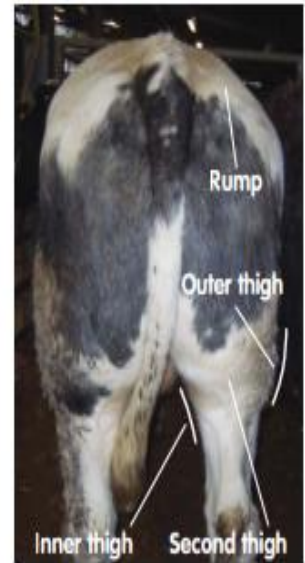
The back

(Topline)

- ✓ Long
- ✓ Wide
- ✗ Short
- ✗ Narrow

Loin

- ✓ Long and deep
- ✓ Full
- ✗ Lacking flesh
- ✗ Narrow



Hindquarters

The round

Hindquarters

- ✓ Well fleshed in first and second thighs
- ✓ Muscle development carried well down to the hocks
- ✗ Flat and shallow
- ✗ Narrow, lacking width
- ✗ Lacking muscle development

Rump

- ✓ Well-rounded
- ✓ Broad
- ✗ Shallow and concave
- ✗ Pin bones prominent

Belly (Underline)

- ✓ Clean
- ✓ No waste
- ✓ Parallel with top line

Finish

Should carry an even degree of finish. ie the fatter the animal the softer to the touch it becomes.



Better Returns Programme

Beef carcass

Stand back and have a good look from a distance at the group. Get a general impression of the carcasses to judge, appearance, type, etc. Identify if heifer, steer or bull carcasses.

Be methodical: start at:

- **the round** (second thigh, top piece and rump)
- **then back** (loin and fore rib)
- **then shoulder**

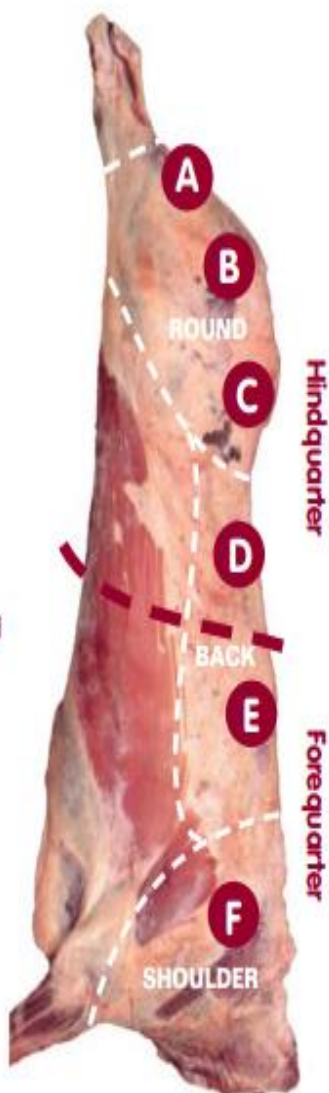
What to look for

- A** Second thigh
- B** Top piece
- C** Rump
- D** Loin
- E** Fore rib
- F** Shoulder

Proportion of hindquarters to forequarters – well-fleshed hindquarter to light forequarter is preferable.

Colour, quality and texture of fat

- ✓ White/creamy
- ✓ Firm
- ✗ Yellow
- ✗ Oily



Amount of fat over brisket –

Even distribution with no excessive depth requiring trimming.

Conformation

The round

Shape of round

- ✓ Well-rounded, convex in profile, fullness of flesh through the second thigh, top piece and rump.
- ✗ Narrow, concave in profile.

The back

Thickness of back – In proportion to the size of the carcass, should be broad, and thick.

Depth and area of eye muscle – Deep and broad loin with fleshing carried well around the ribs.

The shoulder

Thickness of shoulder area – Look for neat, compact, shape that blends well with forequarter.

Shape of forequarter – Compact and well-fleshed while still being well balanced in proportion to the hindquarters.

Fat

Distribution of fat throughout carcass – There should be a light cover of fat, evenly distributed with no patchiness or heavy fat deposits internally or externally that require trimming.

Amount of fat over eye muscle –

Even distribution, thin layer (4–8mm) covering the external surface with light deposits intra-muscularly.



Market requirements

Carcass assessment addresses conformation and fat.

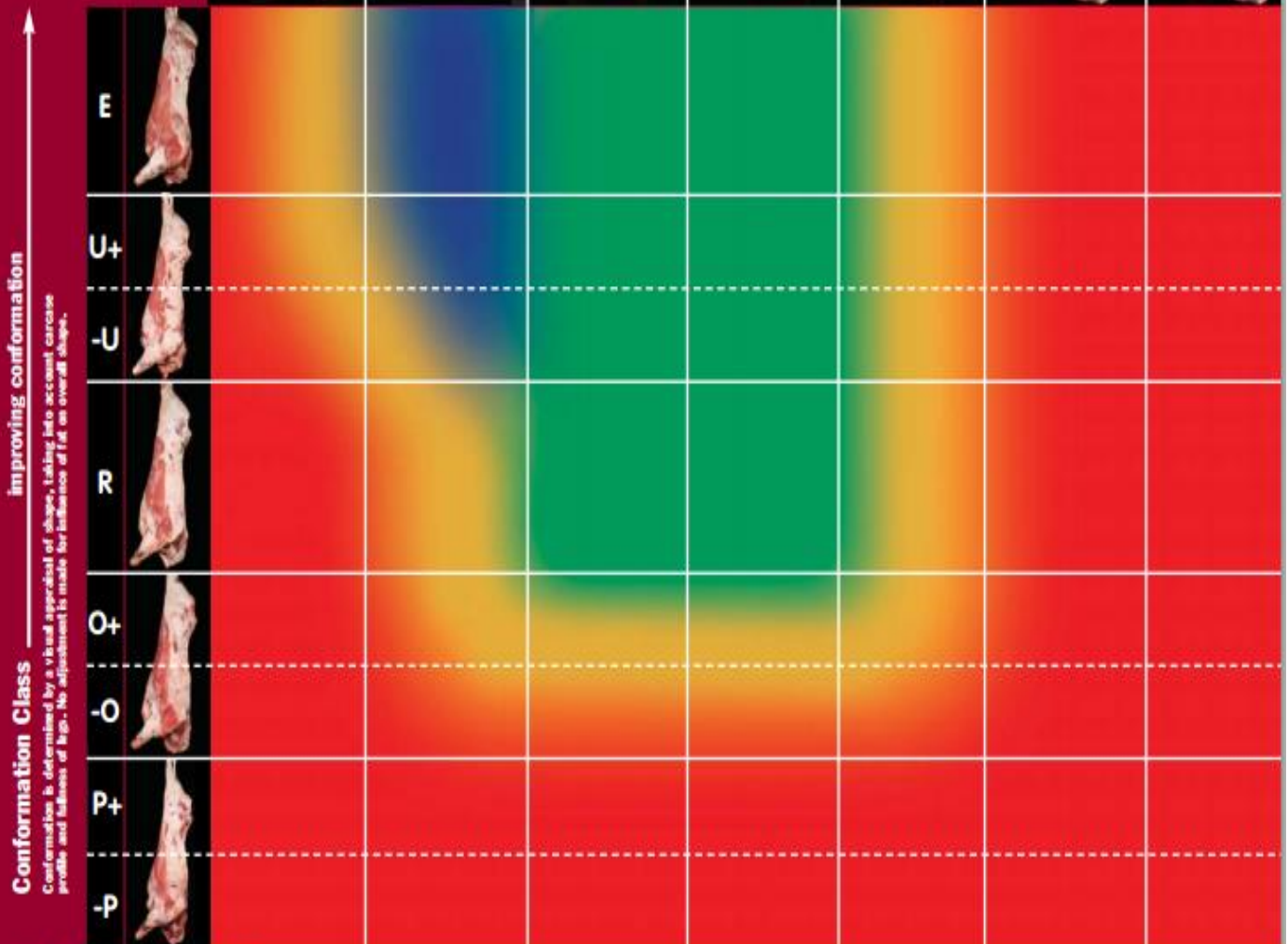
Fat cover is scored on a 1-5 scale.

Conformation is assessed from E to P.

Combining scores for conformation and fat determines the markets which beef suits best.

Fat class
→
 increasing fatness

Fat is determined by visual assessment of external fat cover. There are five main classes. Class 4 and 5 are subdivided into L (leaner) and H (fatter).



Market signals



- Little or no demand
- Discount prices
- Poorest returns



- Medium demand
- Average prices
- Moderate returns



- High UK demand
- Premium prices
- Best returns



- High demand for specific export markets
- Premium prices



BREED: ABERDEEN ANGUS



BREED HISTORY

Aberdeen Angus cattle have been recorded in Scotland since at least the 16th century and because of their native environment, the cattle are very hardy and can survive the Scottish winters, which are typically harsh, with snowfall and storm. They have built an iconic brand amongst discerning consumers looking for premium quality beef.

Aberdeen-Angus cattle have many benefits to the commercial beef farmer both commercially and in terms of lifestyle. They typically mature earlier than other native British breeds such as the Hereford. Commercially the Aberdeen-Angus beef commands a premium price and the premium quality product is much loved by consumer and retailers, the number one brand in the red meat sector.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Head:** Aberdeen Angus's are polled and without horns.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** As long wide and level a top line evenly covered with firm flesh with plenty spring and depth of rib. Hindquarters should be square of their plates with plenty depth and width of rump.
- **Legs:** Medium bone. Four legs set at each corner of the body.
- **Colour:** The cattle are naturally polled and black in colour
- **Size:** The cattle have a large muscle content and are regarded as medium-sized.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Famous for their easy to handle, docile nature.
- Ease of calving with good pelvic structure and unbeatable maternal attributes minimises much of the stress associated with breeding cattle.
- Good strong growth rate and excellent conversion and fleshing ability.

BREED: SHORTHORN



BREED HISTORY

Shorthorn is a British cattle breed that is establishing itself well in Ireland. It was first noticed in the north-east of England around the 1700s, and through genetic diversity, the breed actually split definitively into the Dairy Shorthorn and the slightly bigger Beef Shorthorn! Although there are minor differences between the two types, both Shorthorns share many of the same characteristics and qualities.

The Shorthorn was originally developed as a dual-purpose breed, suitable for both dairy and beef production. However, different breeders opted to concentrate on one purpose rather than the other, and in 1958, the beef breeders started their own section of the herdbook.

There are more than 1,500 registered breeding females currently in the UK meaning a very bright future for the breed.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Head:** Shorthorns are naturally horned animals, though there is a lot of emphasis on modern Shorthorns to be polled and not horned.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** Long, wide and level top line evenly covered with firm flesh, plenty spring and depth of rib. Hindquarters should be square of their plates with plenty depth and width of rump.
- **Legs:** The Shorthorn's feet and legs have good structure, with very few problems.
- **Colour:** Red from head to shoulders and rest of their body roan, with more splashes of red and white on their lower body, legs, and possibly the rump as well. Some may have a roan face others may have a large star or diamond of white on their foreheads with red from the rest of their heads to the base of their necks. Some may not have any white splashes on them, but be

simply roan and red. Others may have more white from the top of their shoulders down to their elbows.

- **Size:** Bulls usually weigh 990kg with cows weighting approx. 800kg. Medium sizes animals.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Excellent forage convertibility
- Great maternal traits, and ruggedness.
- Ability to grade very well, as far as carcass characteristics are concerned.
- They have great longevity. Helping farmers who worry about cost of herd replacements.
- Shorthorn's pleasant temperament is ideal for farmers who wish to run a smooth operation. However, dams have well-developed mothering instincts.
- Calving is fairly easy for this breed, with over 95% of births needing no assistance.
- Excellent fertility. Heifers reach puberty quite early at about 359 days old!
- The cattle are natural grazers, with great efficiency.
- Dairy qualities - high yields with a good ratio of protein against fat.
- Beef Production - Efficient weight gain and suitability for low-input systems.
- Quick finishers. An advantage for farmers wishing to produce in a short, intense period.
- Shorthorns have good disease-resistance and immune systems; essential for keeping a healthy herd. Cases of mastitis and lameness are rare.

BREED: GALLOWAY



BREED HISTORY

The Galloway is one of the oldest and purest of our native cattle breeds. They are famous for their hardiness and can live off the poorest of land. The Galloway female is the ideal suckler cow, and will produce an excellent beefy calf, which is in great demand by people wanting highest quality, natural grown beef.

Galloway Cattle have a great deal to offer and will fit into any system, either a traditional hill farm or low land farm. Galloway popularity is growing due to the increased interest in British Native cattle and environment issues. At the 2009 Royal Highland show, the Galloways won all the major trophies including the individual, native interbreed, interbreed and pairs competitions. Never has one breed dominated all the cattle championships at Scotland's premiere show.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Head:** The neck should be moderate in length, clean, and fitting well into the shoulders; top in line with the back in a female, and in a male naturally rising with age.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The body should be deep, rounded and symmetrical. Shoulders should be fine and straight, moderately wide above; coarse shoulder points and sharp or high shoulders are objectionable. The breast should be full, deep. Back and rump straight. Ribs deep and well sprung. Loin and sirloin should be well filled with hook ones not prominent. Hindquarters should be long, moderately wide and well filled, with flank deep and full.
- **Legs:** Thighs should be broad, straight and well let down to hock; rounded buttocks are very objectionable. Legs should be short, clean with fine bone and tail should be moderately thick set.
- **Colour:** Black, with a brownish tinge or dun. Head should be short and wide, broad forehead and wide nostrils, without slightest symptoms of horns. Ears to be moderate in length and broad, pointing forwards and upwards, with fringe of long hairs. Skin should be mellow and moderately thick with hair soft and wavy. Mossy undercoat: wiry or curly hair is very objectionable.

- **Size:** Medium size. Galloway cows have an average height of 120 cm and weigh 450-590kg; bulls average 135 cm and weigh 600-900 kg.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Maternal breed (easy calving and an abundant supply of milk). Excellent mothering abilities.
- 'Long lived' and reliable to produce calves every year, into their teens and beyond.
- Thrive and produce on low cost winter rations and in summer on unimproved rough grazing.
- Galloway females are an ideal cross-breeding foundation with strong hybrid vigour.
- Hardiness is one of the inherited characteristics. Suitable for outwintering even in rigorous climatic conditions (With long thick coat of hair).
- Grass Fed, Juicy, Tender, and Flavoursome Beef
- Easy Calving and Vigorous Calves
- Easy Care / Easy fed

BREED: HEREFORD



BREED HISTORY

The Hereford is one of the UK's oldest native beef breeds, originating in the County of Herefordshire in the mid 1700's, later spreading to most parts of the UK and the rest of the world. Over the Centuries the breed has evolved through various initiatives implemented by its Society, underpinned by an extensive knowledge of the breed and supreme stockmanship.

The modern attributes of Hereford Cattle, combined with those that have made the breed the cornerstone of the beef producing industry for so many years, make it the natural choice of Quality Beef producers. Hereford beef is now acclaimed by many leading purveyors of Quality Beef from all over the world for its succulence and flavour meeting the demands of today's discerning customers.

More than five million pedigree Herefords now exist in over 50 countries.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Head:** The head of the modern Hereford is short from crown to tip of the nose, with eyes set wide apart, bright and clear. The muzzle is broad and clean with a black pigment considered a fault. The horns are of wax-like texture. The head is set on to the body by a short, thick neck, with well-developed crest.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The top-line from base of neck to tail-head is broad and level. The tail should be neatly set to the hind end. The bottom line also is straight and between that and that top line ribs are well sprung out.
- **Legs:** The top-line from base of neck to tail head is broad and level; the tail being set evenly and neatly to the hind end. Hooves are also short and fetlock joints well up.
- **Colour:** Red and white, with red varying from a deep cherry red to a light buckskin/orange colour. Cattle of this breed will have white running from their faces to behind their ears and down their chest, dewlap and brisket to between their front legs, all along the lower belly, covering the flanks and end at the point between their legs. Skin is soft and pliable with a coat of soft curly hair.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Weight for age.
- Food conversion and conformation are three closely connected factors in the Hereford which help breeders and feeders alike to produce top quality cattle with the expensive beef cuts in the correct places.
- Herefords have a great capacity to deal with grass or arable by-products.
- Thrive under hard conditions, yet respond to intensive feeding.
- Hereford producers like to produce top quality cattle with the expensive beef cuts in the correct places.
- Ability to withstand modern feed conditions and produce efficient prime beef.

BREED: CHAROLAIS



BREED HISTORY

Charolais was the first of the European Continental beef breeds to be imported into the United Kingdom, with the first Charolais bulls being imported into artificial insemination centres in 1961.

BREED DESCRIPTION

There can be two extreme types of Charolais which should be discouraged. One type would be the tall, flat sided bull which has a slack back and a poor hindquarter. This type has no place in modern day beef production and indeed never has. The second would be the double-muscled heavy shouldered bull which invariably has associated fertility and calving problems.

- **Head:** The head should have a wide muzzle with a strong jaw placement, a longer rather than boxy type appearance.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The topline from base of neck to tailhead is broad and level; the tail being set evenly and neatly to the hind end. The bottom line also is straight and between that and that topline ribs are well sprung out. Hooves are also short and fetlock joints well up. The back should be long and level without dips, particularly behind the shoulder. The back should be long and level with a good spring of rig and a minimum amount of brisket in the forequarter. The tail setting should not be dropped and preferably should be slightly raised as this is alleged to be associated with easier calving.
- **Legs:** The legs should be of strong flat bone on good sound feet.
- **Colour:** The colour of Charolais Cattle is generally creamy white through to a light tan colour. Broken coloured cattle are not to be encouraged although this would be of secondary importance to skeletal structure and good conformation. Skin is soft and pliable with a coat of soft curly hair.
- **Size:** The females should have a feminine appearance and should not be heavily muscled and masculine in appearance as this sort tends to be either poor or irregular breeders.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Superior growth rates**
- **Muscle Development**
- **High killing out percentage** and meat eating quality.
- **Unrivalled** as a terminal sire.
- **Weight / Age** - No other breed can be touch Charolais breed for their weight for age ratio.
- **Calves** - Charolais crossbred calves are consistently commanding a premium over many other breeds.

BREED: SIMMENTAL



BREED HISTORY

British Simmental cattle, whose origins go back several hundred years to the Simmen valley in Switzerland, were first introduced into the UK in 1970.

Simmental is a breed of cattle whose history dates back to the Middle Ages. Early records indicate that Simmental cattle were the result of a cross between large German cattle and a smaller breed indigenous to Switzerland. The name Simmental is derived from the name of the area where the cattle were first bred - the Simme Valley which is situated in the Berner Oberland in Switzerland.

Total numbers are estimated between 40 and 60 million Simmental cattle worldwide, with more than half in Europe. The worldwide spread was gradual until the late 1960's. Records show that a few animals were exported to Italy as early as the 1400's. During the 19th century, Simmental were distributed through most of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Russia, ultimately reaching South Africa in 1895.

Selection in Europe was initially for three features; milk, meat and as draft animals. The demand for working animals is greatly reduced today but muscularity and high milk production are still important to the success of Simmental.

BREED DESCRIPTION

The breed has grown to be the 4th largest beef breed in the UK and leads the way on the promotion of health in beef breeding cattle. Simmental cattle are probably the most genuine "dual" purpose breed that can be crossed successfully with any other breed and produce cows which are extremely milky, fertile, docile and with great natural mothering instincts.

The breed also possesses tremendous terminal genetics, with excellent growth rates and daily live weight gains of in excess of 2kg/day achievable in an intensive beef finishing system (varied results between heifers, steers and bulls).

In crossbreeding, the Simmental has proved very successful. It provides good growth, a large frame and thus a better beef yield to its crossbred progeny. It improves the quality of the meat with white fat and excellent marbling. It improves the milk yield, resulting in strong development of the calves in suckler herds.

- **Head:** The head is white and often a white band appears over the shoulders like the photos above. The majority have pigment around the eyes, helping to reduce eye problems which occur from bright sunlight. Simmental can be horned or polled, if horned horns are up turned, another distinguishing feature is that they have a heavy dewlap.
- **Body & Hindquarters:** The topline from base of neck to tailhead is broad and level; the tail being set evenly and neatly to the hind end. The bottom line also is straight and between that and that topline ribs are well sprung out. Hooves are also short and fetlock joints well up. The back should be long and level without dips, particularly behind the shoulder.
The back should be long and level with a good spring of rig and a minimum amount of brisket in the forequarter. The tail setting should not be dropped and preferably should be slightly raised as this is alleged to be associated with easier calving.
- **Legs:** Strong Medium bone and well up on pasterns displaying free locomotion.
- **Colour:** Simmental colour varies from gold to red with white. May be evenly distributed or clearly defined in patches on a white background. Lighter colours are referred to as Fleckvieh.
- **Size:** Their weight can vary on their use but cows can weigh around 700.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Terminal genetics**
- **Excellent growth rates** - Daily live weight gains of in excess of 2kg/day achievable in an intensive beef finishing system
- **High, long term fertility**
- **Longevity**
- **Calving ease**
- **Short intervals between calving**
- **Excellent mothering ability**
- **Good grazing ability**

BREED: LIMOUSIN



BREED HISTORY

In February 1971, 179 pure-bred bulls and heifers arrived at Leith Docks in Edinburgh. The excellent qualities of the breed such as easy calving, hardiness and their ability to produce well marbled quality meat with a low proportion of bone and fat was so impressive that demand grew rapidly. By 1986, only fifteen years after the breed was first introduced to the country the Limousin took the number one beef A.I. position nationally and knocked the traditional Hereford into second place. The Limousin still holds this position today.

Limousin cattle can be seen at all the major agricultural shows in the UK. At the Royal Smithfield Show, the UK's Premier Fatstock event the Limousin cattle and carcasses have dominated the catalogue and the competition, re-enforcing its claims as the Carcase Breed. Similarly the breed has enjoyed considerable success at the Scottish Winter Fair, the Birmingham Primestock Show, the Royal Welsh Winter Fair and the Ulster Beef and Lamb Championship winning the Grand Slam in five out of the last eight years.

In December 1998, figures released from the British Cattle Movement Service confirmed that the Limousin is now the largest numerical beef breed in the UK.

BREED DESCRIPTION

Meat and Livestock Commission carcase evaluation figures confirmed that of all the main beef breeds in this country, the Limousin has the ability to produce more saleable meat in the high price cuts along with the top killing out percentage. The breed is well suited to the market, which demands a consistent, quality, lean beef product.

- **Head:** The head should be short with a wide forehead and broad muzzle. If horns are present, they should be fine and curved forward with slightly raised extremities of lighter colour than the rest of the horn. The absence of horns shall not be a bar to entry to the herdbook, providing the parentage fulfils the Society's standards.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The body should have well-fleshed forequarters; a deep, rounded chest with well sprung ribs; a broad, straight, and well-muscled back; a large and well-rounded rump, with pin bones not too protruding; and deep and well-rounded thighs. The belly should be wide but straight, and not too prominent on the bottom line. The hide should be fine and supple.

- **Legs:** The legs should be fine-boned but strong and straight with a square even stance, and sound feet.
- **Colour:** The legs should be fine-boned but strong and straight with a square even stance, and sound feet.
- **Size:** The Limousin should have a large, but fine, and strong boned frame. Mature Limousin females should average 650 kilos and mature males 1000 kilos.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Hardiness** - Limousin cattle adapt to diverse climates and the widest range of management systems, from the top end of the Northern Territory to the highlands of Central Tasmania.
- **Ease of Calving** - Limousin calves have low birth weights, which lead to minimum calving problems when Limousin bulls are used over cows of other breeds.
- **High Dressing Percentage** - Limousin crossbred steers and heifers have high dressing percentages of 58 - 63 percent compared to an average of 53 - 58 percent.
- **High Yield** - High meat to bone ratios and low fat leads to outstanding yields of saleable meat from Limousin cross carcasses. Yields of up to 80% of saleable meat are not uncommon.
- **Tender Healthy Beef** - Limousin meat is finely textured, tender and low in saturated fats and cholesterol. It is genetically trimmed.
- **Efficiency** - Limousin cattle are efficient - they have moderate mature size and are excellent foragers walking long distances for food. They also have above average feed conversion rates.
- **Genetic Strength** - The Limousin stamps its characteristics on other breeds when used in crossbreeding programs, especially its superior carcase characteristics.

BREED: COMMERCIAL



BREED HISTORY

New to the Stockmanship Programme, Commercial cattle are used in this day-in-age to produce meat for the general market.

Scottish farmers are putting every effort into the type of cow that's bred, as they do when selecting herd sires.

It is important for farmers across the country to consistently breed top notch calves, and have the milk to rear them well until point of weaning. As well as being able to show calves, the main emphasis for Commercial breeders must be volume sales – and have strong markets for stores each year.

Focus will always be on the type of bull that will produce the ultimate suckler cow, with maternal traits to the forefront of the selection process. Emphasis will also be on shape and size, always looking to see how each mating goes come calving time.

BREED: SALERS



BREED HISTORY

The Salers breed pronounced (*sa-lair*) originates from the Massif Central and the mountainous Auvergne region in south central France, ranging from 2000-6000ft.

Originally a dual purpose breed bred for beef, and milk to produce regional 'cantal' cheese.

However now the Salers are primarily bred for beef production. The Salers was first imported to the UK in the early 80s to provide a diverse suckler cow. There are now herds throughout Europe, America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Commercially, Salers are often crossed with terminal breeds such as the Charolais, to produce a fast growing hybrid with high meat Yield.

The difficult environmental conditions where the Salers breed originated and developed in France makes it ideal for the poorer areas of the British Isles and today's beef industry. Salers are generally horned and dark red, though there are a growing number of polled and black Salers becoming available in the pure bred herd.

BREED DESCRIPTION

They are dark red in colour, horned and longer coated than most other continental breeds.

Salers are a hardy, maternal upland breed with exceptional milking ability and longevity.

Well renowned for being exceptionally easy calved, the Salers cow has a deep and broad pelvic area, and short gestation period with light birth weights, typically between 30-40kg.

Due to the Salers unmatched calving ease and strong mothering ability, calving involves minimal stress. Which helps maintain cow fertility and longevity.

The Female Salers produces high quality milk and is renowned for very good udder attachment.

Often having 10-12 calves before requiring assistance to suckle a new born calf.

Due to the Salers deriving from the French mountains, walking long distances to new pasture or to be milked. They have developed strong feet and legs on medium density bone.

Female: lengthy, alert, and parades well with tall elegant stature. Being a maternal breed she must show feminine character. Long level top line with notable wide hook and pin bones showing large pelvic area for ease of calving. Should rival most continental breeds for growth rate allowing bulling at 15 months old, to calf down at 2 years old for early production.

She should be deep and square with light/medium density bone.

Have a tight, strongly attached udder for optimal milk production and high quality milk with high protein content as well as good butterfat ratio. Allowing a typical Salers cow to wean a calf over 50% of her body weight at just over 8 months old.

Male: medium framed compared to other continentals with good balance of conformation particularly on the top line. Again good width of hook bones and squareness of plates to maintain pelvic area in females. Long, wide and deep males with evenly fleshed carcass.

He must walk and parade freely and display good docility to produce long lasting females which are easy to work with.

- **Head:** Broad nose and muzzle with short wide forehead. A bright, kind feminine eye. Average ear length, and no visible protruding horns is preferred. Usually exhibited with Unclipped head to show natural character.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** Medium sized breed with good length and width over top line. Often widening from shoulder to hook bones with square rump. Good spring of rib and depth of body with less muscling in the second thigh than other continentals due to the Salers being a maternal breed. A good depth of body showing little belly, characteristic of most continentals.
- **Legs:** Strong Medium bone and well up on pasterns displaying free locomotion.
- **Colour:** Dark red. A deep rich red colour with medium length of hair allowing hardiness for out wintering conditions. The Salers has white hair at the end of the tail and often white hair on the poll. This is not regarded as a breed fault.
- **Size:** Females should mature to a weight of 650kg+ and Bulls 900kg+.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Easy calving with quick to suckle calves.
- Very fertile males and females.
- Long living hardy animals.
- Low vet bills.
- They have developed strong legs and feet.
- Cattle can travel long distances over rough ground without developing foot problems.
- Equally able to tolerate long periods inside on slats.
- Excellent foragers.
- Milky females producing fast growing calves.
- Readily crossed to a 'terminal sire' breed.

BREED: BRITISH BLOND



BREED HISTORY

The British Blonds breed has been established in the UK for over 30 years and continues to gain much respect from commercial farmers be they suckler producers or dairy men.

The breed's principal attributes are ease of calving and excellent growth rates, terminating in a carcase with a very high killing out percentage and an exceptionally high ratio of lean meat to bone. These claims have been substantiated in an ADAS review of all the recorded data worldwide over the past 10 years.

The breed is widely distributed throughout the UK and Northern Ireland and thrives well in both the harsher climes of the north and the sunnier south.

There are approximately 8000 registered breeding cows in the U.K. and these are owned by the 600 membership, registrations of new births should total 2,500 this year and the Society is maintaining this steady growth in numbers of around 1-2% increase per year.

The breed Society is very conscious of the need to monitor performance and were the first beef breed in the UK to introduce a classification scheme. BLUP summaries for the breed are now available in the Sire and Dam Summary section of this site of this website.

BREED DESCRIPTION

Blondes should not demonstrate a bad stance, through either feet or gait. Any deficiencies in breed and sexual characteristics. There should not be insufficient development and/or poorly fed. Neither should they demonstrate a bad temperament, nor broken colouring i.e. black/brown hairs and/or white patches.

- **Head:** Expressive head, straight or slightly convex profile, broad forehead, triangular face, muzzle in proportion. The jaw should be correct, neither undershot nor overshot.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** Blondes should have an upright stance with strong fine bones and well developed joints. A deep chest with an arched rib cage, showing a broad pelvis at the hips and the second thigh, and having a well set tail.

- **Legs:** Strong Medium bone and well up on pasterns displaying free locomotion.
- **Colour:** An unbroken wheaten coloured coat, varying from a light to dark hue with lighter patches around the eyes and muzzle, on the inside of thighs and on the inclined parts of the abdomen and canons.

MAIN QUALITIES

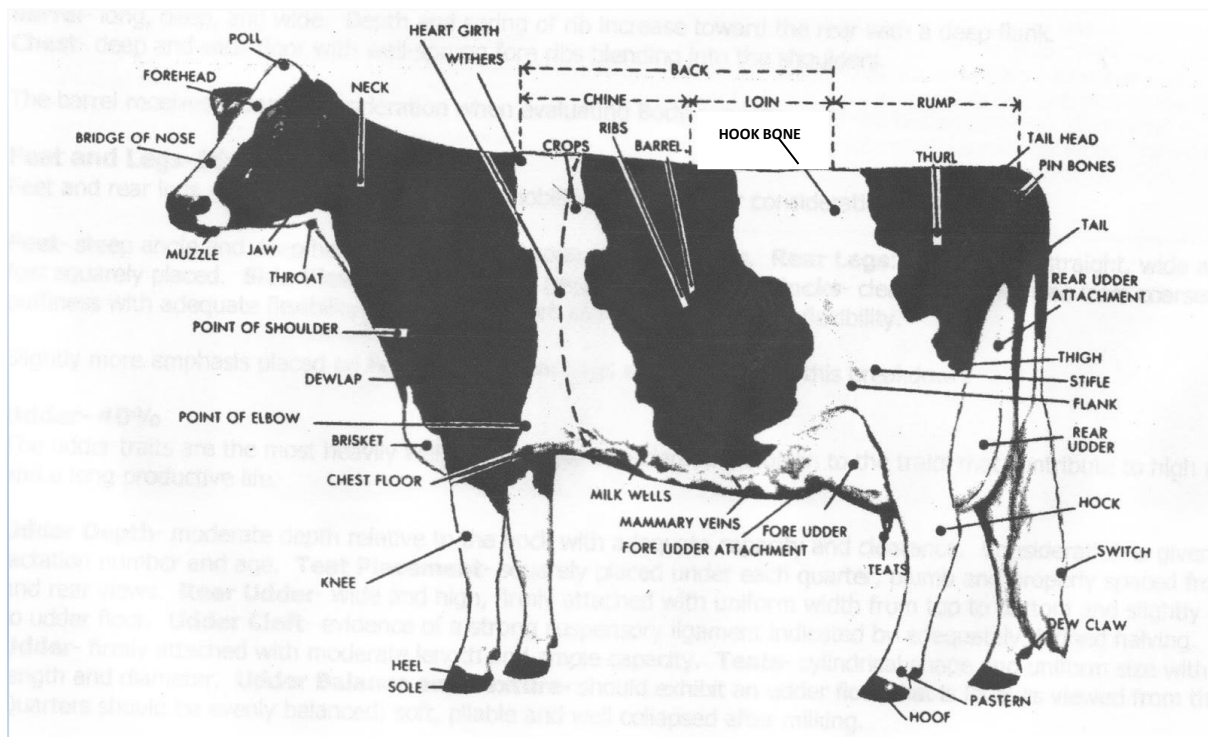
- **High yield carcasses:** Efficient production of lean red meat is their primary advantage. Muscle growth requires much less energy (feed) input pounds/pound than does bone or fat. Thus, Blonde characteristics such as a finer bone structure and minimum external fat, along with well-developed muscles, are ideal for feed efficiency. Of course, the basic hardiness of Blondes is also essential to their efficiency.
- **Calving:** Blondes consistently prove their ease of calving, with five out of seven trials reviewed rating them easier than Charolais, and four out of seven placing them better than, or equal to, Limousins.



DAIRY

ANIMAL

DIAGRAM OF BODY STRUCTURE (Example is a Holstein)



The ideal over all dairy cow should carry its head high on a long slender neck. The head should be full of breed character with a broad muzzle and open nostrils. A good length of head, long from eye to nose with a dark placid eyes and large open ears.

A Dairy animal should be thinly fleshed, with a refined but angular appearance, she should be wedge-shaped, good width between their front legs to allow for width of chest and heart room, with fine sharp withers, and be wide in the hindquarters.

The light sloping shoulders, close at the points, should be neatly laid to the body, producing no definite hollows behind them in the crops.

In an animal with a good constitution the chest will be fairly deep and broad, and a large heart girth will indicate the presence of large heart and lungs. The barrel should be long from the shoulders to the hocks with deep well-sprung ribs to provide plenty of capacity for food.

The top line should be level from shoulders to tailhead and the tail should be well set in. The hindquarters should be wide and square to form a broad base for suspension of the udder.

The tail should be long and fine. The udder should be capacious and be high and widely attached at the rear, with a strongly defined suspensory ligament. The fore udder should be long and blend smoothly to the body wall in the underline with prominent milk veins throughout the underline. The teats should be of a medium size, placed in the centre of each quarter and pointing in a downward direction.

Mobility is very important in a dairy animal. The legs should be strong yet fine boned and the animal should walk with a good spring in the hock and have sound, deep, hard feet.

The animal should walk with an easy gait on parade and give a general impression of finesse and levelness, combined with depth and capacity and she should be covered with a soft, silky, pliable skin as this denotes dairyness and milk ability.

General Appearance: Overall the cow should be balanced from every angle. Thinly fleshed, refined, somewhat angular. Wedge-shaped form but wide, deep and well balanced. Healthy “bloom”, active, stylish carriage: not nervous.

BREED: HOLSTEIN FRIESIAN



BREED HISTORY

Black and white cattle were imported into the east coast ports of England and Scotland from the Low Countries in the nineteenth century and in 1909, enthusiastic breeders form a Society for the registration of these cattle. British black and white breeding during this period focused mainly on British Friesian bloodlines; cattle were bred for milk production and surplus male calves could be fattened up to produce lean beef while beef cross heifers made valuable suckler cows. However, the Society had agreed to the registering of Holstein cattle in their Herd Book and so, in 1988, the name changed to the Holstein- Friesian Society.

The Holstein breed first appeared in the UK in the years immediately after the Second World War, during which time around 2000 in-calf heifers plus a few bulls and cows were imported from Canada in conjunction with shiploads of store cattle and The British Holstein Society was formed in 1946.

In 1999, both The Holstein–Friesian Society and The British Holstein Society merged to form Holstein UK with both Holstein and British Friesian being registered in the open Herd Book.

BREED DESCRIPTION

Holsteins are generally larger cattle whose main function is to produce milk. In the UK and many countries across the world, the Holstein is the predominant breed because of its ability to produce high volumes of milk efficiently. The Holstein breed in the UK currently averages 9239kg per lactation with an average of 3 lactations (9239kg at 3.91% fat and 3.17% protein with a Calving Interval of 418 in 2014.

- **Head/Neck:** Feminine, clean cut; face fairly long from eyes to nostrils forehead broads; eyes large and clear, with gentle expression; nostrils wider and expansive; muzzle wide; ears of good size and rising slightly upwards. Neck to be lean, but not weak, fairly long, clean at junction with head, no noticeable amount of dewlap.

- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The topline from base of neck to tailhead is level; the tail being set evenly and neatly to the hind end. There should be a good length and width between neatly placed hook and pin bones as this area denotes the length and width of the udder underneath. The bottom line also is straight and between that and that topline ribs are well sprung out Hooves are also short and dewclaw well up.
- **Udder/Teats:** Ideally the udder is long, wide and capacious with a silky texture, that when milked out should collapse with no sign of fleshiness. It is firmly attached with a well-defined central ligament and strong fore attachment blending smoothly into the body. Teats are uniform and evenly placed, being about 6.5 cms long.
- **Legs:** The hind legs should be placed underneath correctly placed thurls and should be strong yet clean boned with a good spring in the hock for mobility. The feet should be short and deep and the fetlock joints well up.
The front legs are to be strong, straight and placed widely enough to allow ample chest room.
- **Size:** The size of a Holstein animal is generally larger than most other dairy breeds but this is not essential providing that the animal is functional and well balanced.
- **Skin:** The skin is soft, silky and pliable to touch.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Ability to produce large amounts of milk efficiently from average quality forage.

BREED: AYRSHIRE



BREED HISTORY

Originating in South-west Scotland, the Ayrshire Breed was first recorded on an official basis in the 1870's, with formation of the Ayrshire Cattle Society Herd Book in 1877.

BREED DESCRIPTION

The typical Ayrshire cow is an alert vigorous animal showing strong character and mild temperament. The Classic Ayrshire has balance while exhibiting style and breed character for which she is famed.

The Ayrshire is the ultimate, economic dairy cow - characterised by high quality, longevity, ease of management and overall good health. Now found in all continents, the ability to thrive in climatic extremes makes the Ayrshire the ideal cow for African heat or a Scandinavian winter.

The breed can efficiently produce large quantities of high quality milk from forage, and is renowned for foraging ability. Ayrshires are now becoming very popular in organic systems.

Top herds in the UK are averaging over 8,500 litres of milk per lactation, while in some countries yields exceed 10,000 litres. The milk has a high yield of butterfat and protein - which contributes to taste - and is sought after for processing.

- **Head/Neck:** Femininity about the head, cleanness through the neck and shoulders but with strength in her chest.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The top line from base of neck to tail head is level; the tail being set evenly and neatly to the hind end. There should be a good length and width between neatly placed hook and pin bones as this area denotes the length and width of the udder underneath. The bottom line also is straight and between that and that top line ribs are well sprung out. Hooves are also short and dewclaw well up.

- **Udder/Teats:** The Ayrshire is noted for strong udder formation. Ideally the udder is long, wide and capacious with a silky texture. It is firmly attached with a well-defined central ligament and strong fore attachment blending smoothly into the body. Teats are uniform and evenly placed.
- **Legs:** Should be strong yet clean boned with a good spring in the hock for mobility. The feet should be short and deep and the fetlock joints well up with the cow having a free flowing movement. The front legs are to be strong, straight and placed widely enough to allow ample chest room.
- **Skin:** The skin is soft, silky and pliable to touch.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Good yields of high quality milk.
- Efficient Forage Conversion.
- Excellent Functional Type.
- Health and freedom of disease and ailments.
- Economic and Profitable Milk Production.
- Healthy Long lasting Ayrshires are Profitable Ayrshires.

BREED: JERSEY



BREED HISTORY

Originating from the channel islands, the Jersey is the second most popular specialist Dairy breed in the world after Holstein. With an ever increasing number of Jerseys being born and bred in the UK it has become apparent that many dairy businesses wish to work with a breed that can perform well in sustainable herds.

Jersey cattle have increased their milk production after years of selective breeding.

The average registered Jersey cow in the UK produces 5,900 litres of milk per year with a butterfat content of 5.3% and protein of 3.8%.

BREED DESCRIPTION

The jersey cow is the ideal convertor of grass to high quality milk and are suited to most dairy systems. Jerseys perform well under a wide range of systems, from the feedlots of California to the grazing only systems of Australia and New Zealand.

Whilst it is normal practice to calve Jerseys at two years of age in this country, due to the breeds early maturity they may well have their first calf from the age of 19-20 months onwards.

Studies carried out in Denmark show the Jersey to be less prone to many diseases than the other dairy breeds. Scientific studies also show the Jersey cow produces milk more efficiently than other breeds.

- **Head/Neck:** Feminine, clean cut; face fairly long from eyes to nostrils forehead broads; eyes large and clear, with gentle expression; nostrils wider and expansive; muzzle wide; ears of good size and rising slightly upwards. Neck to be lean, but not weak, fairly long, clean at junction with head, no noticeable amount of dewlap.
- **Body & Hind Quarters:** The topline from base of neck to tailhead is level; the tail being set evenly and neatly to the hind end. There should be a good length and width between neatly placed hook and pin bones as this area denotes the length and width of the udder underneath. The bottom line also is straight and between that and that topline ribs are well sprung out Hooves are also short and dewclaw well up.

- **Udder/Teats:** Ideally the udder is long, wide and capacious with a silky texture, that when milked out should collapse with no sign of fleshiness. It is firmly attached with a well-defined central ligament and strong fore attachment blending smoothly into the body. Teats are uniform and evenly placed.
- **Legs:** The hind legs should be placed underneath correctly placed thurls and should be strong yet clean boned with a good spring in the hock for mobility. The feet should be short and deep and the fetlock joints well up with the cow having a free flowing movement. The front legs are to be strong, straight and placed widely enough to allow ample chest room. The Jersey hard black feet are much less prone to lameness.
- **Size:** The Jersey is relatively small in size - about 400 to 450kgs in weight.
- **Skin:** The skin should be soft, silky and pliable to touch.
- **Colour:** It is typically light brown in colour, though this can range from being almost grey to dull black, which is known as Mulberry. They can also have white patches which may cover much of the animal.
A true Jersey will however always have a black nose bordered by an almost white muzzle.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Ease of Management.
- Feed Efficiency.
- Longevity and Production.
- The Jersey Cow is a breed fit for a variety of farming systems worldwide.
- Especially suited as grazing dairy cattle.
- Despite small size the Jersey is renowned for its ease of calving, allowing it to be crossed with the larger beef breeds.



SHEEP

HOW TO ASSESS A GOOD RAM

1. See that he is widely set on his legs.
2. The front view should give an impression of strength, width, and that certain boldness of Character.
3. The back should be wide and level.
4. The shoulders should be wider and the neck well-set into the shoulders.
5. The neck should be strong, and of good length – at least one span of a man's hand.
6. Test the width of the back across the ribs and loin. The tail-head should be squared and the gigots full – see that the hind.
7. Legs are nicely set.
8. The wool should be of medium, length – densely planed – and nicely ribbed from the root to the tip.
9. The head! That all important factor which denotes Breed Character.
10. The ears should be nicely set on – not too close – and carried attractively.
11. If he fulfils all – or nearly all of these qualifications, you will be looking at a ram worthy of merit.

BREED: BLACKFACE



BREED HISTORY

There are several distinct types within the Blackface breed. These have evolved over the years, influenced by climate, environment and grazing quality. This gives the breed the advantage of being able to produce species to suit every climatic condition. The Scottish Blackface, which are the most numerous, are sub-divided into two types.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Perth type** (north type): a large-framed sheep with a medium to heavy wool, is found mainly in north-east Scotland, south-west England and Northern Ireland. The larger frame produces lambs ideal for long keep on winter forage or indoors, to finish in the spring when hogget prices tend to be on the rise. With hoggets reaching a finishing weight of 40kg plus. A Perth ram can bring size, strength and vigour to a hill flock.
- **Lanark type** (south type): Dominant in much of Scotland and areas of Ireland, is of medium size, with shorter wool than the Perth type. Over the past thirty years, a strong influence of Newton Stewart type has been introduced, the integration of Lanark and Newton Stewart bloodlines, as well as benefiting both milking ability and hardiness, has helped create a more uniform and identifiable breed. Lambs and hoggets will easily reach 40kg plus in a good system. There are different types within the south type to fit all systems, whether it be a smaller hardier type for the high hard hills. Bigger bodied types are also popular to suit the mule breeders and lower ground farmers to produce a bigger wedder lamb.

In the north of England, the large-framed, soft woolled **Northumberland** Blackface is popular and influential in breeding the North of England Mule.

- **Females:** A well balanced animal, medium in size and displaying plenty of breed character but keeping her femininity. Ewes should handle correct of the udder.

- **Males:** A larger more masculine animal than the female, the male should be more powerful of the head and have a longer, thicker curly horn. His crown will be more distinct and slightly raised. Traits should be similar. Males should handle correct of the Testicles.
- **Head:** The head should be held high and proud. Muzzle should be broad and deep with a black pigment of the skin. Head should be medium in length, broad between the eyes and dished of the brow. Eye should be dark, bold and bright. The head should be covered in short silky hair. Grey round the nose and eyes is acceptable but shouldn't be excessive, black over the brow although a distinct white bell or spot is acceptable. The cheek should be clean with a distinct line between the black of the face and white of the cheek.
- **Horn:** Should come out the head high and wide, swooping round to help give the animal a tougher look. As the horn turns back in towards the head it should stay clear of the face and eyes. Ideally they should come straight out the head and not backwards (which we call a claw hammer head).
- **Body:** Medium length neck should blend into a broad well rounded shoulder (remembering it's a hill breed and won't be as broad as the terminal breeds). The back should be long and level with a wide deep loin. A high, wide spring of rib and plenty depth of heart, The tail head should be square and hind quarters should be round with welldeveloped of the gigots. The body should be well fleshed with a thick well fleshed tail.
- **Legs:** Medium boned legs, should stand and walk correct at all times and be well up on medium lengthened pasterns with a flat hind bone. Hair on the legs should be short and silky with printed distinct black and white colours.
- **Fleece:** Body must be covered in short tight pure wool, free from kemp (hair) and black spots or blue hair especially at the neck. The tail should be well wooled and free of black wool.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Excellent Mothers** - Blackface ewes often defend their lambs against predators.
- **Good milkers**
- **Ability** to yield a lamb crop and a wool clip even when on marginal pastures.
- **Modern Consumers** - Lambs yield a carcass ideal for the modern consumer.
- **Meat** - The meat is free of superfluous fat and waste and is known for its distinct flavour.
- **Enormous potential** - Pproduction of high quality lean lamb.

BREED: NORTH COUNTRY CHEVIOT



BREED HISTORY

The History of the North Country Cheviot goes back to 1972 when Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, in the County of Caithness, and of Statistical Account fame, brought 500 ewes from the Cheviot hills to his farm of Langwell in Caithness. These sheep from the Cheviots were known as the "long hill sheep", and it was Sir John who gave them the name "Cheviot". The sheep did very well and in a few years many, many thousands flocked to Caithness, Sutherland and the North. They thrived in the Northern climate, on the high hills of Sutherland and the pastures of Caithness. They maintained the size and length of the old long sheep.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Head:** White, well-covered with fine hair, free from blueness or brown. Ears of fair length and thickness, well covered with white hair, and coming out from the head at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal with good width between. Nose, straight to slightly Roman. Good width between eyes, broad muzzle, and wide black nostrils, well open. Head long, with deep under-jaw. Eyes dark, fairly big, bright and alert. Wool well up to back of cheeks and under throat and to back of ears but not between. The male is sometimes horned, but the horn must be free from black.
Strong neck, big at base, well set in at shoulders, and of medium length.
- **Body:** Deep and wide at the breast. Long, deep and wide body. Back straight with good width between shoulder-blades and no slackness or falling off between them. Belly and flanks well covered with wool. Ribs well sprung. Tail, broad and well woolled.
- **Legs:** The legs must be squarely set under the body, strong clean boned, covered with white silky hair and free from any brown hair and wool. The feet should be large and black in colour with the pasterns being of medium length and strong to support the fetlock joints.
- **Fleece:** White, of good staple, free from curl, hair or kemp. Not hard, but with a spongy feeling when grasped. An average good fleece, washed, should weigh 4 ½ lbs. It is fairly fine in

quality, grading from 50's up to 56's. It is white, regular, lofty, clean and is largely used in the Scottish tweed trade.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Constitution** – Strong and hardy. North Country Cheviots are long-lived.
- **Crossing** – Excellent sheep in itself, it is also an ideal crossing sheep. The most famous cross is the notes Half-bred sheep.
- **Docility** – While there is plenty of spirit in the breed it is a docile sheep and easily handled.
- **Fecundity** – On reasonably good land high fecundity is a noted characteristic and the lambing season can be adjusted to fit into any type of farming season can be adjusted to fit into any type of farming. Under good conditions the ewe lambs may be bred from without harm to future performance or health.
- **Milk** – The ewe is an excellent milker and will successfully foster two lambs.
- **Mutton & Carcases** – There is a high proportion of lean to fat.

BREED: SOUTH COUNTRY CHEVIOT



BREED HISTORY

This hardy Cheviot Hill breed has lived on these Border hills for centuries and during which very great care has been taken in the breeding.

Commercially it produces mutton of a very high quality and no wool can compare with the Cheviot in making the durable Tweeds for which the Border towns of Selkirk, Galashiels and Hawick became world famous.

After three or four crops of lambs on a hill farm the ewes are sold and bought to continue breeding at a lower altitude – mated with a Border Leicester ram it is the bed rock of half-bred stock, which it supplies with milking qualities and the refined and hardly nature which makes the half-bred so prolific and so popular. It is also crossed with any of the Down Breeds to produce the ideal butcher's carcass.

The Cheviot is much in demand abroad and many congratulatory letters have been received from foreign countries as to the great satisfaction given by those exported.

Through fair weather and foul, through good times and bad, the Cheviot has remained on the Border Hills producing a livelihood for its owner. In many cases generations after generation of one family have carried on successful breeding on the same farm.

BREED DESCRIPTION

The breeders of Cheviots rightly claim that for production of the best mutton and wool, as well as for crossing, there is no other breed in existence that can compare with the Cheviot. As a hardy commercial sheep it requires no pampering and will live where many of the other breeds will die.

- **Head:** The first-class Cheviot ram of the present day has a strong masculine head with the bones of the jaw widening as they extend back towards the neck. The nose should be black and the nostrils open, the eyes dark and sparkling, the ears neither too big nor too small, and firmly set. The whole head and ear should be covered with white hair, not coarse, but fine enough to indicate the quality of the wool.

- **Back, Body & Hind Quarters:** The neck should be strong, and the forequarters and hindquarters wide, the back broad and well fleshed but not too long. The body should be well covered with wool, but there should be no muff on the head or legs.
- **Legs:** The legs must be squarely set under the body, strong clean boned, covered with white silky hair and free from any brown hair and wool. The feet should be large and black in colour with the pasterns being of medium length and strong to support the fetlock joints.
- **Fleece:** Close set, medium length of staple, clear of kemp and coarseness of buttock. It must cover the whole body. A good quality and dense fleece, with the quality even from bottom to top of the staple, with a little variation as possible from shouldler to britch, is just what is wanted by a manufacturer. The length of the staple does not matter so much as the quality of the fineness of the fibre – both the buyer of the longer wool for combing and the buyer of the shorter wool for carding judge it entirely from the point of view fineness. All flock masters know that a good skin is a better protection to the sheet in rough weather and consequently more profitable to the farmer.

BREED: BORDER LEICESTER



BREED HISTORY

The Border Leicesters are lineal descendants of the Dishley Leicesters made famous by Robert Bakewell of Dishley, Leicester.

Introduced into Northumberland in 1767 by the Brother Culley who were pupils with Bakewell, these improved Leicesters were soon established on both sides of the border.

After Bakewell's death the Northern breeders continued to hire or purchase ram from the South but this practice was discontinued about 1850. By that time the Northern breeders had evolved a type of sheep which was different from that which found favour in the South and they began to call their sheep Border Leicesters.

Registered Flocks are to be found in all parts of Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland and fairly large numbers have been exported to many different parts of the world.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Females:** A female should be sweet and milder countenance with a less strong build than a Ram, but making allowance for the difference in sex, she must have all the right attributes of a good female sheep and have substance which are inseparable from a sound and robust constitution.
- **Males:** A Ram should have all of the desirable characteristics. He will be evenly balanced, be able to move freely and carry himself with style and presence.
- **Head:** The head and characteristics is an important part of a Border Leicester Sheep. The head should be masculine with a well-developed muzzle, nostrils should be wide and black and pink noses are looked upon with disfavour.
The eyes should be bold and dark, smooth clean crown clear of tufts of wool.
The ears should be of a good length covered in pure white hair (clean of any black or brown spots) and carried at an attractive angle with ears positioned at ten to two being regarded as 'too wide'. The whole head should be covered with pure white silky hair.

- **Neck, Shoulders & Hind Quarters:** The neck, tapering nicely from the head, should be strong set at the shoulders.
The shoulders should slope gently to the ribs, thus avoiding any narrowness at the heart. The back should handle well and be long and wide and well fleshed through the loin down to the hock.
- **Legs:** The legs must be squarely set under the body, strong clean boned, covered with white silky hair and free from any brown hair and wool.
The feet should be large and black in colour with the pasterns being of medium length and strong to support the fetlock joints.
- **Colour/Fleece:** The whole body, above and below, should be evenly covered with white wool of equal quality. The fleece should be tight of its purl and should be densely planted over the sheep's body.

If the ram has all these desirable characteristics he will be evenly balanced, be able to move freely and carry himself with style and gaiety. The above description may be applied to a shearling ewe or gimmer, making due allowance for the difference in sex.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Crossing ability** - The Border Leicester is renowned for its ability to cross with many Hill breeds (mainly Cheviot, Blackface, Swaledale & Herdwick).
- **High Prolificacy** - The greatest assets of a Border Leicester Ram are his prolificacy.
- **Early maturity**
- **Vitality** - Which he transmits to his progeny.

BREED: SUFFOLK



BREED HISTORY

The breed originated by the mating of the Norfolk horned ewes with Southdown rams. The resulting cross was immediately recognised as a fine butcher's sheep, and by process of crossing and selection a fixed type was evolved, and the Suffolk has been recognised as a pure breed since 1810.

The Suffolk Sheep Society of Great Britain and Ireland was founded in 1886 at a meeting held in Stowmarket, Suffolk, with the object of encouraging the breeding of Suffolk Sheep at home and abroad.

Today, in addition to the founder Society, there are Suffolk Sheep organisations in the United State of America (two breed Societies), Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Tasmania.

BREED DESCRIPTION

Suffolks are renowned for their weight for age and superior growth rates compared with any other terminal breed making them more suitable for the early lamb market. Their ability to convert grass into higher carcass weights whilst maintaining high quality meat and muscle is second to none making them the ideal butchers choice. Having a wider range of carcass weights gives Suffolk lambs a longer marketing period enabling farmers to sell their lambs at optimum times of the year.

Suffolk genetics are found in many lowground commercial flocks as the breed has high milk output, hard hooves and wide pelvic dimensions for ease of lambing. Early lambing is another advantage which the Suffolk has over most breeds.

- **Females:** Suffolk females should be of medium to large size and full of flesh. They should be feminine to look at and full of vigour. Their vessel should be well attached and free from lumps or hard bits.

- **Males:** Suffolk males should have more power and strength of bone than females. They should be more masculine throughout carrying more muscle. They too should be vigorous and active on parade. Testicles should be of even shape and size and firm when handled.
- **Head:** Muzzle broad and dark. Face long and wide with ample depth of side face. Bright and sparky eye for sign of vigour. Long sweeping ear ideally with a flick at the end and carried attractively at 20 to 4 position. Short black silky hair should cover the head. Brown hair is undesirable but a few white hairs on nose end are acceptable with older sheep. Black hair/wool down the neck is undesirable.
- **Back:** Shoulder should be broad and flat being well filled with flesh behind the shoulder. Good width of chest and open heart is desired. Back should be long and wide with flesh from shoulder right to tailhead. Loin should be long wide and full of flesh. Ribs long, deep and well sprung.
- **Hind Quarters:** Tail head should be wide and square with this good width carried down through the gigot. Gigot should be deep, round, full and firm when handled.
- **Legs:** Legs should be of medium to strong bone standing with a leg in each corner. Hind legs should not be too straight or too hooky. They should parade on sound hard feet being well up on strong pasterns.
- **Wool:** Wool should be short, dense and tight of the staple with a fine fibre quality. Fleece free from brown or black wool. Skin should be fine, soft and pink in colour.

MAIN QUALITIES

- Fast growth rates.
- Ability to finish off their mothers.
- Wider range of carcass weights depending on sheep system run.
- Wide marketing window (suitable for early lamb trade or long term keep system).
- Milky females.
- Wide pelvic dimensions in females for ease of lambing.

BREED: BLUE-FACED LEICESTER



BREED HISTORY

The Blue Faced Leicester evolved from a breeding scheme, to develop the Longwool sheep in the 1700s by Robert Bakewell. Originally known as the Dishly Leicester. The breed was developed over the next 200 years and became more commonly known as the Hexham Leicester due to its early concentration in the north of England. Today it is known as the Bluefaced Leicester and is the most popular crossing breed throughout the British Isles.

The Bluefaced Leicester is regularly crossed with hill breeds such as Blackface, Cheviot, Swaledale and Welsh Mountain to produce the Mule. The term 'Mule' sheep means any crossbred ewe sired by a Bluefaced Leicester. It is known for being a tall, long and framey sheep with high prolificacy and high milk output. These traits compliment the hardiness and motherliness of smaller hill breeds to produce the ideal commercial ewe for upland or lowground commercial sheep enterprises.

There is a crossing strain of bluefaced Leicester which is commonly used to add darker and more distinct colours in the Scotch Mule and North of England Mule. These Crossing types should have the same breed characteristics as the 'Traditional' Blue except for the fact that they contain brown hair on the head and legs.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Female:** Females should be tall long and oozing with style and character. Vessels should be well attached, free from lumps or hard bits with a soft, fine, silky skin.
- **Male:** Males too should be tall, long and have outstanding style and character. They should carry more strength and masculinity throughout than a female. Testicles should be of even shape and size and firm when handled.
- **Wool:** The most important part of the breed. Wool should be short, fine and purly being tight of the staple. This should be true across the whole body. It is not unusual to find poorer wool quality with a looser purl down the chest and covering the gigots, however, this is

undesirable. Skin should be blue and fine.

- **Head:** Carried high and alert on parade. Muzzle broad and black. Face long and wide with slight curve to nose but avoiding being too Roman nosed. Good depth of side face with correct length of bottom jaw. Bright sparkly eye showing health and vigour. Long, alert ears carried forward attractively at 10 to 2 position. 'Traditional blue' head should have a blue skin covered in short, fine, silky white hair. Brown hair is undesirable. Broken colours containing pink skin is undesirable. 'Crossing type' blue head should also have blue skin with short, fine, silky white hair and distinct brown or black markings. Mixed/mottled colours are undesirable. Pinker skin is acceptable.
- **Back:** Shoulder broad and flat being firm and strong behind shoulder. Back long and wide with long, deep, well sprung ribs.
- **Hind Quarters:** Square tail head with ample width and depth carried down through the gigot.
- **Legs:** Legs should be of medium strength standing with a leg in each corner. Back legs not too straight or not too hooky. Should parade on sound hard feet being well up on strong pasterns. 'Traditional blue' should have short, fine, silky white hair covering a blue skin. 'Crossing type' colourings should be distinct black and white or brown and white.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Growthy characteristics** compliment smaller hill breeds to produce 'Mule' ewe.
- **High milk output.**
- **Very prolific.**
- **Wool** - High quality wool of premium value.

BREED: TEXEL



BREED HISTORY

The Texel sheep originates from the island of Texel off the Dutch North-Sea coast. Around 1933, the Texel was introduced to France and has since become established there, particularly in the Northern provinces.

In 1970, they were introduced to the United Kingdom with an importation organised by the Animal Breeding Research Organisation, who brought in four rams for experimental purposes. Another four followed in 1971 and ABRO initiated extensive trials to compare the Texel with other terminal sires. The verdict was that the Texel excelled in carcass quality and in particular, in lean meat yield.

In 1973, thirteen Lanarkshire sheep breeders joined forces with ABRO to import twenty-seven Texel females and thirteen rams from France. Further importations were made throughout the 1970s, with the first direct import from the Netherlands at the end of that decade.

In Great Britain, the Texels have shown that they are capable of withstanding the rigors of the Scottish winter without any hardship and their progeny have proved to be as adaptable in our climate and altitude as the flocks in Holland and France.

BREED DESCRIPTION

The Texel is hardy, tough and docile. Ewes are proven to excel in grass-based rearing systems. Lambs are famously vigorous at birth with a great will to survive. The breed is moderately prolific with 1.7 lambs per ewe.

Because of the breed's adaptability and excellent carcass quality, which it passes on to first cross progeny, Texel rams have become the UK producer's preferred choice of Terminal Sire. Changes in the growth potential of Texel sheep have been immense since the initial imports during the seventies, enhancing both the efficiency and profitability of carcass production from Texel sired lambs.

- **Head:** In pedigree terms, the British Texel's head should be covered with fine white hair, the nose preferably black, with a wide muzzle. Occasional black spots are allowed on the ears or face, but brown hair is undesirable. Ears should be alert and the eyes bright and bold, with plenty width between the eyes.
- **Neck, Shoulders & Hind Quarters:** The body must be well proportioned with strong loins, a solid square stance and wide, deep and well-developed gigots.
- **Legs:** Front legs should be straight and set neither too close or wide. Back legs set well apart but not extreme with a good definition of hock, neither too hooked nor straight. Pasterns short, strong and upright.
- **Size:** The British Texel is a medium sized sheep with a wide, well-fleshed body, well-proportioned with a level back and medium bone structure.
- **Fleece:** The fleece should have a densely planted staple of medium length.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Muscling** - The Texel's outstanding qualities are its pronounced muscling and long loin, coupled with the unique leanness inherited from the original Texel sheep.

BREED: BELTEX



BREED HISTORY

Beltex sheep were first imported into the UK from Belgium in 1989 and with their double-muscle traits they brought a totally new dimension to British Lamb Production. Mr Tom Ashton was the first importer and along with a few others, namely, Gavin Shanks, John McIlwraith & Mary Dunlop. In 1990 the British Beltex Sheep Society was formed and now 25 years on the Beltex can be crossed with any breed to improve the carcass quality of the lamb crop as well as the flock profit margins.

Commercial Flockmasters enthuse about easy lambing and the vitality of the Beltex X Lambs which minimise labour at lambing time we make no secret of the premium we get when lambs are sold and butchers enthuse about the extra volume of saleable meat that keeps the customers coming back for more, and exporters just can't get enough Beltex for their customers in Europe.

BREED DESCRIPTION

- **Females:** The first imports in 1989/90 were very small females but now in 2015, a far bigger ewe has been bred. A British version you may say, although keeping the original traits. They now weigh around 80 Kgs.
Great bred character, long meaty level back, very wide loin and double muscled hindquarters. Tails must be docked.
- **Males:** Again the males were very small at the start, but British Flockmasters are now looking for a bigger tup, but with all the double muscling qualities, which enable more ewes per tup for natural service. Tails must be left complete.
- **Head:** White Face and the head is generally white in colour but may have black, blue or brown shadings or patches. The fore face is short and thick

- **Neck, Shoulders & Hind Quarters:** Long in the body. It is wedge-shaped from a narrow shoulder to a distinctive large, double-muscled hindquarter.
- **Legs:** Front legs should be straight and set neither too close or wide. Back legs set well apart but not extreme with a good definition of hock, neither too hooked nor straight. Pasterns short, strong and upright.
- **Size:** Rams on average weigh 90 kg (200 lb) and ewes 70 kg (150 lb) at maturity. At the withers, rams grow to 60 cm (24 in) and ewes 50 cm (20 in) at maturity. The Beltex is a medium sized sheep.
- **Fleece:** Medium length wool. The fleece is tight, dense of medium staple length.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Hindquarters Muscling** - Beltex are well known for their extremely heavy muscling, especially in the hindquarters.

BREED: CHAROLLAIS



BREED HISTORY

The Charollais was imported from France in the mid 1970's as a terminal sire breed over the years the breed has grown in popularity due to its superior performance.

BREED DESCRIPTION

Its easy lambing ability is a main feature due to smaller heads, finer bones and slender shoulders. The lambs are vigorous and fast growing with excellent fleshing on the loin and gigot. The finer bones and high-quality lean meat give a high killing out percentage. Lambs will be fit for slaughter over a range of weights without getting over fat, so allowing flexibility for selling.

The ewes are very prolific having an extended breeding season and can achieve up to 220% lambing percentage.

- **Females:** Charollais females should be feminine without being too fine. They should be active, fit and medium to large size and full of flesh. The udders should be soft free from lumps or hardness.
- **Males:** Charollais Rams should be strong and masculine but not coarse. They should be active, fit and hard working. A medium to large size and full of flesh. Testicles should be large, the same size and consistency.
- **Head:** A Charollais's head is full of character, alert without wool. The skin is pink and covered with fine silky creamy/sandy/white hair. Bare pink heads are undesirable but head cover is a personal preference. Muzzles should be wide and open with a good width between bright eyes however they should not be too strong and coarse.

Ears should be long, sharp and alert.

- **Back:** Shoulders should be well fleshed and level, without being narrow or too wide. The back should be long level and well fleshed especially behind the shoulder.
The loin should be long, wide and deep.
- **Hind Quarters:** The width from the loin should be carried over the hind quarters being wide and square and thick, narrow sloping rumps are undesirable.
The gigots should be thick, deep, full and rounded.
- **Legs:** Front legs should be straight and set neither too close or wide. Back legs set well apart but not extreme with a good definition of hock, neither too hooked nor straight. Pasterns short, strong and upright.
Bones should be of medium strength and legs covered in a silky hair that is same colour as head hair. Soundness of movement is essential.
- **Fleece:** A good fleece is essential. The wool should be short and dense and cover the full body without any bare patches and should not cover the back legs or head.

MAIN QUALITIES

- **Easy Lambing** - Due to fineness of bone/head.
- **Excellent fleshing qualities** - Can achieve higher weight without excess fat.
- **Fast growing.**
- **High Killing Out percentage** - Due to fineness of bone.
- **Prolificacy**
- **Strong maternal traits** with extended breeding season achieving up to 220% lambing percentage.

BREED SOCIETY WEBSITES:

Aberdeen Angus: <http://www.aberdeen-angus.co.uk/>

Beef Shorthorn: <http://www.beefshorthorn.org/>

Galloway: <http://www.gallowaycattlesociety.co.uk/>

Hereford: <http://www.herefordcattle.org/>

Charolais: <http://www.charolais.co.uk/>

Simmental: <http://www.britishtsimmental.co.uk/>

Limousin: <http://limousin.co.uk/>

Commercial:

Blonde d'Aquitaine: <http://www.britishtblondesociety.co.uk/>

Holstein Friesian: http://ukcows.com/holsteinuk/publicweb/huk_home.aspx

Ayrshire: <http://www.ayrshirescs.org/>

Jersey: <http://www.ukjerseys.com>

Blackface: <http://www.scottish-blackface.co.uk/>

North Country Cheviot: <http://www.nc-cheviot.co.uk/>

South Country Cheviot: <http://www.cheviotssheep.org/>

Border Leicester: <http://www.borderleicesters.co.uk/>

Suffolk: <http://www.suffolksheep.org/>

Blueface Leicester: <http://www.blueleicester.co.uk/>

Texel: <http://www.texel.co.uk/>

Beltex: <http://www.beltex.co.uk/>

Charolais: <http://www.charollaisheep.com/>

Dutch Spotted: [Dutch Spotted Sheep](#)



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