

Journal – No. 54

January 2021

Luings



The Luing Cattle Society Limited



Wallets Marts
Castle Douglas LTD

“The Premier Market for the Premier Breed”

FRIDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2021
FIFTY SIXTH ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE OF
REGISTERED LUING CATTLE

held under the auspices of the Luing Cattle Society

Wallets Marts are delighted to host the 56th Annual Show and Sale of Luing Cattle. The Luing breed has established itself as one of the most prolific suckler cows available in today's market. Therefore, a visit to Castle Douglas on 5th February is essential to anyone looking to source top quality suckler replacement stock.

Last year's sale saw 31 bulls sell to a top of 25,000gns and average £5,865 whilst 85 bulling heifers sold to 2,400gns and averaged £1,610gns with 31 in-calf heifers topping at 2,600gns and averaging £1619gns

WALLETS MARTS CASTLE DOUGLAS LTD

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Castle Douglas
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Tel: 01556 502 381
walletsmarts@auctionmarts.com
www.walletsmarts.co.uk

The Luing Cattle Society Limited

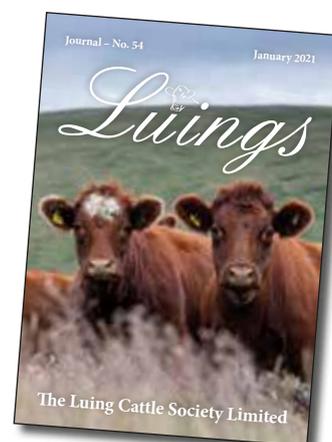
Dairy Cottage, Tower Road, Ayton, Berwickshire TD14 5QX

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10

Around the Sales

25

Canadian Luing Society



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Bonsma Revisited

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2020 Premier Bull Sale Line-Up



Diary Dates 2021

Sunday 31st January

Closing date for photographic competition

The Photographic competition is now online and results will be given at the Annual Dinner

Thursday 4th February (Provisional)

The 55th Luing Cattle Society Annual General Meeting

5.30pm Canteen, Walleys Marts, Castle Douglas

6.30pm for 7.00pm Annual Dinner

Market Hotel, Castle Douglas

Friday 5th February

Walleys Marts, Castle Douglas

PREMIER LUING SOCIETY PEDIGREE SALE

of in-calf and bulling heifers followed by bulls

9.30am: Judging of heifers in pens

10.30am: Parade of bulls 12 noon: Sale commences

Sunday Friday 28th February

Last day for 2020-born calf registrations (Letter Z)

Wednesday 19th May

12th Spring Sale at Dingwall Mart

(entries close 16th April)

Friday 13th August

Open Day at Nunnerie, Biggar, Lanarkshire

by kind permission of C.C. MacArthur & Co.

Saturday 23rd October

48th Autumn Sale at United Auctions, Stirling Agricultural Centre

(entries close 17th September)

Saturday 13th November

3rd Society-approved Production Sale from Isle of Luing

at Oban Livestock Centre

Friday 10th December

Closing date for Premier Sale entries

Friday 31st December

Deadline for updating census on Grassroots

The Luing Cattle Society Limited

Dairy Cottage, Tower Road, Ayton, Berwickshire TD14 5QX

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Web: www.luingcattlesociety.co.uk

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Office Bearers and Members of the Board 2020/21

Chairman

Mr M. Thomson, Tillyrie Farm, Milnathort, Kinross. Tel: 01577 861992

Vice-Chairman

Mr N.F. McGowan, Shealwalls, Alyth, Blairgowrie, Perthshire. Tel: 01828 633652

Immediate Past Chairman

Mr D. Stanners, Low Chesterhope Farm, West Woodburn, Hexham. Tel: 07919 337584

To retire 2021

Mr R.K. Bell, Roxburgh Mill, Kelso, TD5 8NF. Tel: 01573 450221

Mr G MacRae, 120 Newton of Ferintosh, Mulbuie, Muir of Ord, IV6 7RD. Tel: 01349 865409

Mr G Lawton, 57 Plas Isaf, Rhosmedre, Wrexham, LL14 3EW. Tel: 01978 790345 (resigned June 2020)

To retire 2022

Mr P. Crerar CBE, Newmains, Stenton, Dunbar. Tel: 01368 850240

Mr S. Murray, West Preston, Kirkbean, Dumfries. Tel: 01387 880630

Mrs H. McNee, Over Finlarg, Tealing, by Dundee. Tel: 07713 642886

To retire 2023

Mrs Kirsty Dunlop, Dryden, Teviothead, Scottish Borders (resigned June 2020)

Miss Shona Marshall, Mains of Concraig, Kingswells, Aberdeen. Tel: 07507 421105

Mr Alan Cowens, c/o Philiphaugh Estate, Selkirk (resigned June 2020)

Co-opted during 2020 – to retire (or re-elected) in 2021

Mr Shane Cadzow, Ardlarach, Isle of Luing, Oban

Mr Neil McCorkindale, Scammadale, Kilninver, Oban

Mr Andrew McNee, Woodend, Broxburn, Armadale, W. Lothian

Mr Ted Fox, St Johns Kirk, Symington, Biggar, Lanarkshire

Mr Andrew Lyth, Heatherhouse Farm, Tankerness, Orkney

Mr Les Robson, Buckholm Farm, Galashiels

Mr Jim Wilson, East View, Langlee Mains, Galashiels

Society Representatives

General Manager

Natalie Cormack, Dairy Cottage, Tower Road, Ayton, Berwickshire TD14 5QX

E-mail: secretary@luingcattlesociety.co.uk

Breed Development Officers

Mr N.F. McGowan, Shealwalls, Alyth, Blairgowrie, Perthshire. Tel: 01828 633652

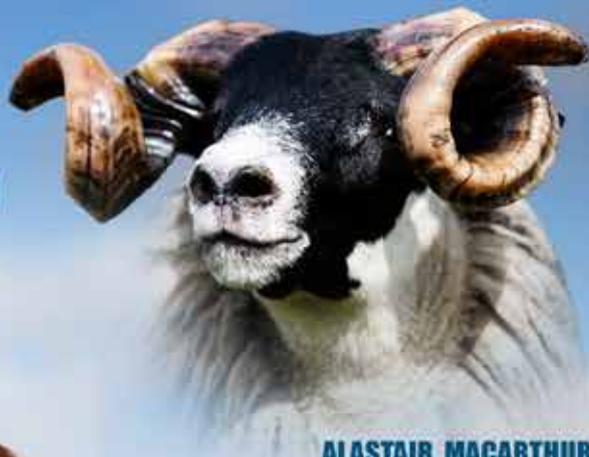
Mr R.H. McNee, Over Finlarg, Tealing, by Dundee. Tel: 07900 221641

Fieldsperson

Mr C.J. Symons, The Priory, Morebattle, Kelso. Tel: 01573 440207 or 07971 231885

NUNNERIE

LUINGS



ALASTAIR MACARTHUR

07887 512648

DAVID MACARTHUR

07766 004028



From the Chair

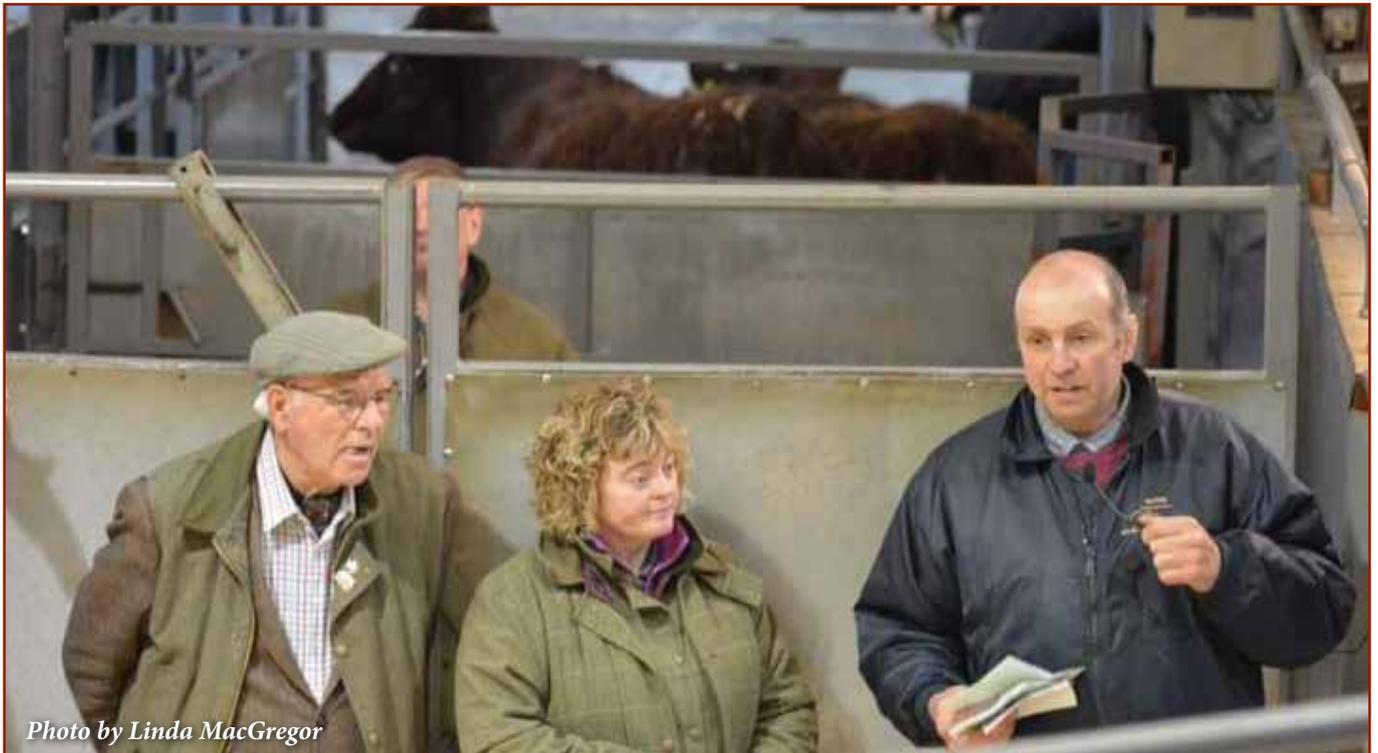


Photo by Linda MacGregor

As the second year of being Chairman nearly draws to a close, the membership and registrations within the society still grows steadily. Even with a pandemic engulfing the country and the curse of Brexit still hanging over British Agriculture, Luing cattle are still in demand.

Covid-19 arrived and the country went into lockdown but farmers still tended to their stock and worked the land. Just to put a bit more of a boot into farming, the weather was so unpredictable: wet winter, cold & dry spring, drought summer into more wet and stormy weather. But we are still here feeding the country. As 2020 comes to an end, at least prime, store and breeding cattle prices have maintained a good price as with the sheep trade. Fingers crossed the cattle & sheep trade can be sustained as we go into a new era out with the EU.

A major disappointment was the cancellation of all the shows and agricultural events, not being able to speak to members and friends as well as promoting the breed. For the first time the Open day had to be cancelled. Hopefully all will be well enough to meet up again next year at Nunnerie for

the Open Day, as well as all the shows and events.

On a more positive note, the society sales once again have proven to be successful. The highlight of the day at the Premier Sale at Castle Douglas saw a new society record of 25,000gns for Nunnerie Xenon from Alistair & David MacArthur, not a bad start for auctioneer Bruce Walton on his first Luing Cattle Society Sale. A tremendous show of incalf and bulling heifers also met with robust bidding with all going to new homes. Wallets Mart once again provided a good service for the sale. It was then onto Dingwall Mart but due to Covid-19 and a national lockdown, the Society and Dingwall Mart worked together to ensure the sale went ahead albeit an online sale. A lot of credit must go to the vendors for supplying the videos of their good quality stock for sale. Sitting at home watching the computer as the bids came in for each lot was surreal, exciting with a touch of nervousness. Just like last year, all heifers and bulls sold with buyers and vendors very happy. October 31st and we have the society sale at UA Stirling and our thanks go to UA directors, auctioneers and the staff for their hard

work to make this sale work under the pressures of the pandemic. Once again good quality Luing and Sim-Luing heifers were put forward for sale with buyers socially distanced around the sale ring and auctioneer Raymond Kennedy threatening to “climb out the rostrum” should buyers fail to comply with Covid regulations. The interest in Luing cattle continues to grow as the purchases from the sales disperse around the United Kingdom. With the interest in Luing & Sim-Luing cattle increasing hopefully we will see more cattle at Society sales, a great shop window for the society and breeders.

Finally, I have to thank all the directors over the past two years for their work for the society; a huge thank you to Una and Natalie for their support; to Charlie in his activities as Fieldsman; to Neil for his immense support as Vice Chairman and wish him all the best in the role as Chairman; but most of all to Kathleen, Rebecca & Fiona for the invaluable support that allowed me to fulfil the role as Chairman. Thank you all.

Hopefully we can all meet up in 2021 for a drink and blether.

View from the Office



2020 has been a year of change and has been characterised by finding new ways of doing everything that we do. The Luing office has been no different as there have been many obvious changes both in location and personnel. With no real handover possible, it has taken some time to get to grips with the processes and rules, learn a new database, nevermind figuring out where to put everything. In some respects, not having to be at shows and sales has allowed the time required to properly absorb as much as possible.

We began immediately with the implementation of a DNA testing programme and I would like to thank all the breeders for their adoption of this, most without even a question. I hope that this is because of the care taken by your Council to ensure that there was sufficient explanation and supporting information available to answer any queries. We expected in the region of 100 samples from stock sires in use this season and at the time of writing we have nearly that, and it's expected to surpass. Results have yet to be achieved, but the Council expects that the confirmation of sire verification, for example, will provide a level of certainty for those buying animals, especially stock sires. Certainty is especially important if you

are in search of specific genetics, or indeed need to avoid specific genetics, in a small gene pool. Testing of the Myostatin variants is exploratory within the Luing population, and the Council has yet to decide how to use the information that will be revealed, but wants to analyse it first to see what's there. There is more information on the Myostatin story, and how it might apply to Luing, in a feature article elsewhere in the Journal.

It's fair to say that the Council has experienced some upheaval during 2020. It is hoped that the addition of 7 new members in August, albeit temporarily, will settle into a working team that can get on with the business of Council. We have undertaken a review of the accounts systems and together with Grassroots, have implemented a new system that is ready to go from the new financial year in November. We have made a couple of small enhancements to software to enable slicker and GDPR proof electronic communication with members. Speaking of electronic communications, with the cancellation of our traditional style Open Day, due to be held at Nunnerie, we embarked on the creation of a virtual tour. Every day's a school day, or so the saying goes, and so it was with the virtual tour. Much thanks to the MacArthurs at Nunnerie,

Wayne and Sam Hutchison, Katrina MacArthur and Scott Brown for their perseverance in sticking with a project that threatened to spill into a third month in creation. Nothing is ever as easy as it looks at first! I know that the real thing will be even more spectacular when we are able to host it in 2021.

Sales have been forced into an online format this year in most cases. We have been fortunate to have been able to hold two live sales this year, and one virtual. Despite early trepidation, the online sale, hosted by Dingwall Mart, was a resounding success, not least due to the hard work of our Fieldsman, Charles Symons. There was nearly 100% clearance, with buyers the length and breadth of the UK. While we all would prefer to see stock "in the flesh" before purchase, and despite fears for the live auction system, the online platform has a place, and in cooperation with some trusted field work, it can be a very useful tool going forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark Thomson and Charles Symons especially, for their help, patience and many explanations of all things Luing over the past 4-5 months. I can't say it's been a seamless introduction, and it has been eventful, but definitely made much easier by Mark and Charles!

Committee Reports

Breed Promotion

2020 has been a challenging year in many ways, not least of which has been finding ways to keep the breed to the forefront of the minds of suckler producers, and membership alike. As every planned event slipped off the calendar, it became clear that we would need to follow the lead of others and utilise our digital channels to further our promotional ambitions. Facebook has become an important method of communication, and never more so than the last 8 months. Most types of information can be disseminated in this fashion, and as long as its accompanied by a good image file, it has been a useful tool. We have also implemented a means of E-Newsletters which, quite apart from the usefulness in a Covid situation, will reduce traditional postage quite considerably.

One of the casualties of the year has been our much anticipated Open Day at Nunnerie. But not to be outdone, Wayne and Sam Hutchison were commissioned to film a virtual tour. Together with Katrina MacArthur, Scott Brown and Alastair and David MacArthur, who all played their parts in the script, narration and filming, the resulting piece is excellent and has been really well received. The video has been put onto YouTube and Facebook and received many hits.

The website, which is the first port of call for many enquiries, has been reviewed and much of the information updated. We have added online forms for bull inspection applications and journal advertising booking. The usual frequency of newsletters has been maintained and they are available in both electronic and paper format for now. Advertisements for both breeding and bull sales will continue as normal as long as we are able to hold live sales.

The promotion committee is made up of Shona Marshall, Mark Thomson, Graeme MacRae and Charles Symons. Please don't hesitate to contact any of these members if you have queries or can make constructive contributions.

Breed Development

The Breed Development Committee has implemented a program of DNA profiling, starting with the service sire population, which will hopefully have been completed by end October. This first step will populate a library of service sires in use at this time, and will facilitate sire verification of the sale bulls, and females, going forward. Results will be communicated to their contributors once it is determined the most efficient way in which this can be done. It is anticipated that this information can also be displayed on the individual animal's record within Grassroots.

In addition, the samples collected have largely been tested for Myostatin variants as well. Once all these results are available, Council will use this information to assess the prevalence of any Myostatin variants found. This is very much an information gathering mission at this stage.

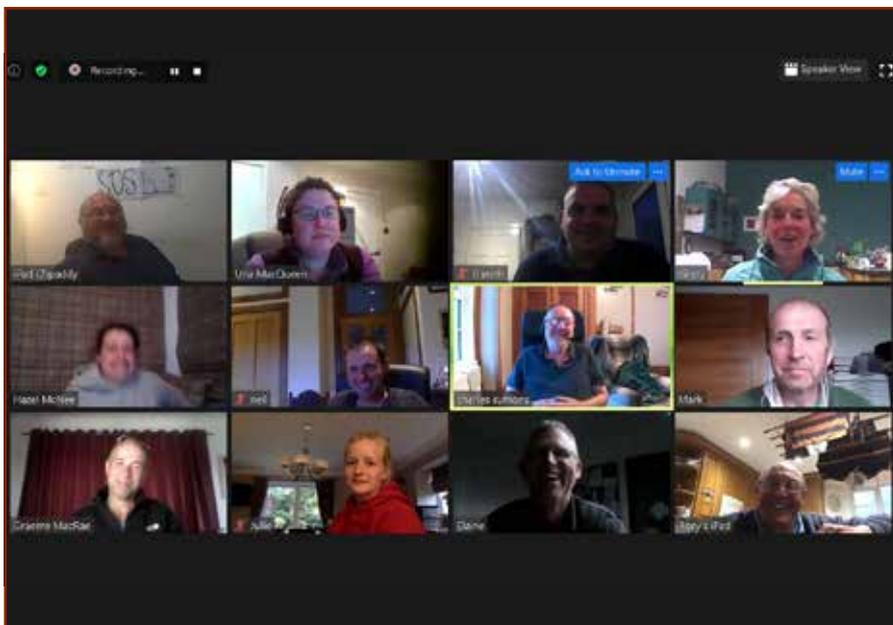
This committee has also reviewed the bull inspection and dam classification process and remit over the course of the year. The remit of bull inspections was fully discussed with a view particularly to assess the possibility of introducing a locomotion inspection to the on-farm pre-sale inspection for young bulls. On balance it was determined that locomotion was not an appropriate trait to introduce in that format. After review, the Dam Classification process remains the same. Explanation on both processes are available on the website at www.luingcattlesociety.co.uk/breed-development. The Breed Development Committee members are Neil McGowan, Mark Thomson, Robert McNee, Rory Bell, and Steven Murray. Your Breed Development Officers are Neil McGowan and Robert McNee who would be more than happy to discuss any points in relation to breed development, DNA profiling, inspections and dam classifications.

Finance Committee

A small finance committee has been established to monitor cash flow and implementation of new accounting software. This will include facilitation of payment of invoices by BACS and distribution of invoices by email, where possible. To fully utilise this new system it would be helpful if members who do not have an email on file with the Society, could forward their address to secretary@luingcattlesociety.co.uk

Remuneration Committee

Following guidance on governance matters, the Luing Cattle Society has also established a Remuneration Committee which has responsibility for managing employment and self-employed contractors on behalf of the Society. The committee consists of Neil McGowan, Rory Bell, Hazel McNee, Ted Fox and Andrew McNee.



Around the Sales

Castle Douglas

The Luing Cattle Society staged its 55th Annual Premier Sale at Wallets Mart, Castle Douglas on Friday 7th February 2020.

The pre-sale show was judged by Alan Cowens, Philiphaugh, Selkirk, who selected the champion pair of in calf heifers from Robert McNee Ltd, Benhar selling to SK & S Brown, Woodmarsh, North Bradley for 2,500gns. Reserve champion in calf heifers went to S Murray, Rockcliffe. Top price for a in calf heifer was 2,600gns from Robert McNee Ltd

being purchased by A McGill. Overall average for 31 in calf heifers forward and sold was 1,619gns (£1,700).

The champion pair of bulling heifers was awarded to D & A Barr, Milkieston which went on to sell for 2,400gns to P Simmers, Backmuir. Reserve champion pair of bulling heifers went to Messrs W Graham, Craigdarroch selling to 2,600gns to M Halligan & Burke, Stewartson, Eddleston. Top price for the bulling heifers was 2,600gns (Craigdarroch) with the overall average for 85 bulling heifers forward and sold being 1,610gns (£1,691).

The breed witnessed a new record of 25,000gns for Nunnerie Xenon from CC MacArthur & Co, Nunnerie, being purchased by Mr T Renwick & Sons, Blackhouse. Of the 33 bulls forward for sale, 31 found new homes giving a clearance rate of just over 94% and three bulls being purchased 10,000gns and over.

Other prices 14,000gns was a Benhar Xerox from Robert McNee Ltd, Benhar, purchased by P Simmers, Backmuir. R & H McNee, Finlurg went on to sell Finlurg Xplosion to Kedzlie Farms, Galashiels for 10,000gns. Overall average for bulls was 5,865gns (£6,158).



Cadzow

Cadzow Bros, Isle of Luing held their 2nd annual production sale at Oban, conducted by United Auctions on Saturday 14th November. Although averages for all types of females was back on last year's inaugural sale, as expected, a brisk trade saw the lots disperse widely across the UK, despite the restrictions in place for buyers.

Rising 2 year old purebred heifers in calf to a variety of Luing genetics, due in spring 2021, were keenly sought after averaging a pleasing £1936 for 39 sold. The top priced in calf heifer (2yr old) reached £2730 and was purchased by I McKie, of Northumberland for his Lanton herd. Over half of these in calf females traded for more than £2000, with the majority going to pedigree homes. Similarly, 4 rising 3yr old heifers, all in calf to different bulls,

and also due next spring averaged £1523 and sold to a top of £1680 to R McCarlie Ltd. Bulling heifers were a steady trade, averaging £1326 for 16 sold to a top of £1470 to Mark Thomson of John Lawrie Tillyrie Ltd.

Isle of Luing bulls have been the foundation of many Luing herds throughout the UK and that history was evident. Neil McGowan of Incheoch went to £6300 to secure Luing Yanis, a Lochbroom Talisker son out of an Ardlarach female, also the top priced bull on offer. Messrs Atkinson pushed hard and got Luing Yankee at £5775, also a Talisker son, while HM Jarret got their pick, Luing Yanick for £5250. These well bred bulls sold well to average £4380 for 7 sold, an increase of £128 on the year.

Cows with autumn calves at foot, were also in demand, selling to a top of £2100 to Blarghour Farm, and averaging £1208 for 8 sold. Mixed age cows, back

in calf to the Luing were a stickier trade, averaging £1103 for 10, with a top of £1890 to AJ Lambie.

Lot 52 was sold in aid of My Name's Doddie Foundation, and was purchased by Society Chairman Mark Thomson for his Tillyrie herd at Kinross. This roan bulling heifer was by Luing Wyvis and out of an Ardlarach female which is a daughter of Luing Lad.



	No	Average Price £	Top Price £
Bulling Heifers	17	1322	1470
Bulls	7	4380	6300
Cows with Calves at Foot	8	1208	2100
In Calf Heifers	39	1936	2730
In Calf Heifers (3yr)	4	1733	2100
Mixed Age Cows - I/C	10	1103	1890
Grand Total	85	1838	6300

Dingwall

On 20th May 2020 the Luing Cattle Society held their annual spring sale at Dingwall Mart in a different format due the Covid 19. The Luing Cattle Society and Dingwall & Highland Marts made a decision to conduct an online timed auction sale, which has been a huge success in these difficult times. Paul Spencer, Senior Auctioneer at Dingwall and Highlands Mart has been delighted to work with the society in order to make the sale continue this year. We all sat poised in front of our digital devices for the sale of 129 pedigree and commercial Luing cattle. The online timed auction allowed many to view and bid on cattle that would not have been able to travel to Dingwall.

Pedigree bulling heifers (82) averaged 1,571gns (£1,650.00) with the top price being 3,020gns (£3,171.00), twice for 25 month old heifers from Mr G. MacRae, Kintail, 120 Newton of Ferintosh, selling to J. C. Innes & Sons, Dunscroft, Huntly.

Pedigree yearling heifers (5) averaged 808gns (£848.40) and sold to 840gns

(£882.00) for a 14-month old heifer from Mr J. M. Haley, Lochan Farm, Kinrossie to Meikle Farms, Darvel, Ayrshire.

Yearling Sim/Luing heifers (13) averaged 1,034gns (£1,085.54) and sold to 1,280gns (£1,344.00) twice from Messrs J. Lawrie, Tillyrie, Kinross, selling to Mr C. Arnot, Hatton Mill, Angus.

Un-registered bulling heifers (9) averaged 889gns (£933.33) and sold to 1,080gns (£1,134.00) twice from Welbeck Scottish Farms Ltd., Welbeck Estate, selling to Messrs Tulloch Farms, Upper Coullie, Laurencekirk.

Bulls (4) sold to 6,000gns (£6,300.00) for two 25 months old both from Messrs C. C. MacArthur & Co. Nunnerie Farm, Biggar, one selling to Firm of Ernest Crawford, Blarghour Farm, Dalmally, and the other to Mr A. Kennedy, Mitchell hill Farm, Biggar.

Other leading prices: Pedigree bulling heifers: Culmailly Farm, Golspie, 2,960gns (twice) & 2,420gns (thrice); Kintail, 2,580gns (twice); Clashnoir, Glenlivet, 1,980gns (twice) & 1,760gns; Nunnerie (twice), Inverbroom, Ullapool (thrice) 1,700gns. Pedigree yearling

heifers: Lochan Farm (4 times) 800gns. Yearling Sim/Luing heifers: Tillyrie Farm (twice), 1,260gns; Lochan Farm (thrice), 1,020gns. Un-registered bulling heifers: Welbeck Estates (thrice), 1,040gns.

Adam Hunter, Yorkshire, is delighted to have purchased the foundations for his new herd having sold off his Limousin herd and joined a Native breed scheme. Having looked at all the native breeds he felt "Luings were by far the best of the native breeds".

Graeme MacRae, Kintail was delighted with his "exceptional sale" selling to top 3,020gns.

The success of this sale goes to show the popularity of the Luing breed from all over the UK.



Stirling

A good offering met with solid trade at this year's 47th Autumn Breeding Sale of Luing and Sim-Luing cattle, held at United Auctions' Stirling centre on 31st October. This year's event was without a show due to the Coronavirus restrictions. Registered Luing in calf heifers opened the sale with an excellent couple of pairs from A. Kennedy, Mitchellhill which sold to 2800gns and 2000gns. The Sim-Luing in calf heifers were the highlight of the sale selling to 2800gns twice for two pair from Robert McNee Ltd, Woodend. Their consignment of 15 heifers averaged 2543gns and the two top priced pairs sold to Webster, Sunnybank, Woodsley, York and Rogerson, Masongill, Great Aspey, Appleby, respectively. Colin Little, East Bracklinn, Callander, also



Lots 1 and 2

fares well, selling to a top of 2800gns and averaging 2438gns for 8 sold, with 3 pair at 2500gns each. Paddy Crerar, Newmains, Stenton averaged 2020gns for 5 sold and The Woodland Trust, Glen Finglas averaged 1975gns for 4 sold, all to Rogerson, Appleby.

Bulling heifers, both Luing and Sim-Luing were in demand, with averages for both types up 306gns and 476gns on the year. Pedigree Luings were selling to a top of 2000gns for no less than 4 pairs, from T. Renwick, Blackhouse (1 pair) and W Graham & Son, Craigdarroch (3 pairs). Registered Sim-Luing bulling heifers sold to a top of 2800gns for a single heifer consigned by Messrs Halligan and Burke, Stewarton, Peebles, who also had a pair at both 2250gns and 2200gns, all purchased by Messrs Foster, The Riddings, Bolton Abbey, Skipton. Other leading averages in this section belong to Messrs R & H McNee, Over Finlurg, Dundee, averaging 2000gns for 2 pair of Sim-Luings, and W Graham & Son, Craigdarroch who averaged 1854gns for 13 Luing heifers forward.

Luing heifer calves sold to an average of 764gns for 11 head, from Messrs Horsfall, Balnairn Flax Mill, Pitlochry. Luing cows sold to a top of



Lots 161 and 162

1800gns for Lochan V39 P/44345, a Luing Newton daughter with calf at foot, back in calf to the Simmental. The Lochan cows averaged 1131gns for 4 forward.

Crossbred heifers (6) sold to a top of 1600gns for a pair from Marshall Farms, Concraig House, Aberdeen, purchased by Professor Penny, Harehead, Cranshaws, Duns. Marshall Farms' second pair realised 1500gns and are away to the same home.



Lots 20 and 21

Summary and Averages

	No	Average	Top Price	+/- on Year (gns)
LUING BULLING HEIFERS	65	1418	2000	-78
Messrs W Graham & Son, Craigdarroch	13	1854	2000	
T. Renwick & Sons, Blackhouse	16	1700	2000	
RJ Wotherspoon, Glen Lyon	16	1194	1600	
Mr D. Barr, Milkieton	6	1267	1400	
Mr J Haley, Lochan	2	1300	1300	
Mr AP Waugh, Thomsons Walls	4	1200	1200	
The Woodland Trust Scotland, Glen Finglas	8	845	900	
LUING COWS	4	1131	1800	
Mr J Haley, Lochan	4	1131	1800	
LUING HEIFER CALVES	11	764	850	+122
Mr NH Horsfall, Balnairn Flax Mill	11	764	850	
LUING IN CALF HEIFERS	5	2250	2800	
A Kennedy, Mitchellhill	4	2400	2800	
DG Henry, Oakwoodmill	1	1650	1650	
SIM-LUING BULLING HEIFERS	29	1705	2800	+476
Messrs MG Halligan & AC Burke, Stewarton	5	2340	2800	
Messrs R & H McNee, Over Finlurg	4	2000	2000	
Mr M Thomson, Tillyrie	9	1522	1600	
Messrs FJA McGowan, Incheoch	4	1525	1550	
Mrs CM Reid, Boreland Farm	6	1425	1500	
Mr P Crerar, Newmains	1	1400	1400	
SIM-LUING IN CALF HEIFERS	32	2364	2800	+306
Mr C Little, East Bracklinn	8	2438	2800	
Robert McNee Ltd, Woodend	15	2543	2800	
The Woodland Trust Scotland, Glen Finglas	4	1975	2100	
Mr P Crerar, Newmains	5	2020	2050	
UNREGISTERED CROSSBRED BULLING HEIFERS	4	1550	1600	
Marshall Farms, Concraig	4	1550	1600	
UNREGISTERED CROSSBRED IN CALF HEIFERS	2	900	1100	
DG Henry, Oakwoodmill	2	900	1100	
Grand Total	152	1641	2800 (4)	

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Luing Journal Breeder Feature - *Nunnerie*



Alastair MacArthur and son, David

The MacArthur family's Nunnerie herd has been hitting the headlines in the Luing cattle world over recent years, producing top prices for bulls and females at society sales, and setting a new breed record of 25,000gns for Nunnerie Xenon in February, 2020. Although primarily successful Blackface sheep breeders, securing lead prices in the sale ring with ram lambs and shearlings, Luing cattle have become a staple part of the family business, producing hardy and efficient home-bred replacements.

After coming across David Kerr's Luings at Craigdarroch, the family established the Nunnerie Luing herd in 1992 with the purchase of two in-calf heifers from the McNee's Benhar herd. The family continued to buy in several other heifers over the following years and in 1996, purchased their first bull Glengorm Tyrant, which has left a lasting stamp on the herd.

"We previously ran Galloways and Blue Grey cows but were looking for something to breed our own replacements and to produce a bigger and stronger calf," said Alastair, who farms with wife Ann, and their son David, who is now the fourth generation to farm at Nunnerie. *"Luings have a great temperament and are very fertile and easy calving. They have a thick skin and can stand up to harsh weather which suits the farming system here."*

Situated in the Lowther Hills, at Elvanfoot, near Biggar, the MacArthur family has been farming at Nunnerie since 1901 and purchased the originally tenanted unit almost 40 years ago. The land rises from 950ft to 2000ft above sea level, with the majority of ground at Nunnerie rough hill and around 150 acres enclosed and 50 acres of arable ground suitable for silage production. A further 600 acres of previously quarried ground is farmed nearer to Biggar, at Annieston and Muirhouse, both of which have been purchased gradually over the last 20 years. This ground is mostly in grass but allows for 25 acres of rotational kale to be grown, followed by spring barley prior to reseeded.

The Nunnerie team, which includes daughter Fiona, who helps out in her spare time, and shepherds, Craig Thornborrow and Neil O'Sullivan, run 70 pedigree Luing cattle and 1100 breeding ewes at Nunnerie, while a further 1200 ewes run between



Annieston and Muirhouse. During the summer the cows are run in two groups on different areas of the Nunnerie hill, each with a bull. "Luings are great foragers and graze on the hill all year, but because the peaty ground can become very wet during winter, they are offered big bale silage and mineral blocks on gravelly areas from late November onwards" said Alastair

Calving takes place at the end of March, preferably outside if the weather is decent and Alastair comments that the cows are great mothers, and rarely need any assistance at calving. *"Luing cows are more than capable of calving outside and our cows take full advantage of their 1000-acre block hiding in sheltered glens,"* he said. *"We get a lot of wind and rain, with our annual rainfall at 1362 mm so in spells of stormy weather, we bring batches of cows into the shed to keep them away from the muck around feeders. This allows them to get back onto clean areas as soon as they have calved."*

The calves produce good growth rates without creep feed as the first turn calves generally average 300kg at weaning when they come straight off the hill at Nunnerie in November. Calves don't generally get a chance of creep feed as the cows don't hang about the feeders until November time.

They are then moved to Muirhouse, where they are in-wintered and fed a home mix. *"The breed has great versatility and can easily adapt to any finishing system from intensive bull beef to more extensive low input grazing"* said Alastair. Early born male calves are kept entire and are finished as bulls, before being sold to Stoddart's, where they averaged 390kg this year and grossed over £1400 per head at 15-months-old. They produce mainly U grades, with the most recent batch sold in July, reaching a top of £1488 or 366p per kg for one weighing 406kg.

Later born male calves are castrated and fattened more slowly on grass at 18 to 19-months-old at very little cost while a few have been roughly wintered and



finished at an average weight of 395kg at 27 months, which Alastair believes is big enough for the current market demand.

As the herd is kept pure, the MacArthurs have been able to breed all of their own herd replacements for the past 10 years which is ideal for the high-health status. *“The health of the cattle is high on our priority list so it’s a real advantage that Luings can be bred pure but managed in a commercial and low-maintenance system,”* commented Alastair. *“We have been members of the Premium Cattle Health Scheme for more than 10 years, with our cattle BVD and Johnes accredited, and stock for sale clear of IBR and Lepto.”*

In order to keep up the quality of the females, the Nunnerie team pays close attention to feet, udders and temperament when keeping home-bred replacements which calve down at three-years-old. *“The cows are quite capable at calving at two-years-old but would require separate management,”* said Alastair. *“At the moment, we are considering running some two-year-old calvers for a year at Muirhouse before joining the hill herd. We may also graze a few of the older cows for an extra couple of years on the lower ground. We aim to breed with a medium-sized, hardly hill cow and unlike many other breeders, we are just as happy at keeping the roan coloured Luing cows as we are the more fashionable red types.”*

The Luing Cattle Society’s dam classification scheme has been well supported by the MacArthur family since it began operating in 2002, which Alastair says has been a great marketing tool when it comes to selling pedigree bulls. *“We have been using the dam classification system since it started which is an extremely important part of what we do, giving buyers a reliable source of information when it comes to buying a stock bull,”* said Alastair.

Charles Symons, who is fieldsman for the Luing Cattle Society, also pointed out the huge importance of the dam classification system. He said: *“This scheme is the most important tool we*

use within the breed and has been really helpful to our members, particularly those who are establishing a new herd or who are having problems with various traits.”

This system gives buyers an assurance that at 18 months of age, the bull has attained a standard of soundness, growth and conformation, and that the dam of each bull for sale has been scored as above average for feet, locomotion, teats and udder, in accordance with the society’s rules. Overall, the scheme was designed to fit in with breeding objectives for a profitable suckler cow to improve the overall performance of Luing cattle herds across the country.

Although the MacArthurs breed and sell top-quality bulls, they are aware of the Luing’s maternal ability as a profitable suckler cow and so have always put emphasis on improving stock and sale heifers.



Alastair started selling autumn-born in-calf heifers at Castle Douglas in 1999, where he produced strong averages just shy of £1400. With all calves now spring-born, the heifers are sold as bulling heifers at United Auctions, Stirling, Dingwall and Highland Marts’ Dingwall Mart, and Castle Douglas. In 2018, Nunnerie sold 28 bulling heifers to average £1885. *“We decided to change our policy from selling the stronger heifers at Castle Douglas in February to the autumn so that the cattle can be taken straight from the field,”* said Alastair.

“This ultimately saves three months feeding and allows for easier management for our buyers.” Younger heifers are outwintered and sold at Dingwall in May. Stock bulls are purchased every two to three years, with one of the herd’s most influential purchases to date being Harehead Davy Dee, which was purchased for 8000gns in 2004. He was a roan and polled bull with great character, and his first crop of daughters sold up to 2700gns, averaging 1800gns, with 25 of his daughters still found in the herd today. In 2008, the family sold a Davy Dee son named Nunnerie Harvey, for 14000gns to the sire’s breeder,

Professor W.A. Penny, Harehead, Duns. Harvey then went on to sire the previous Luing record holder, the 20,000gns Harehead Mourie.

While the Nunnerie team have enjoyed many successful days at Castle Douglas, this February will go down in history for them, producing the new breed record of 25,000gns. Their record breaker, brought out with assistance from freelance stockman Dennis Gall, is by the 17,000gns Finlargo Tornado, out of a dam by Nunnerie Magnus, and sold to the Renwicks at Craig Douglas, Selkirk.

Harehead Walker, which is a son of Finlargo Nero, has been out to work at Nunnerie for the second time this summer, after being purchased for 17,000gns at Castle Douglas in February, 2019. He is the fourth Harehead bred bull used on the herd, and his first calves born on the ground this spring look promising.

Looking ahead, Nunnerie has eight young bulls which they hope to have forward for sale at Castle Douglas in February, and Dingwall in May. Six of the bulls are by Finlargo Tornado and the other two are by Harehead Nonu.

Outwith the beef enterprise, the family’s large-scale sheep enterprise includes mainly Blackface ewes which are bred pure and crossed with the Bluefaced Leicester, as well as Mules and pedigree Texels. *“There is no alternative to cattle and sheep grazing on much of our land and we already have a reasonable amount of forestry,”* said Alastair. *“Cattle grazing is good for our hill which is mainly Molinia and it encourages diversity in plant species and provides a habitat for a wealth of waders and other bird life. The cattle grazing also provides a natural fire break between the forested areas which surround the farm. We are quite certain that native breeds are on the rise, with hardy, easily managed and low input Luings at the forefront,”* he concluded.





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Out and About with Guy Everard



Leigh Farm, Exmoor

We are a family business farming four farms which all form part of the Miltons Estate. We keep a commercial suckler herd of 500 cows, the majority of the calving takes place in 2 batches in the late spring/early summer and another batch mid-autumn. These cows and calves are housed from November to April. The suckled calves are sold at 9-12 months of age (Tb permitting). In addition to the cattle we keep a flock of 600 mule ewes which we put to Suffolk rams. We own and manage Winsford Hill, a 1,250 acre block of moorland which has been in various Natural England environmental management schemes since 1995. Winsford Hill rises to 1300ft above sea level and has an annual average rainfall of 70 inches.

In 2018 two things happened that started us down the road to keeping a herd of Luing cows.

1. Winsford Hill Modification of Stewardship Agreement.

In the Spring of 2018, after discussions with Natural England, it was agreed to adopt a modified management plan for the moorland. In practice this meant changing from adhering to a list of does and don'ts, to agreeing to a set of outcomes as to how the moorland should look in 5 years' time and us having a freer hand as to how the hill is managed in order to achieve these outcomes. Since 1995 there had been

a proscription against keeping cattle on the hill during the winter. My father (Christopher) and I both believe that this lack of winter grazing has been a contributory factor to the increase in the amount of gorse on the hill. During our discussions Natural England said that we could put cattle on the hill in the winter but they would have to be a native breed.

2. Leigh Farm Coming In-Hand

Leigh Farm is a 300 acre hill farm adjoining Winsford Hill. Leigh had been farmed by the Rawle family for nearly 100 years. In the early part of 2018 Chris Rawle said that he wanted to retire and surrender the tenancy of Leigh on 29th September 2018. We decided to take Leigh in hand and use it to rear replacements for the main suckler cow herd at Broford Farm.



The first sim-luing calf born at leigh

In order to be able to graze cattle on Winsford Hill all year round we clearly needed cows that were hardy enough to stick it but were also capable of producing a heifer that was the

right type to rear on and go into the commercial suckler herd.

Christopher remembered, that when he was on his travels in 2007 as chairman of the National Beef Association, he was taken by Robert Forster (Founder and Director of the NBA) to a farm near Otterburn where he was impressed by a herd of Luing Cows. The farmer and his son explained that when the weather was driving rain and sleet, other breeds would seek shelter but Luings remained grazing in the open. At a local show I bumped into Ron Smith, the retired farm manager of a large farm in the middle of Exmoor where they used to cross Galloways with a Whitebred Shorthorn bull to produce Blue Greys in the 1980's. I explained our situation to Ron and to my surprise he said if he were in our position, he would have a serious look at Luings.

So, with all this in mind we contacted Charles Symons who kindly arranged a 2-day farm tour in the July 2018 heatwave. On the morning of day one, Charles took us to see Ian Mckie's Cows at Lanton and then in the afternoon Andrew Mcknee's at Woodend Farm. On day 2 we met up with Bruce Gilchrist to see the Rawburn herd. Impressed by all that we had seen we concluded that a herd of Luing cows would be a good fit for Winsford Hill and breeding Sim-Luing heifers would help improve our suckler herd.

In October 2018 Ian Mckie helped get us going by selling a nucleus of 24 cows and a Simmental bull. A trip to the Castle Douglas sale in February 2019 added 16 heifers to the herd. Last November we bought 28 in calf cows with 27 Luing calves at foot from John Campbell at Currburn and 11 Cows and 5 Heifers from Phil Preece in Mid Wales.



First luing cows and calves arriving from lanton

We bought a second Simmental bull this summer and have built the Luing herd up to 87 cows and heifers in just under 2 years. The majority of the cows calve in the spring in the fields at Leigh. Once the cows and calves have mothered up, they go back out on the hill until the autumn, when we bring them in to wean and house the calves. The cows get a mineral bolus and go back out on the hill for the winter.

During the winter the cows are fed cobbs with a snacker feeder every other day and plus some hay if the weather conditions are such that they need it.

The cost comparison between the Luing herd and the suckler herd is quite revealing. The variable costs (including forage costs) to keep one of our suckler cows all year and her calf until weaning is £198/cow. The same calculation for the Luings is £78/cow! Even when replacement costs are added to the variable costs the Luings score better at £188/cow as against £276 for the commercial suckler herd.

the hill looking for the cattle we fitted four of the cows with GPS collars. These came from a Spanish company, “Digitanimal,” at 150 euros each they have proved to be a good buy. The collars link to a mobile phone app, so that if you want to see where the cows are you can simply check your phone.



The GPS system also sends a text message if the cattle go beyond the boundary of Winsford Hill. An added bonus of the collars is that they record where the cows have been grazing, and heat maps can be produced such as the one below.



This is a really helpful tool to demonstrate to Natural England the management benefits of having the Luings on the hill.

The other piece of technology we have adopted this year is using an electronic heat detection system. Each of the Simmental bulls has been fitted with a “Moocall heat collar” and Moocall ear tags to all the cows and heifers. The collar uses the cow/bull proximity, mounting behaviour and bull activity to determine when a cow is in heat and when she is likely to have been served and correspondingly when she is due to calve. We await to see how accurate this is next spring.



Establishing this Luing herd has been one of the most satisfying farming projects that Dad and I have done together. As the economics of farming change with a greater emphasis on “public money for public goods” I am sure that having a herd of Luing Cows on Winsford Hill is going to help us adapt to the new dynamic of a greater link between livestock farming and conservation.

Guy Thomas-Everard



Winsford Hill is one block of 1,250 acres. It is steep in parts with many overgrown combes. To try and reduce the amount of time spent riding around



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Out and About with Rory Bell

It's 14 years since the business of Robin H Bell ventured onto its Luing journey – maybe it's time for reflection.

To begin with – the background. We – my wife Jane and myself, sons, James (24) who is the tractorman and Finlay (21) currently in 4th year Rural Business Management (from home), plus daughter Lucy (16) when not at school - run two rented farms. My father, Robin still has a keen interest in all things stock related. Roxburgh Mill is a 280 mixed arable unit four miles west of Kelso on the River Teviot, with 200 acres of arable ground and the remainder being permanent pasture. Winter Oats are grown which go to the local miller John Hogarth Ltd, while the Spring Barley is hopefully malting quality, with some kept for home use. The Teviot Simmental herd and Texel flock are at home here. Fifteen miles away, south of Jedburgh and just east of the Carter Bar, Plenderleith is about 1550 acres of hill and 290 acres of fields – all grass. Almost half of the field ground was reclaimed in the years since my grandfather took the farm in 1947. Peter Hunter is the resident stockman looking after the 100+ cows and 700 Blackface ewes.

Until the Luing herd was started, spring-calving Simmental cross cows were summered at Plenderleith and wintered inside at Roxburgh Mill on home-grown barley and straw. Cattle courts were rented locally to winter some of the youngstock. In the summer



when grass availability reduced, the cows went onto the hill, but I always felt that neither the cows nor the rough hill benefitted much. The large framed cows didn't perform on the vegetation available and they didn't cover all the hill – only the more palatable bits.

I started looking for a cow that would be able to forage the hill ground more effectively. My father had had Blue-greys in the past and also some in-wintered Luings for a short period. After Finlay McGowan assured me that they were ideally suited for the farm, I opted for Luings. The added attraction was that having had a pedigree Simmental herd since 1973, breeding Sim-Luings was a logical option. The Plenderleith herd was born.



The first batch of 15 heifers were bought at Castle Douglas in 2006 from Luing, Merkland and Nunnerie and 25 cows and calves followed from the Westwater dispersal. The only other females added since were bought at the Merkland and College sales in 2014. Bulls have been bought from Luing, Harehead, Dirnanean and Merkland. The bulls that have had most influence on the herd are Harehead Hammer and Merkland Nugget. Both these sires have left medium sized, well fleshed daughters that hold their condition whilst out-wintering on the hill. One hundred cows and heifers went to the bull in 2020 – half going to Simmental bulls.

All cows and heifers are wintered on the hill, getting feed blocks to start with then onto a ration of baled silage. We use a bale unwinder to feed the silage which has 3 benefits: 1- The ground doesn't poach, 2- There's no bullying because the fodder can be spread out any distance, and 3- The fodder can be rationed.

Heifers calve, at 3 years old, inside from the end of February and cows from 20th March. Some of the earlier cows are calved inside at Roxburgh Mill before returning to Plenderleith. The calves are weaned in mid-November down to Roxburgh where they are wintered on silage based ration. Protein and energy source is flexible depending on what is required/available. In the spring the youngstock go to grazing near Duns.



Both Luing and Sim-Luing steers are sold through the store market in the autumn. I have been culling cows fairly hard as I reckon that each crop of Luing calves are an improvement, so once I have selected stock heifers there are not many left for sale. We keep some Sim-Luing heifers for home use and have a ready local market for the rest.



What have we learned from the Luing experience?

Temperament - the most important trait in my book. The attitude of the Luing cattle here is excellent. One person can move a mob easily and there is very rarely any need to chase cattle by bike which is the norm on some farms. Working with them can be a pleasure!

Maternal traits – calving is rarely an issue and without doubt, the best place for a Luing to calve is on the hill. The biggest hassle can be finding a hidden calf among the rushes and drains. There has been an improvement in teat size over the period – no doubt due in part to the Dam Classification – but it's rare to find a calf, born out on the hill, that hasn't suckled. Whether this is because there are no other animals close by to disrupt the

cow/calf bonding or because the udder doesn't fill and extend the teats as much as might be the case in a cow that's getting better treatment inside? – some of you can tell me! Calving outside also reduces problems like scour and navel ill.

Fertility - The Plenderleith cows generally go out with the bull in the fields and then onto the hill later on in the bulling period. As long as there is a basic mineral provision – the Cheviot Hills are cobalt and copper deficient – fertility is not a problem. The average number of twins in the last 5 years is 6 for the 100-odd put to the bull.

Foraging ability – This was an issue with the thinner skinned cattle that were summered on the hill. Straight away it was evident that the Luing cows spread the ground better. They can be seen on all parts of the hill areas. In the early 80's my father electric fenced each of the sheep cuts so there are 7 separate hill sections and 2 more enclosures, all with water access. It means that the cows graze certain areas in the summer whilst other sections are kept for wintering.

Health – It is only in the last 15 or so years that ticks have become prevalent in the district. Yearling stock heifers are put on the worst affected area to hopefully



acclimatize but there has never been an issue. We have worked into John's 1 status and I'm sure that outside calving helps reduce any infection. It may be luck, but so far we have not had any foot problems either.

Versatility – Luing cows produce a good calf from the poorest of land. Give her better conditions and she produces a quality 1st cross calf. Sim-Luings are possibly the most under-rated suckler cow in the country – they will suit nearly every system.

Looking forward

Most of the cows only come through the yards twice a year – at weaning when they are pregnancy and John's tested, then in January to get a flukicide. This summer we have replaced the outside feed barrier with self-locking yokes. Having used yokes at Roxburgh Mill for 40+ years, I am hoping that the cows will hardly need to go through the crush. This should be a boon for times of labour shortage and for health and safety.

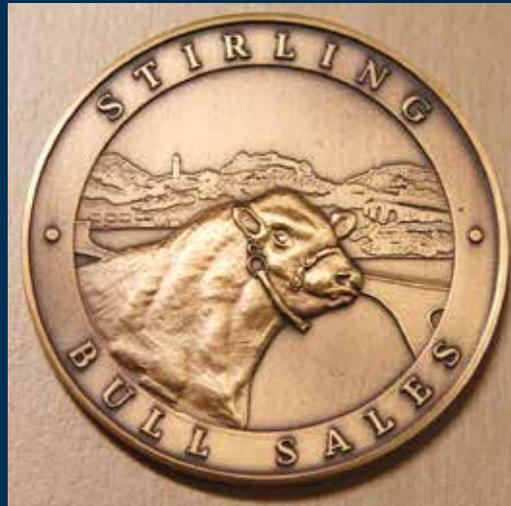
As a tenant, putting the hill ground into forestry is not an option. The Luings have proven that with appropriate supplementation they can utilize the poor quality roughage and improve it – which benefits the sheep too. As long as the cow type is suitable there is a place for a Luing at Plenderleith. We have to hold onto the hardy maternal characteristics that the breed was founded on.

Rory Bell

Photos by Rob Haining, The Scottish Farmer

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Canadian Luing Association

By the time you read this 2020 will be over and after the pandemic chaos it brought we'll all be glad to see the back of it! The COVID-19 crisis caused a market collapse in fat cattle prices in Canada through the spring due to slaughter plant shutdowns. Since then prices have bounced back somewhat and compared to other sectors of society I think agriculture in general has suffered less than most.

On a more positive note we exported four bulls to South Dakota and Wyoming this year, the first Luings to go into the American market in several decades. I'll be particularly interested to follow the progress of the two that went to the ranch in Wyoming as it's likely a very different environment to anywhere Luings have been before. This high elevation (up to 8000 feet), sagebrush desert with an 8" rainfall is about as different from the island of Luing as you can get! Their temperatures will be much hotter in summer and colder in winter than Scotland but less extreme than those in Manitoba. It will be a good test of the adaptability and functional efficiency of our breed in an extensive, dry environment.



Early May

We continue to see exceptional demand for Luing bulls among commercial cattlemen in Western Canada. The initial attraction for a lot of the large ranch customers is the breed's calving ease on heifers. As most other breeds have continued to select for increased growth their ability to calve unassisted out on the open range has declined. Many of the traditional ranches check their heifers on horseback once or twice a day and want to avoid assisted calvings if possible.



Fall Colours

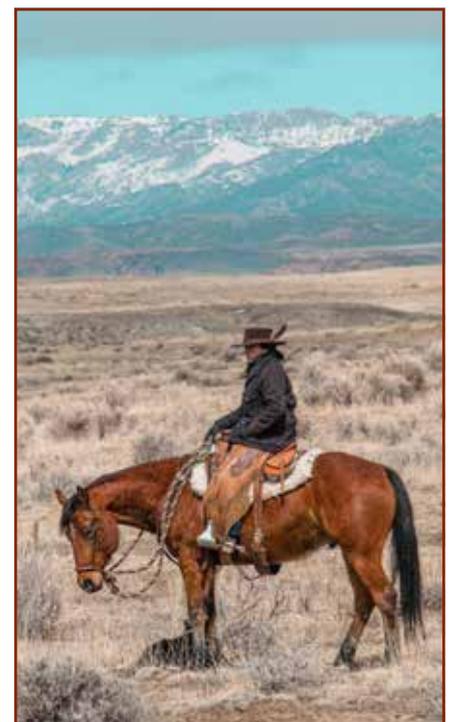
As selection for growth has increased in most breeds, so too have mature cow weights. With the slim margins in our cow/calf sector many ranchers are now realizing their cows have got too big for their environment and require too much feed to maintain them. As a result many ranchers buying Luing bulls are using them to reduce mature cow weights to the 1100-1200lbs that is probably optimal for much of western Canada.

We are getting some interesting feedback on the temperament and breeding ability of the Luing bulls on some of these large ranches. One of our customers used 38 Luing bulls this summer and reported none injured or lame which is quite an achievement with a bull battery that size. It seems the Luings tend to breed a cow once and move on and they don't spend a lot of time fighting either which helps reduce injuries and maintain body condition. Rearing bulls slowly on a forage diet rather than over-conditioning them for

the show ring also reduces injuries. Far too many bulls nowadays are overfed and carry more weight than their young bones can support. This greatly increases the incidence of leg, foot and stifle injuries.

Combining the advantages of easy calving, "right size" genetics with low replacement rates on bulls translates into significant financial savings for our commercial ranch customers. As long as we continue to meet their needs the future of our breed looks bright.

Iain Aitken



January - Grazing through 2½ feet of snow

Bonsma Revisited

I came across an article this summer that I thought worth revisiting as I'm guessing only a handful of the current Luing breeders would ever see the original. The article was titled "Sad News from the Show-ring - The Bonsma Bombshell!" in the 1974 Luing Journal although it was actually written and published first in a beef magazine in Alberta.

I was intrigued by its inclusion in the Journal as Dr Jan Bonsma was not a name I had ever heard mentioned in Scotland. His work is better known among a certain segment of cattle breeders here in North America, probably as a result of numerous lecture tours he made during the 1960s and 1970s.

Jan Bonsma was born in South Africa in 1909 and became the research officer in charge of the Mara and Messina Research stations in the Northern Transvaal from 1937-1960. From 1955 until retirement in 1974 he was head of the Department of Animal Husbandry at the University of Pretoria and published over 180 articles during his career. He was also the creator of the "Bonsmara" cattle breed.

The goal of his breeding endeavours simply stated was *"to produce as much good meat per unit area as possible without deterioration of the natural pastures"*. The breeding methodology he employed to pursue this goal he christened "selection for functional efficiency," a term that is widely known today. Bonsma was convinced that to

maximize functional efficiency you had to accurately measure, assess and compare the physical attributes of different animals. The title of one of his books "Man Must Measure" reflected that belief.

The cattle in South Africa in the 1930s were mainly *Bos indicus* (Brahman type) of the Sanga and Afrikaner breeds but several of the British breeds had been introduced to try and increase beef production often with disastrous results. In seeking answers to why some of the British breed cattle performed so poorly he embarked on the most comprehensive climatological and ecological experimentation on bovines in the world. Bonsma's research at Mara revealed much of what we know today about environmental adaption of cattle to different climatic regions.

He measured and compared the differences between individual's weight gain, body temperature, rates of respiration and pulse, tick counts, hide thickness, hair count per square centimetre as well as fertility, milk production, mortality and longevity. Body conformation was assessed by subjective evaluation based on careful observation. He personally performed 14 body measurements on over a thousand animals every three months over the duration of their lives. Taking these skeletal measurements, observing and running his hand over the hides of so many animals gave him an unrivalled ability to judge livestock.



It was suspected that the problem with the British cattle breeds might be their inability to digest the very low protein grass. Bonsma however was able to prove that the chronic malnutrition was caused by hyperthermia (the opposite of hypothermia) as these animals were not able to dissipate excessive metabolic heat. The cattle that couldn't cool their bodies sufficiently would spend their days panting in the shade or wading in water and didn't graze sufficiently as a result. He discovered that not all of the animals, even from within the same breed, suffered equally. Those with thicker hides and shorter hair were better able to adapt to the sub-Tropical environment.

What also emerged from Bonsma's extensive research project was a better understanding of the influence of the endocrine system on bovine physiology. Hormones released from the endocrine glands are the chemical messengers that control every aspect of animal function. Environmental factors ranging from feed quality to daylight length to soil PH can all impact the endocrine system. What Bonsma discovered was the animals with hormonally balanced endocrine systems were the best at dealing with environmental challenges and were the most functionally efficient in any given environment. Furthermore he recognized that these hormonally balanced animals all had the same phenotype. This is what has come to be known as the "Bonsma type" by those of us familiar with his work.

Learning to recognize this type was a revelation to me. Like generations of other Scottish cattle breeders I practiced stock judging in Young Farmers using the stock-judging bible "Know Your Farm Stock". I remember vividly the example it gave of the ideal





Ayrshires

dairy animal based on an Ayrshire cow. She was shown to have a “dairy wedge” when seen from the side — getting progressively deeper from her shoulder to udder. When looked at from above there was another wedge from a fine shoulder to the wide hook bones. These match perfectly Bonsma’s findings on the ideal, fertile female form of the bovine species. Conversely when we turned to the description of the ideal beef animal in that book it was based on the characteristics of a good prime steer with the impression given that these same characteristics were the selection criteria for beef breeding females.

Proof of the veracity of the Bonsma type is easy to see once you know what to look for. Every successful teenage cow I’ve ever owned or seen, regardless of breed, is of the Bonsma type. The “wee hairy coo” that has been the logo of the Luing Society since the beginning is clearly of the Bonsma type. It is often said that the successful teenage cows in your herd have proven they have the correct level of fertility, milk and performance for your environment. It should be added that this is a result of them being of the right type, hormonally balanced and functionally efficient.

Creation of the Bonsmara breed

Dr Bonsma travelled to the King Ranch in Texas in 1936 to study the Santa Gertrudis breed which had been developed from a 5/8 Shorthorn and 3/8 Brahman base. South African Agricultural officials asked him to create a similar breed with a 5/8 British, 3/8 Afrikaner cross but Bonsma persuaded them instead to use a 5/8 Afrikaner, 3/8 British blood. This was based on his research that adaptability declined when the Bos Taurus component exceeded 50% in their African environment. Shorthorn, Hereford, Red Aberdeen Angus, Red Poll and Sussex cattle were all tested but the Shorthorns and Herefords proved most suitable. These two

breeds combined with the Afrikaner formed the basis of the Bonsmara breed which continues to flourish to this day.

Returning to the article that ran in the 1974 Journal, the purpose of which was to report on his critiquing of cattle seen on one of his North American tours. It made no difference if the animals he was shown were show ring champions or everyday commercial cattle. He could quickly assess their strengths and weaknesses and tell their past health and breeding history with an unerring accuracy that astounded their owners. There has likely never been anyone, before or since, that could “read” cattle like Bonsma.

A number of Bonsma’s statements quoted in the article are worth repeating as they are as relevant today as they were back then. On the topic of cattle size and its relationship to fertility “*You often find the cow that has the calf every year is the small or medium sized cow that looks like a cow.*” He warned that many of the highest gaining bulls have small genitalia and other characteristics that make them poor breeders “sub-fertile animals have tremendous growth potential hence the best performers have to be especially scrutinized”

Bonsma also highlighted the danger of raising breeding stock on too high a plane of nutrition “*These very hot rations, especially if they are used for more than 140 days can do irreparable damage to breeding stock by laying down excess fat. Fat is a major cause of infertility. One of the causing factors is the fact that this fat can absorb sex hormones and therefore*



Teenage Luing

reduce the animals libido or desire to breed”.

His comment on muscling reinforces my belief “*Clearly defined, rapid growing muscles are a male characteristic. Selecting for the same type of muscle growth in a female will result in poor fertility.*” I wonder what Bonsma would make of the extremely heavily muscled breeding females, characterized at the extreme end by Belgian Blue x Limousin cows, but also displayed to some degree in most breeds and crosses making up Britain’s beef herd today?

In conclusion I now realize that it made perfect sense for the Cadzow’s to run the “Bonsma Bombshell” article back in 1974. It was about a fellow breed-creator using a similar 5/8, 3/8 breeding methodology they had used in the creation of the Luing breed. They shared philosophies on selection and rearing practices, functional efficiency and the need for their breeds to be adapted to their respective environments as well as having a disdain for the frivolous fads and fashions of the show ring.

A number of Bonsma’s books have been republished and can be sourced via the internet. I strongly recommend them to any cattle breeder.

Iain Aitken



Bonsmara Cow

Benhar



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 Tillyrie Farm

Registrations, Charges and Useful Information

THE YEAR LETTER FOR CALVES BORN IN 2020 IS Z AND 2021 CALVES WILL BE A

Luing Bull and Heifer Registrations:

- Each Herd Book Year will end on 31st December.
- Breeders are required to update their cow herd (herd census) as at 31st December either online by lodging deaths and transfers or via a paper annual return upon request to the office.
- On-line registration and herd census options are now available using the link on the website at www.luingcattlesociety.co.uk/login**. A username and password can be obtained by contacting the Breed Secretary on secretary@luingcattlesociety.co.uk or by using the facility on the website. **Use of the online system for all herdbook based transactions is encouraged.** Alternatively, a birthing summary form will be sent to each breeder registering via a paper-based system and all calves born in that year should be entered. This must be **fully completed** for all calves to be registered: i.e. UK tag, date of birth, name and/or management tag, colour, horned/polled and sire. Breeders are encouraged to notify all other calves born (date of birth, UK tag and sire) so that full records can be kept for every cow on the database.
- Registrations (both online and paper based) must be done / returned to the Breed Secretary by **28th February** of the year following birth. Early registrations are encouraged. **Any registrations received after 28th February will be charged double fees.**
- Any animals over 2 years of age can only be considered for Appendix B, and will attract double registration fees.
- Pedigree certificates will be issued for all calves registered, and will be forward by email.

Sim-Luing Heifer Calf Registrations:

- Entries will only be accepted from members of the Luing Cattle Society Ltd.
- To be eligible for acceptance into the register for Sim-Luing females, heifer calves must be:
 - out of Pedigree or Appendix A Luing females registered in the Herd Book of the Luing Cattle Society and,
 - sired by a Simmental bull registered in the Herd Book of the British Simmental Cattle Society Ltd.
- All calves should be registered by the 28th February following their year of birth.
- Following verification of the registration of both the dam and the sire by the Luing Cattle Society, the Sim-Luing heifer will be accepted for entry into the register and a certificate issued.

Annual Subscription Charge:

An **Annual Subscription** is due annually on 1st January and members will receive a renewal notice around early January. The Annual Subscription is £50.00 incl. VAT (£41.67 + £8.33 VAT).

Registration Fees:

- Pedigree Luing**
Registration fees (Pedigree, Appendix or Sim-Luing) are charged on a sliding scale based on the number of breeding cows (i.e. females over 3 years of age) held on Society records for each herd at 31st December of the year of birth of the calves being registered. This includes full Pedigree and Appendix A and B cows and Sim-Luing females.

Breeding Females (>3 yrs)	Registrations completed online	Registrations completed on paper
1-25	£8.50	£9.00
26-50	£8.00	£8.50
51-100	£7.50	£8.00
101-250	£7.00	£7.50
251+	£6.50	£7.00

- Sim-Luings**
If only Sim-Luing heifer calves are to be registered, the registration fees will be as follows:

Number of calves registered	Registrations completed online (per head)	Registrations completed on paper (per head)
1-15	£9.50	£10.00
16 or over	£8.00	£8.50

Registrations, Charges and Useful Information

3. Individuals who feel that they have a special case will have the opportunity to appeal and the merit of the case will be considered by the Board.
4. Breeders will be invoiced when registrations are processed, at the end of each respective registration period.

Transfer Fees:

All animals purchased at Society Sales (males and females) will be transferred free of charge.

Transfer fees are incurred by the purchaser (unless previously agreed with the vendor) upon the transfer between herds of any full Pedigree or appendix female animal purchased outwith a Society Sale (purchased privately) at £10.00 + VAT per female.

Transfer fees are incurred by the purchaser (unless previously agreed with the vendor) upon the transfer into the purchaser's herd, for bulls purchased outwith Society Sales (privately) on a two tier basis, as follows:

- 1-30 breeding females (as listed on each herd's list on Grassroots) - £2 /cow, with a minimum fee payable of £25 +VAT
- 30+ females - £100 + VAT

Bull Inspection

1. No bull can be sold at a Pedigree Luing Sale until it has been inspected by an appointed representative of the Society and has been accepted as conforming to the standards as laid down by the Society. Breeders must apply to the Society for this inspection by 30th August each year.
2. The bulls will be inspected as soon as is reasonably possible and the dam of each bull will be classification scored at the time of the bull inspection. Dams must be presented for inspection if they are still on the farm – regardless of whether they have been scored in previous years. The age of the dam at the time of assessment and the number of calves she has had will be taken into consideration to ensure potential buyers know the scores relate to a young cow yet to fully prove herself.
3. Bulls passed for entry into a Society sale will have their pedigree record updated on grassroots. Bulls not to be entered for a Society Sale but otherwise deemed suitable for pedigree breeding will also have their pedigree record updated on grassroots.
4. Breeders are encouraged to have bulls inspected for Society Approval prior to private sale – to avoid the potential problem of a bull being turned down after being sold. Only bulls with Dam Classification Scheme scores for feet, locomotion, udder and teats of 5 or above (out of 10) will be approved for use.

Premier Sale

- **The 56th Premier Sale will take place in Wallets Mart, Castle Douglas on 5th February 2021.**
- All bulls must be in the market by Wednesday night and heifers must be penned by 12 noon on Thursday 4th February.
- The minimum age for bulls sold at Society Sales is 18 months on the day of the sale and each bull must have been approved for pedigree use (by inspection) by the Society, in association with the rules on bull inspection set out in the Society's rule and byelaws. In addition, bulls will be weighed at the sale and must meet the minimum height measurement of 52" at the shoulder. Bulls will be sold in age order with oldest bulls sold first.
- Minimum scrotal circumference measurement for bulls is 38cms. Measurements will be taken in the market and displayed on the pen card along with the weight and height.
- All cattle presented at the Premier Sale must come from herds which are members of a CHecs accredited health scheme and must be vaccinated against BVD. Any cattle coming from a herd which is not accredited free of BVD must be individually tested negative for the virus.
- A health declaration form must be submitted with an entry form, the information from which will be displayed in the sale catalogue.
- **NO minimum age** is required for pedigree Luing females presented for sale in February. Prizes will be awarded to the best pair of in-calf heifers and best pair of bulling heifers – to be judged in the pens on the morning of the sale. Any animal with a black nose or displaying unruly temperament will be rejected by the inspection panel.
- Vendors are responsible for ensuring that all animals forward are correctly double tagged.
- All cattle will be sold under the terms and conditions of the National Beef Association Breeding warranty.
- There will be an upset price for bulls of 2,000gns.

Luing Website/Facebook (www.luingcattlesociety.co.uk)

The Society website and Facebook page continues to prove a useful source of information on the breed from commercial beef producers wanting to find out more about Luing cattle and for breeders needing to download sales entry forms, application forms, or sale catalogues. Another very useful feature is the 'stock for sale' pages. The website also contains a page featuring the Society merchandise which can be ordered using a form from the site with herd names added for only £1.50 per item.

Cattle Health Policy

Since 2011, all official Society sales (Premier Sale in Castle Douglas, Spring Sale in Dingwall and Autumn Sale in U.A. Stirling) have had the same entry conditions in terms of cattle health; i.e. entry is only permitted from herds which are members of a CHecs (Cattle Health Certification Standards) accredited health scheme such as Biobest Laboratories' HIHealth Herdcare or SAC's Premium Cattle Health Scheme. In addition to being a member of such a scheme, herds must be specifically managing BVD and John's disease.



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Build It and They Will Come



“Build it and they will come”. That’s what Kevin Costner said in the film *Field of Dreams*. In Kevin’s case he was talking about a baseball pitch, but I thought the principle might still apply to other things. In my case, it was lapwings.

My building efforts started 10 years ago. I had never seen a lapwing on the field in question. In fact, the only decent record of lapwings breeding on the farm came from my Mum’s *Diary of a Farming Year* which she wrote in 1987. There is a short entry for 22nd June: “Long walk to the Moor late last night to find lapwing chicks!”.



Despite the lack of recent lapwing activity on the farm, there were some occasional sightings nearby. The ‘Lapwing Field’ consisted of 25 acres of improved, ryegrass pasture that was difficult to drain and occasionally cut for silage. Nothing wrong with that maybe, but it didn’t fit the bill for lapwings; in breeding habitat terms it would have been the equivalent of a blue tit trying to nest on a telegraph pole.

I set to work. Stage one involved some blocking of drains that my father put in the early 1970s. Some tense conversations preceded this. The next step was to put in a couple of wader scrapes; many more have followed

since. The result was remarkable and surprising. The birds quickly found the site and bred for the first time. Seeing newly hatched chicks feeding around the fringes of a newly dug muddy scrape was a special moment.



Cattle are an essential part of habitat management for waders and I was itching to get some of my own. I wanted a breed that was hardy, had a good temperament, natural foraging ability and produced a commercial calf. Luings ticked all the boxes. In 2015 I bought five Luing heifers from Shinness and Monzie at the Dingwall Premium Sale, and two more the following year.

It was my good fortune to strike up a partnership with Graeme Macrae of Kintail Luings. Graeme and I run a similar set up; juggling a small herd of cattle with full-time employment. His cattle come to Knockbain in the summer and we share a bull, most recently the excellent Commonsides Scania purchased at Castle Douglas in 2017. I keep reminding Graeme that the Knockbain grass contributes to him regularly topping the Dingwall Premier Sale with his fine heifers! I sell my heifers at the Dingwall sale in May and take male calves through to finishing, selling them direct to Munros in Dingwall.

The Luing cattle deliver exactly what

the lapwing need. Lots of quite heavy late summer, autumn and early winter grazing leaves the sward nice and short, a bit poached in places, ideal for lapwing arriving in March. 2020 has been a particularly successful breeding season. We had four pairs that each successfully raised at least one fledged chick, and at least one pair fledged two.

The Luings are also ideal for grazing the wildflower meadows that we are expanding on the farm. Heifers spend the late summer on one of the meadows once it has flowered. The cows will do the same on a new 5 acre meadow we sowed in the autumn.



The next stage is trialling some mob grazing and herbal leys. I’m also interested in how we can adapt the chemicals we put on / in our animals to maximise the dung beetle population which is important to lapwings and other wildlife. Getting waders and more wildlife back on the farm is a big challenge but Luing cattle are essential to what we are doing.

Richard Lockett

Richard Lockett is a freelance farm conservation adviser. He also runs a small farming operation at Knockbain Farm near Dingwall.



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**Sale – Oban, Saturday
ber 2021 ****

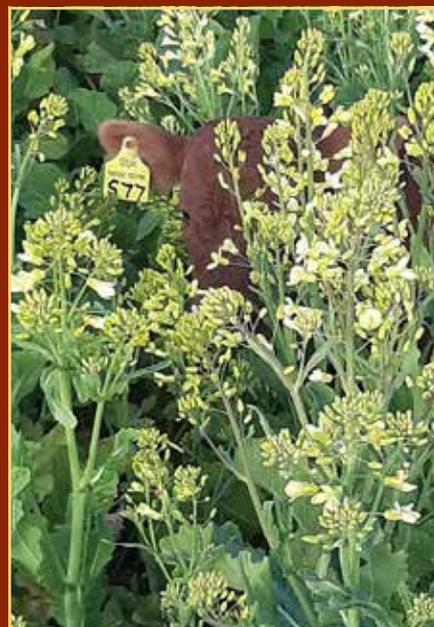
Euan Ferguson

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Gallery





Beef Market Outlook

2020

- 4% fall in UK beef and veal production expected in 2020
- Imports are expected to remain at similar levels to 2019, due to a drop in demand
- Exports expected to fall by around 2% due to lower production
- Cattle prices will be determined by domestic demand and Irish supplies

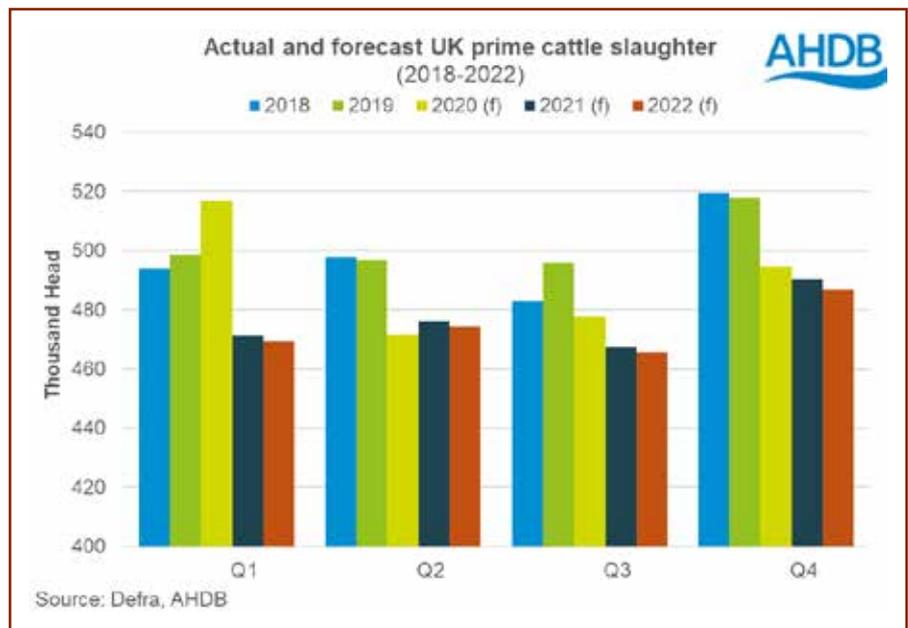
Overview

In 2020, UK beef production is still expected to fall slightly, due to tighter cattle supplies. Imports are not expected to recover as strongly as first forecast, and could remain at similar levels to last year. But they could be competitively priced. This means that the level of exports needed to balance the market will be higher than previously forecast, however it will ultimately depend on domestic demand.

UK Production

Both the dairy and suckler herds have continued to shrink in 2020, a trend which is expected to continue for the rest of the year. A lower requirement for replacements has allowed heifer slaughter to remain above 2019 so far. However, lower steer slaughter has meant that in the year to May, prime slaughter is down slightly on 2019.

Slaughter in 2020 is expected to be slightly lower than 2019, due to fewer prime cattle on the ground. Combined with lighter carcase weights, this will reduce beef production for the year by a forecast 4%.



UK Beef Trade

UK beef exports for 2020 are forecast to be lower than 2019 because of longer-term production declines. However, the fall is not expected to be as steep as previously forecast, due to an anticipated fall in domestic beef consumption caused by COVID-19. UK imports in 2020 are also expected to adjust to be slightly lower than 2019 for the same reason.

This forecast assumes current access to European markets in 2020 and beyond.

Price Outlook

The key influencers on GB beef prices in the short term will be domestic demand and Irish supply. With domestic demand looking to remain subdued for the rest of 2020,

and higher Irish supplies on the horizon, it is difficult to make a case for support to cattle prices in the next few months. Demand is expected to recover in 2021, based on demand scenario A, and so prices may benefit from that going forwards, coupled with tighter long-term cattle supplies.

Reference: Phil Bicknell, AHDB Market Outlook

Forecast supplies of beef and veal in the UK

000 tonnes	2018	2019	2020 Q1	2020 Q2(f)	2020 Q3(f)	2020 Q4(f)	2020(f)	2021(f)	2022(f)
Production	890	906	234	205	210	224	872	849	843
Imports	451	371	94	87	86	101	369	427	427
	(fresh/frozen)	(361)	(310)	(77)	(74)	(70)	(84)	(306)	(355)
	(processed)	(90)	(61)	(3)	(13)	(16)	(17)	(48)	(72)
Exports	147	174	43	38	45	45	171	171	171
Total consumption*	1194	1103	285	254	251	280	1070	1105	1099

*carcase weight equivalent, calculated from production, trade, and including changes in stocks

Totals may not sum due to rounding

Source: Defra, IHS Maritime and Trade - Global Trade Atlas®, HMRC, AHDB

Carcase Balance: Optimising the Balance

The meat industry faces a planning challenge: how to achieve carcass balance. Demand for finished products (or cuts) will never equate exactly to what is available from the carcass. A given amount of waste is an inevitable by-product of matching supply and demand. The key to profitability is in finding a good market for all of the cuts from a carcass and not merely the higher-value steaks and roasting joints. Each cut has its own profit margin and costs associated with the production process. Certain material surpluses created by the need to fulfil service obligations are inevitable.

Beef carcasses contain many different parts to prepare for sale to a wide range of outlets. Most parts are in demand while others are difficult to sell. One of the difficult parts is the offal etc, also known as the Fifth Quarter. In reality, many parts are subject to varying and seasonal demand. In simple terms, carcass balance is about ensuring all costs are less than or equal to overall income for the carcass.

The key point concerning carcass balance is to get the required income from the mix of cuts across the carcass, plus the 5th Quarter. When all cuts are selling well, or have a ready outlet, then this is achievable. The key cuts are Steaks, Grill, Frying, Roasts, Lean Mince, Standard Mince, Stew and Casserole, Flanks and 5th Qtr. When one or some cuts are not selling well, they have to be discounted (often substantially), or perhaps frozen.

When processors need to freeze higher value primals, mainly due to lack of demand, there is an inevitable reduction or deviation of budgeted income. Even when mince is frozen and stored, some reduction in income is incurred due to product storage costs. There are often seasonal reasons for carcass balance becoming a problem, such as lack of demand for roasts and stewing beef in summer, or a change in eating habits such as those seen during this year's COVID lockdown period.

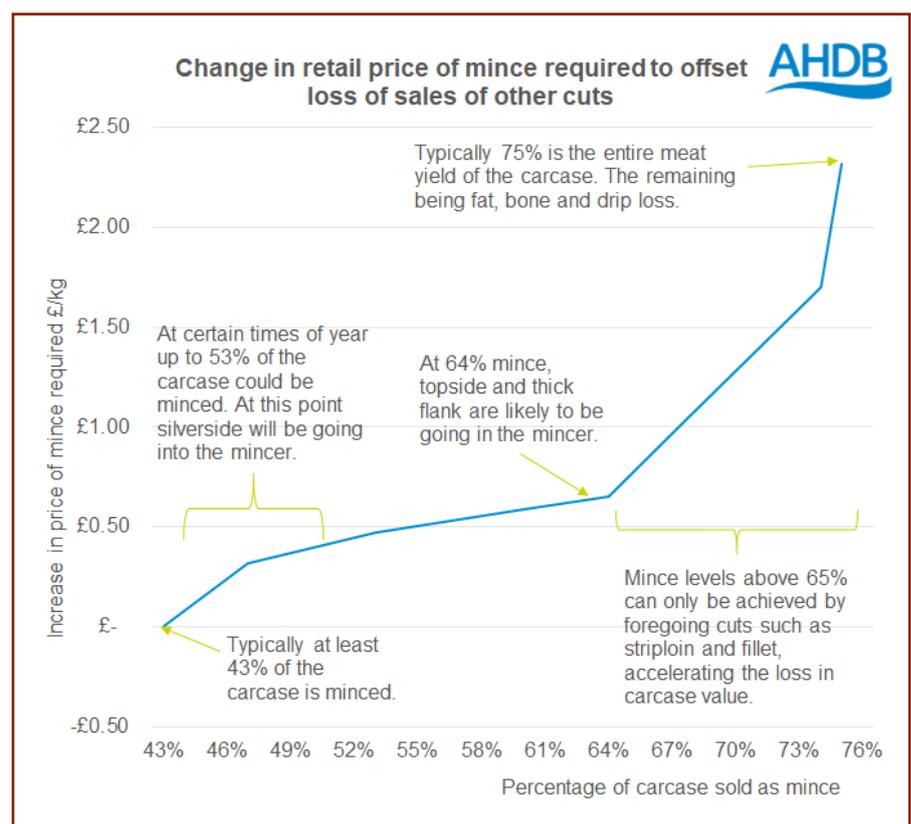
During this period the retail demand for mince rose sharply. Some product was available from foodservice that could be diverted into retail, however this was not enough to cover the increase in demand for mince at retail level. While initially, more cattle could be processed to meet the mince demand, this led to an oversupply of other cuts, such as roasting joints and steaks. The concept of killing more cattle may sound straightforward, however, other short term considerations such as plant capacity, current workforce availability and frozen storage capacity, which was very nearly depleted during the height of demand.

AHDB analysis has already shown that if we mince an extra 10% of the carcass to 53%, then the average retail price of the carcass would decrease by around £79/head. At a mince level of 64%, for example, the average retail price of mince would need to rise by £0.65 per kg to offset the loss of higher end cuts. Realistically it is uneconomic to include

all the meat as mince. If the whole carcass, steaks and all, were minced the average retail price of mince would need to rise by more than £2 per kg compared with the 43% mince level. The key for the industry is to find an equilibrium where consumer demand is satisfied at prices that mean the most valuable parts of the carcass are not lost into the mincer.

However, what would the average retail price of mince need to do, in order to offset the lost revenue from higher end cuts? The chart below shows the increase required at retail level in mince as the proportion of the carcass being minced increases.

In normal demand periods, in percentage terms, working with a bone-in carcass, roasts account for approximately 14% (53kgs from a 380kg carcass). Mincing material could account for approx. 43% (160kgs/380kg). Sirloin accounts for only 3.5% (13.3kgs/380kg) but could easily be reduced by £40 per carcass in a slow market.



Furthermore, the total value of the 5th quarter can account for as much as 50% of the gross margin earned on a carcass. Fifth quarter products are any part of an animal which does not form part of the dressed carcass. These can be split into various types such as fats, hides, red offal, green offal and variety meats. In addition, there are also products not going into the human food chain, and some for disposal only. The table below demonstrates the proportion of the carcass in each category.

PROCESSING THE BEEF CARCASS

CARCASS	Bone/Fat/Drip Loss	13%
	Carcass meat	40%
	Fifth Quarter	47%

Historically the fifth quarter provided the profit for the abattoir while the carcass meat sales covered the operating costs, however due to changing market conditions this may not always be the case anymore. Although consumption of offal is low in the UK, it has not always been so. In the late 1880s offal was commonly consumed by both rich and

poor. Offal was commonly eaten during World War II when rationing restricted the availability of many goods. In 1974, the per capita consumption of offal was



51g per week, but by 2015 the per capita consumption was just 4g of offal per week – a drop of 93%, according to data from DEFRA.

The year-round challenge the industry faces in achieving carcass balance is brought sharply into focus during the run-up to the festive period. Evidence from retail sales analysis does not show a significant lift in the volume of beef sold, although it does reveal that the products bought change, according to QMS. Over the Christmas period sales of beef mince and steak decline, while sales of roasting joints and stewing meat increase.

Meeting the demand for roasting cuts can often mean cold stores filling with unsold mince, and in the retail market there is little evidence of beef selling at premium prices over the Christmas and New Year period. Hence, provided volumes of cattle are sufficient to meet demand for roasting cuts, there is little incentive for processors to pay more, and indeed analysis of markets over festive periods in recent years reveals little significant lift in prices. Other factors which influence prices include volumes, types and breeds of cattle available in the marketplace, carcass sizes and currency induced challenges in export markets.



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DNA Genotyping, Sire Verification and Myostatin Testing within the working Luing sire population

Beginning in late summer, the Luing Council have implemented a package of DNA testing options aimed at the working sire population. Breeders producing pedigree Luing calves have been given the opportunity to voluntarily hair sample their working stock bulls, and Weatherbys Scientific have been commissioned to create a genotype profile and myostatin profile for each one. A genotype profile is added to a library for future reference, the most useful application being for sire verification of future progeny. It is intended that bulls for the Premier sale in February will also be profiled and some will be able to be sire verified as their sire profiles will have been stored in the library over the summer.

Council feel that sire verification will be a useful and informative tool for both buyers and sellers, particularly of potential stock sires. Sire verified animals ensure confidence in the genetics, avoiding damaging and expensive problems after sale. This is particularly true in smaller breed populations, when choices may be limited.

Myostatin warrants a lengthier explanation, as its connotation is often negative, sometimes unjustly so. As the first documented case of myostatin related phenotypic characteristics was in Durham cattle over 200 years ago, it stands to reason that all breeds will have at least a small proportion. Indeed, across the animal kingdom there appears to be a version of the myostatin gene in most animals analysed. In animal evolution (certainly for mammals) myostatin must have given an evolutionary advantage and is therefore important in the viability of an animal. In fact, the natural version or the Wild Type (wt) gene has the function of limiting muscle growth. Indeed, the very name Myo meaning muscle and Statin means ‘to stop or stand still’ reflects its role. It is the mutated form which leads to increased muscle development.

Myostatin is commonly referred to as double muscling, but is in fact the manifestation of a condition known as myostatin gene mutation, of which there are nine known mutations (also known as variants); Q204X, E226X, E291X, C313Y, nt419, nt821del11, F94L, S105C, and D182N. The first six variants result in double muscling (hyperplasia), larger birth weights, increased dystocia and meat tenderness, while the last 3 increase

muscularity and reduce external and intramuscular fat, with no change in birth weight. Many breeds exhibit phenotypic (physical) trait expression that is a direct result of the presence of one or more of these variants, including Limousin, Angus, South Devon, Shorthorn and British Blue. Other breeds are examining their populations to see what it holds, and these include the Beef Shorthorn. The Luing Cattle Society is therefore similarly interested in examining its population to see which (if any) of the myostatin mutations exist.

It appears that this gene has experienced different types of mutation in different cattle breeds. For Beef Shorthorns the predominant mutations are single copies of E226X (the most common), nt419, F94L and nt821. When the myostatin gene is mutated the protein it produces (which is what does the work of limiting muscular growth), loses all or part of its function, resulting in unregulated muscle growth. Phenotypically, this enlargement of muscle growth appears mostly in the rump and shoulder areas. Other traits exhibited which may or may not be significant, particularly when fully expressed:

- Prominent creases between muscle groups
- Minimal fat cover and modified fat composition
- Shorter, thinner and less dense bones
- Delays in puberty, reduced fertility and reduced milk production
- Increased likelihood of dystocia (difficult calving)

- Enlarged tongues in newborn calves
- Poorly developed genitals
- Increased susceptibility to respiratory disease probably due to increased demands in aerobic metabolic activity
- Increased meat tenderness and yield

It is important to note that these mutations do not operate in isolation, but interact with other genes in ways that are as yet poorly understood. It is often observed that one copy (inherited from one parent) of a variant does not necessarily give rise to a deleterious phenotype. There may, for example, be an increase in musculature without obvious signs of any disadvantageous side effects. This is why other breed societies have found it inappropriate to take a simplistic approach and disqualify all cattle carrying a variant from the herd book, for example. In addition, not all well muscled cattle will carry any of the mutations.

If the progeny animal has only one copy of a mutated gene (heterozygous) then a non-functional or partially functional Myostatin (from one parent) can be partially compensated by the unmutated or wild type version from the other parent – please see Table 1 for further explanation. If both copies are mutated then that can mean for a fully disruptive mutation (like E226X, nt419 and F94L) then no wild type function is present and the animal is likely to exhibit increased muscling with possibly other physiological characteristics (some of which may be detrimental).

Table 1: Probability of progeny Myostatin mutants in various mating options

Parents (0, 1 or 2 mutated Myostatin genes)	Registrations completed online
0 x 1	50% chance of no copy; 50% chance one copy
1 x 1	25% chance of no copy; 50% chance of one copy; 25% chance of two copies
0 x 2	100% chance of one copy
1 x 2	50% chance of one copy; 50% chance of two copies
2 x 2	100% chance of two copies

While the well defined purpose of the Luing is that of breeding replacement females (outwith the pedigree population) in the upland beef suckler herd, and some of the deleterious effects of the myostatin variations would inhibit this purpose, there are also situations where presence of some of the traits associated with myostatin may

be desired, and there is no doubt that partial loss of the functional Myostatin protein as happens with single copy inheritance confers some configuration benefits. For example, a commercial farmer has Luing cross females (perhaps Sim-luing) and intends to market the calves in a traditionally continental type setting so it might be advantageous to

select a Luing bull (or allow him to use a Luing bull where he otherwise might not) that is a known carrier for F94L. It would also be helpful in this situation to know exactly which variants are carried by both male and female parents, and testing is the only way to ensure full information. Obviously, two copies of the same myostatin variant in one animal is much more likely to exhibit negative phenotypic characteristics, particularly in comparison to the ideals of the Luing breed, but again, testing to fully inform is the only way to ensure that selection either positively or negatively is beneficial. Phenotypically, double copy animals are observed to have more pronounced musculature although it is interesting that in most cattle that have not been positively selected for double copies of myostatin variants for generations don't exhibit the very extreme musculature of (for example) British Blues. This supports the notion that there is more going on than just the Myostatin gene. In time, science will no doubt identify the developmental sequence upstream and downstream of the Myostatin protein but until then, we have to use phenotypic selection supported by knowledge of

the Myostatin status of our breeding animals, to inform our breeding choices. In summary, single copy myostatin mutations have in many people's minds, improved the "commercial" credibility of some native breed types to a wider audience. There are benefits to achieving more "beef character" through informed use of Myostatin mutants. However, there is also a potential cost to breeding decisions where Myostatin status is unknown and there is a reputational risk to the breed when Bulls used commercially with either single copy or double copy mutations are used on other breeds or crosses that may also carry Myostatin deletions.

The Society intends to monitor test results and the effect on breed type, with a view to discussion on possible publishing these results so that full information can be visible to potential buyers. Any possible changes to this status and indeed possible changes to regulations or advice to breeders will be communicated to members. It is the clear wish of the Society not to inhibit any particular breeding programme and to give ample time for breeders to adjust to any recommendation or directive. The Society's effort in this respect is entirely

to help breeders make more informed choices and to this end the Society intends to cover the cost of:

- Stock sire DNA profiles for samples submitted by the end of October 2020
- Profiling and Sire verification for samples taken from bulls inspected by the Society during the 2020 inspection time period (2019 registered males). This will ensure that as many bulls as possible forward for the Premier sale in February 2021 will have been profiled and sire verified.
- Myostatin profiling both stock sires and young bulls inspected in 2020.

This is budgeted to cost the Society £6000, which is an investment that Council is keen to promote and hope that breeders make use of. Council intends to also discuss the integration of testing female progeny in the near future – perhaps with the introduction of first calved heifers into the herd.

References: Coombs, Carey, Double muscling, myostatin and the Beef Shorthorn; Riley, Tim, Myostatin and its uses in Beef Shorthorn breeding.



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Boosting profits in the suckler herd by calving at two

Calving heifers for the first time at two years of age has been commonplace in many beef producing countries since the 1970's; however in the UK it is estimated that only 35% of suckler herds carry out the practice.

When we compare ourselves globally, the UK suckler herds cost of production is significantly higher than elsewhere, and even with a relatively high beef price, often our income does not cover cash costs (Figure 1).

Heifer development costs equate to around 9% of total cost of production and therefore if more herds implemented a calving at two policy, profitability within the industry could be improved. It has been estimated that calving heifers at two years of age, rather than three, reduces development costs by £600 per heifer. In addition, heifers which calve for the first time at two years of age are more productive, wean more calves over their lifetime and remain in the herd longer.

However, calving at two years of age is not easy and does require additional management. There are also concerns over increased risk of calving difficulties, stunted cows and challenges getting first calved heifers to rebreed. With this in mind, in 2018 I applied to do a Nuffield Farming Scholarship with the aim of developing a blueprint which would provide farmers with the necessary information to calve heifers at two years of age successfully.

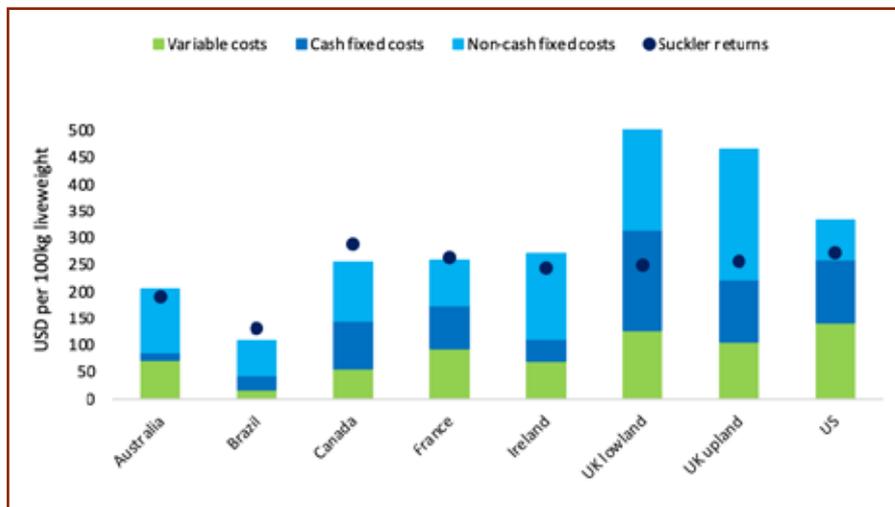


Figure 1: Typical farm suckler herd production costs and output, 2018
Source: Agribenchmark, AHDB (2020)

During my scholarship I was lucky enough to travel to the USA, Canada and Australia; as well as places closer to home including Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to uncover examples of best practice in more representative systems. No matter which country I visited, it was clear that the success of calving heifers at two was determined by genetics, selection and nutrition.

Genetics

One of the things that struck me as I visited ranchers across the USA and Canada was that they had clear breeding goals which had enabled them to use genetics to produce a very functional suckler cow. One which had good fertility, low maintenance costs and increased longevity.

Jerry Holtman, a rancher from Canada explained how he had been

using genetics to improve the reproductive efficiency of his 350 Beef Booster herd. By focusing on six traits of economic importance including fertility, milking ability, weight, conformation, hardiness and disposition, he is now achieving a 93% conception rate within a 55 day breeding period.

Jerry has a clear focus on improving maternal traits, he really questioned my thinking when he said “why do we raise cattle the feedlot wants when two thirds of the cost of a finished animal relates to the suckler cow”. I think in the UK we have become guilty of focusing majorly on terminal traits when actually the fertility traits are five times more important than end-product traits to the suckler producer (Lardner, 2019).

It is true that many of the maternal traits are less heritable than terminal traits; however this does not mean that they should not be considered when making breeding choices. As I travelled the world, the Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) which were mentioned numerous times in reference to breeding heifers were: calving ease daughters, age at first calving, scrotal circumference, mature size and milk. EBVs for each pedigree bull can be found on the relevant breed Society website.



Figure 2 & 3: Sarah Pick with Jerry Holtman and Beef Booster cow with calf at foot



Figure 4: In calf heifers at Dan Kellys, Nebraska

Selection

“A good cow starts with a good heifer” was one of the comments I heard from a farmer in Scotland. Therefore we must ensure that our selection criteria is optimum so that only the most suitable heifers are retained in the herd.

Most herds did not retain heifers from cows which:

- Required assistance at calving
- Calved late in the breeding season (+42 days)
- Failed to wean a calf
- Large teats
- Weaned a light calf (less than 1kg/day)
- Bad temperament

Once the heifers reach weaning age, most selection decisions were based on their weight. Ideally heifers need to reach 65% of their mature weight before breeding, this is because age at puberty is strongly correlated with weight. However any abnormally large heifers were culled, because of worries of increased mature weight and its association with high maintenance costs.

Most producers in the USA, Canada and Australia were operating a 60 day breeding period, so that calving was compact and management easier. One producer who was taking this to the extreme was Dan Kelly who farms 1200 Simmental X Angus cows in Nebraska. The only selection criteria he used for his heifers was that they conceive within the first three weeks of the breeding period. All of his 500 heifers were synchronised and inseminated to one service, with anything not in calf sent to the finishing pen. Dan achieves a conception rate of 60%, resulting in a replacement rate of 20%.

Nutrition

Getting nutrition right is crucial to ensuring that heifers reach 65% of their mature weight before breeding. To achieve this they need to be growing at around 1kg/day pre weaning and 0.7kg/day post weaning which should be achievable in most beef breeds.

Often it is during the winter housing period when silage quality is insufficient that growth rates drop. To supplement a heifer with 2kg of concentrate each day during the winter, would cost around £85

which when considered against the value of an additional calf, really is worthwhile.

When I travelled to Florida, I met with Travis Lybbert the heifer development manager of Deseret Ranches. Deseret farm 42,000 Brahman cross cows. Brahman are much later maturing than any of the breeds used in the UK and therefore nutrition is key to ensuring the heifers reach puberty before 15 months. Travis has developed a high-nutrition based heifer development system and although this is expensive, Travis has calculated that the value of the additional calf far covers the cost of the additional feed.



Figure 5: Travis Lybbert with Sarah Pick

Whilst travelling, one of the major barriers identified for calving heifers at two years of age, is difficulty getting them back in calf after their first calving. Heifers have a naturally longer post partum interval (the time between calving and resumption of estrus) compared to cows, which makes it more challenging to get them to rebreed within 365 days. Body condition is the single most important factor controlling the post-partum interval. Research has shown that heifers which are thin, have a 30 day longer post-partum interval compared to those which calved at body condition score 3.

In the past I have known producers who try to thin heifers down before they calve in an attempt to reduce calving difficulties. However extensive research has shown that this does not reduce calving

risk but does reduce calf survivability and the quantity and quality of the colostrum produced by the heifer.

Furthermore, it takes approximately five months to develop a healthy egg to ovulation, which means the process starts during the last trimester of the previous pregnancy. Therefore by reducing nutrition pre calving, both the current and succeeding pregnancy are detrimentally impacted. The most successful way of reducing calving risk is by using genetics to select bulls with positive calving ease EBVs.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that calving at two years increases profitability but to be successful we need to ensure we get our breeding policy, selection criteria and management correct. This involves a greater focus on maternal traits to ensure a functional suckler cow is created.

As I travelled through many non-European countries I did not see one suckler cow which consisted of dairy genetics. This is due to concerns over health and maintenance costs of these extremely milky cows. If as an industry, we can work to improve the maternal genetics available in the beef herd, there should be no need to rely on the dairy industry to produce suckler heifer replacements.

Thank you to the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, Yorkshire Agricultural Society and Worshipful Company of Butchers for making this opportunity possible.

Sarah Pick
2019 Nuffield Farming Scholar

Further information on managing heifers can be found in the AHDB manual “Managing replacement heifers for Better Returns” which is available on the website <https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/managing-replacement-heifers-for-better-returns>

Overcoming the barriers

BARRIER	SOLUTION
Difficulty reaching breeding weight	Feed good quality silage during first winter. If forage poor, supplement with 2kg per day per head of concentrates. Ensure that there is sufficient feed space for every animal to feed at the same time.
Hard calvings	Use EBVs to select easy calving bulls. Look particularly at calving ease direct, gestation length and birth weight.
Stunted cows	The average mature weight of cows in USA, Canada and Australia was 550-600kg. Mature weight is strongly linked to maintenance costs, therefore if we can reduce weight, cost of production should fall.
Low rebreeding rates	Nutrition is key, keep heifers in body condition 3 from pre-breeding to second calving. If cows look to be losing weight whilst nursing their first calf, wean the calves early to prevent further body condition loss.

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Use your records to improve the genetics of your Luing herd

How your records can help your herd? Information you are already collecting about your cattle can be turned into EBVs (Estimated Breeding Values) and used as a powerful selection and marketing tool. EBVs show the genetic merit of cattle in specific traits, regardless of management so you can compare and rank animals across herds to identify the best. This means you can match the genetics of your cattle to the needs of your customers.

Neil McGowan of Incheoch Farm, who produces stud sheep and cattle explained how he uses performance recording in his Luing herd. He gave an insight to the benefits of performance recording and how it can be integrated to a beef herd. EBVs were already being used in the other beef and sheep enterprises so he understood how the extra information at his finger-tips could aid breeding decisions and is a powerful tool in making genetic progress.



What do you need to start recording? All you need is to keep pedigree records, a set of scales and accurate records for your cattle. Signet recording your cattle is flexible, so can fit around your usual herd management, with young cattle needing to be weighed around every 100 days. These timings can often be combined with other key events such as weaning and vaccinations, so extra handling of the cattle is minimised as practised at Incheoch.

‘Collecting the birth weight of calves can be biggest challenge, but once you have a method sorted other records are very straightforward’. Whilst it would be great for birth weights to be recorded for all Luing cattle, it is an optional measurement as we are aware it may be difficult for some herds to collect this information. Recording difficult calving’s and the weights of growing cattle is an important part of recording.

You can supply this data electronically by exporting it from farm software or enter it directly online to Signetdata.com.



What do I get from performance recording? Performance recording produces EBVs in 15 production traits, including: growth, muscling, calving ease and milking ability, which can be used to market your cattle and inform selection decisions.

The Signet service isn’t limited to producing EBVs, but is about helping you make the most of your data. When you log onto our database (Signetdata.com) you have access to:

- Breed reports- showing the cattle with the top genetics helping you find your next breeding bull and also helps raise the profile of your animals and herd
- Herd finder- appear in a listing of Luing breeders to grow your online presence
- Produce charts- these charts show the genetic merit of your cattle for shows and sales
- Produce your own catalogues- use the new cattle for sale feature to list cattle on and create catalogues
- Maximise gains and control inbreeding- part of the Signet service is an inbreeding calculator that takes into account an animal’s whole pedigree. Maximise genetic gain while managing the inbreeding in your herd

At Incheoch, EBVs are being used to identify cows whose daughters will be retained for breeding and has quickly helped to identify family lines that perform well in particular traits. EBV’s are particularly useful when comparing cattle and this means that bulls can be selected to best compliment your cows.

EBVs that Neil feels are important to focus on in the future are those that are lower accuracy at the early stage of recording in the breed; Calving Interval, Age at First Calving and Lifespan.

Performance recording so far in the Luing

Performance recording is a numbers game, so the more cattle recorded the more high merit animals will be found and the faster the genetic progress. In the last 10 years the number of Luing cattle recorded has increased from just over 100 in 2010 to nearly 450 in 2019. The more breeders and cattle involved the bigger the group to select from, the faster the progress.

Recording your herd only costs £140 (herd fee) and £5/ per cow; thus for a herd of 50 cows, performance recording would only cost £390. There is also the option to ultrasound your cattle when they are £6/head or £175 minimum visit. All these prices are exclusive of VAT.

With numbers recorded increasing, an exciting future lies ahead for Luing breeders. Over the years breeders are building a large dataset that to inform the best breeding decisions but Neil is encouraged by the feedback he is getting from his figures already. He delayed performance recording his sheep, waiting for more breeders to start recording. Neil now feels that it would have been best to ‘get going immediately’ which he has applied to the cattle recording. ‘The Luing breed has a lot to offer the commercial suckler market and these customers are used to using figures to help select their bulls.’

You can use performance recording to help sell your breeding bulls EBVs mean that you can show the genetic merit of your cattle in specific traits and overall genetic merit. Knowing the genetic merit of your bulls means that your customers have the confidence to invest in your genetics and shows that you are measuring and monitoring important traits.

Neil uses EBVs as ‘another piece of the picture’ when it comes to selling bulls, helping his customers add specific traits to their herds. It also means he can direct his customers to the ‘right bull for the job’ showing good performance in key areas.

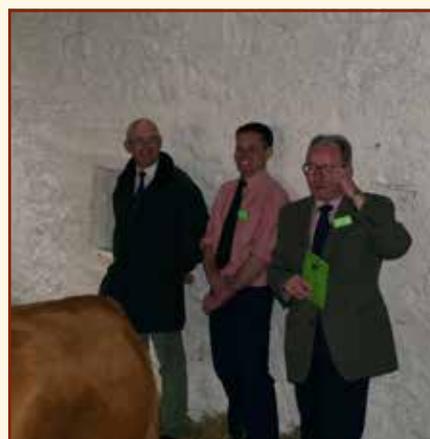
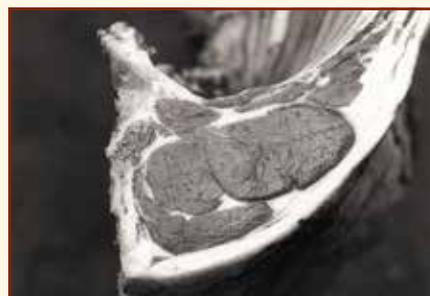
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Nostalgia



Fieldsman's Report



I have now been Fieldsman for The Luing Cattle Society for six years. There has been exponential growth within the society during that period with an increase in membership, registrations and balance sheet. Even though we haven't been at any promotional events this year the Society has still attracted a large number of new members, which is testament to the quality of cattle we have and for all of the hard work put in by all of the people involved. Members spend huge amounts of time extolling the virtues of Luing cattle to friends and other farmers as they all go about their daily lives and I certainly think it is paying off. I spend a huge amount of time speaking to potential new members and there are various reasons that they are attracted to Luing cattle. The main reasons I am regularly told is the docility, the ability to out winter cheaply, their natural fertility, and the bull inspection and cow classification system deployed by the society.

The society bull inspection and cow classification policy is in my opinion the flagship policy of the Society and is what takes up the largest part of my time. The number of bulls to inspect, and consequently cows to classify have almost doubled in the last six years which just goes to show how fast the breed is growing. Following the Society Dingwall sale we had new herds set up on Exmoor, two in Yorkshire and one

in Aberdeenshire. Three of these herds have subsequently bought more cattle which must surely be a testament of how pleased they were with their original purchases. Just this morning I was talking to a member who bought their first cattle two years ago and have ninety to go to the bull next spring and hope to increase the herd to three hundred - again, testament to what a wonderful breed of cattle we work with.

I know a number of top breeders of other breeds of cattle are very envious of the bull inspection and cow classification system that we deploy. For any breeder, old and new, can go to a Society sale armed with a wealth of information to hand and then at the premier sale at Castle Douglas they have the opportunity to see the bulls paraded on a most unforgiving surface where they can decide for themselves which bulls, if any, they like. As the popularity of calving heifers



at two years of age increases, so does the importance of testicle measurement carried out at the sale. We know that testicle size is very closely related to fertility, and in particular age at puberty. I think we should be very grateful to those that went before us who had the foresight to devise such a brilliant system that has undoubtedly put The Luing Cattle Society well in front of some others. The system is there to be used by all and I commend it to you.



I am now sixty-eight years old and hope to do this wonderful job for as long as I am wanted and am fit enough to do it. There is nothing I like more than speaking to potential new breeders and hope to assist in persuading as many as possible to join this wonderful society. I feel confident they will not regret it.

Charles Symons



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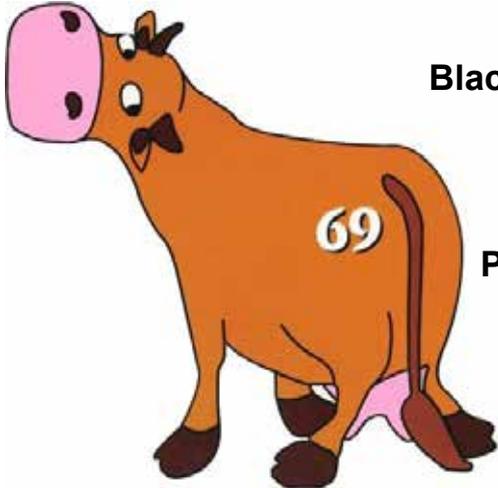
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The 2020 Premier Bull Sale Line-Up

Herewith the 2020 Premier Bull Sale line-up. All details given are from the time of sale, and bulls are listed in catalogue order.



Benhar Xylon

Sire: Benhar Lennox
Vendor: Robert McNee Ltd
Height at Shoulders: 56.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 38.5cm
Weight: 934kg
Price: 4,000gns
Buyer: S. Marshall, Concraig



Backmuir Xante

Sire: Backmuir Saturn
Vendor: Mr P Simmers
Height at Shoulders: 55.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
Weight: 944kg
Price: 4,800gns
Buyer: Gilfillan Bros, Shetland



Lammermuir Xmas

Sire: Harehead Mourie
Vendor: Mr P Crerar CBE
Height at Shoulders: 58”
Scrotal Circumference: 43cm
Weight: 766kg
Price: 3,000gns
Buyer: Messers March & Lobban, Muncraig



Lammermuir Xcellence

Sire: Harehead Mourie
Vendor: Mr P Crerar CBE
Height at Shoulders: 55”
Scrotal Circumference: 41.5cm
Weight: 740kg
Price: 2,500gns
Buyer: Messers Atkinson



Backmuir Xenos

Sire: Harehead Savivatú
Vendor: Mr P Simmers
Height at Shoulders: 57.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 39cm
Weight: 1006kg
Price: 0gns NS
Buyer:



Backmuir Xfactor

Sire: Backmuir Saturn
Vendor: Mr P Simmers
Height at Shoulders: 57.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 39cm
Weight: 940kg
Price: 8,500gns
Buyer: Kedzlie Farm Ltd, Melrose



Benhar Xavier

Sire: Culmaily Sheamus
Vendor: Robert McNee Ltd
Height at Shoulders: 57.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
Weight: 998kg
Price: 4,000gns
Buyer: Messers McCornick, New Cummock



Backmuir Xanther

Sire: Backmuir Saturn
 Vendor: Mr P Simmers
 Height at Shoulders: 58.5”
 Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
 Weight: 946kg
 Price: 3,500gns
 Buyer: Messers Mortimer, Devon



Nunnerie Xcallibur

Sire: Finlarg Tornado
 Vendor: C.C.MacArthur & Co
 Height at Shoulders: 58”
 Scrotal Circumference: 42cm
 Weight: 996kg
 Price: 2,800gns
 Buyer: R.B. Sutherland, Belford



Harehead Xtra Time

Sire: Commonside Teviotdale
 Vendor: Prof WA Penny
 Height at Shoulders: 55.5”
 Scrotal Circumference: 41cm
 Weight: 910kg
 Price: 3,000gns
 Buyer: Messers Bell & Co.,
 Plenderleith



Nunnerie Xfactor

Sire: Finlarg Tornado
 Vendor: C. C. MacArthur & Co
 Height at Shoulders: 56”
 Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
 Weight: 932kg
 Price: 4,500gns
 Buyer: McCaig Farms, Falkirk



Harehead Xtra Special

Sire: Finlarg Nero
 Vendor: Prof WA Penny
 Height at Shoulders: 58”
 Scrotal Circumference: 40.5cm
 Weight: 958kg
 Price: 4,200gns
 Buyer: RSPB, Isle of Colonsay



Benhar Xerox

Sire: Benhar Lennox
 Vendor: Robert McNea Ltd
 Height at Shoulders: 59”
 Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
 Weight: 1010kg
 Price: 14,000gns
 Buyer: Mr P Simmers, Backmuir



Commonside Xcalibur

Sire: Craigdarroch Torres
 Vendor: WW Dunlop & Son
 Height at Shoulders: 56”
 Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
 Weight: 870kg
 Price: 4,500gns
 Buyer: Messers Dodd, Lockerbie



Nunnerie Xander

Sire: Finlarg Tornado
 Vendor: C.C. Macarthur & Co
 Height at Shoulders: 54.5”
 Scrotal Circumference: 39cm
 Weight: 856kg
 Price: 3,200gns
 Buyer: John Lawrie (Tillyrie) Ltd



Commonside Xbox

Sire: Craigdarroch Torres
 Vendor: Mr W Pringle
 Height at Shoulders: 58”
 Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
 Weight: 896kg
 Price: 3,500gns
 Buyer: Messers Fletcher,
 Mailingsland



Nunnerie Xaviour

Sire: Finlargo Tornado
Vendor: C.C. Macarthur & Co.
Height at Shoulders: 58”
Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
Weight: 894kg
Price: 3,800gns
Buyer: J. Innes & Sons, Dunscroft



Culmailly Xrated

Sire: Benhar Nevis
Vendor: AL & AC MacCall
Height at Shoulders: 57”
Scrotal Circumference: 42cm
Weight: 862kg
Price: 2,800gns
Buyer: Mr. T. Coghill, Orkney



Nunnerie Xpert

Sire: Finlargo Tornado
Vendor: C.C. Macarthur & Co.
Height at Shoulders: 56”
Scrotal Circumference: 42cm
Weight: 978kg
Price: 4,000gns
Buyer: Messers Beattie, Sanquhar



Harehead Xpert

Sire: Finlargo Nero
Vendor: Prof WA Penny, CBE
Height at Shoulders: 57”
Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
Weight: 888kg
Price: 5,000gns
Buyer: Messers Barr, Peebles



Craigdarroch Xavi

Sire: Culmailly Turbo
Vendor: W. Graham & Son
Height at Shoulders: 57”
Scrotal Circumference: 41cm
Weight: 856kg
Price: 3,200gns
Buyer: Glenlyon Estate, Fortingall



Finlargo Xcel

Sire: Lammermuir Tremendous
Vendor: R & H McNee
Height at Shoulders: 55”
Scrotal Circumference: 44cm
Weight: 832kg
Price: 3,000gns
Buyer: I & E Davies, Glasfryn



Finlargo Xplosion

Sire: Lammermuir Tremendous
Vendor: R & H McNee
Height at Shoulders: 56.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 45.5cm
Weight: 960kg
Price: 10,000gns
Buyer: Kedzlie Farm Ltd, Melrose



Harehead Xpress

Sire: Finlargo Nero
Vendor: Prof WA Penny, CBE
Height at Shoulders: 56.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
Weight: 892kg
Price: 0gns
Buyer:



Craigdarroch Xanni

Sire: Culmailly Turbo
Vendor: W. Graham & Son
Height at Shoulders: 57.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 39cm
Weight: 918kg
Price: 5,800gns
Buyer: Messers W&G Tweedie, Biggar



Harehead Xplorer

Sire: Finlargo Nero
Vendor: Prof WA Penny, CBE
Height at Shoulders: 56.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
Weight: 898kg
Price: 6,000gns
Buyer: AL & AC McCall, Culmaily



Finlargo Xclusive

Sire: Finlargo Pedro
Vendor: R & H McNea
Height at Shoulders: 56.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 41cm
Weight: 906kg
Price: 8,000gns
Buyer: Ms L Porritt, Brampton



Harehead Xceed

Sire: Harehead Texas
Vendor: Prof WA Penny, CBE
Height at Shoulders: 56.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 41.5cm
Weight: 896kg
Price: 4,500gns
Buyer: Messers J Helm, Heriot



Nunnerie Xenon

Sire: Finlargo Tornado
Vendor: C.C. Macarthur
Height at Shoulders: 55”
Scrotal Circumference: 40cm
Weight: 884kg
Price: 25,000gns
Buyer: Mr T Renwick & Sons,
Selkirk



Blackhouse Xanadu

Sire: Benhar Magnum
Vendor: Mr T Renwick & Sons
Height at Shoulders: 56”
Scrotal Circumference: 42cm
Weight: 790kg
Price: 4,000gns
Buyer: R.B. Sutherland, Belford



Blackhouse Xander

Sire: Benhar Magnum
Vendor: Mr T Renwick & Sons
Height at Shoulders: 57”
Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
Weight: 800kg
Price: 2,800gns
Buyer: Percy Farms, Alnwick



Craigdarroch Xhaka

Sire: Culmaily Turbo
Vendor: W Graham & Son
Height at Shoulders: 57.5”
Scrotal Circumference: 42cm
Weight: 862kg
Price: 5,800gns
Buyer: Mr S Murray, Dumfries



Benhar Xeno

Sire: Finlargo Viagra
Vendor: Robert McNea Ltd
Height at Shoulders: 55”
Scrotal Circumference: 38cm
Weight: 816kg
Price: 5,000gns
Buyer: RSPB Scotland, Isle of Colonsay



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Director Profiles

Thomson, Mark (Chairman)

Mark is married to Kathleen with two daughters, Rebecca (23) who works at the Tayforth Machinery Ring and Fiona (21) is in her 4th year studying Rural Business Management at SRUC Craibstone.

After leaving school in 1983, worked for a year at Spott Farm, Dunbar then studied agriculture for two years at Elmwood College. In partnership with his father, rented a farm in East Fife for 11 years, worked for a land & estate agent for 5 years (compensation claims & farm management), before going contracting with his father for 2 years fencing and roller mill.

Since June 2009 he has been running the family farm. Today there are 82 Luing cows and heifers as well as 4 pure Simmental cows to calve in the spring. As he is still building the herd, all Luing heifers are presently retained, sim-luing heifers sold for breeding and bullocks sold store market. Alongside the Luings are 450 texel cross (to the Suffolk tup) & scotch mule ewes (to the Texel tup). Texel cross lambs are retained and the majority of the lambs are sold prime through Farmstock Scotland Ltd and the rest through the live market. He also grows approximately 60 to 70 acres of spring barley for the high nitrogen market as well as 30 to 40 acres of kale for out wintering the in-calf cattle.

Out with farm, Mark was an active member of Kinross YFC and played rugby for Edinburgh Wanderers, Kirkcaldy, Kinross and district rugby with the North & Midlands. Currently he is chairman of West Fife & Kinross branch of NFUS.

McGowan, Neil (Vice-Chairman)

Neil and Debbie farm in a family partnership at Incheoch, at the foot of Glenisla, home to the Dirnanean herd. Neil's parents, Finlay and Judy started in Luings with the purchase of Dirnanean farm in 1977. The current herd of about 150 cows are partly bred pure for replacements the rest crossed to produce SimLuings. A recent reduction of the Simmental herd is making way

for more Luing cows. Incheoch is also home to flocks of Lleyne and Texel ewes, with a ram sale held on the farm. Having worked successfully with performance recording in maternal sheep, Neil is keen to use his time on Council to progress a performance recording scheme in the Luing breed. Neil has recently been on a Nuffield Farming Scholarship, when Debbie has had to rely on extra help from their children, Tally (16) and Angus (15). His future aspirations are to keep improving on the Luing herd, and to take a real good bull to Castle Douglas.

Bell, Rory (Appointed 2018)

Rory is married to Jane and they live at Roxburgh Mill, Kelso. Eldest son James (22) works at home where his interest lies with machinery. Finlay (19) is a keen stockman and is in second year at SRUC studying Rural Business Management, and Lucy (15) is at Kelso High School.

The family rent Roxburgh Mill and Plenderleith, Jedburgh from Roxburgh Estates.

Simmentals and Texels are run at Roxburgh Mill with Luings and Blackfaces on the hill unit. Rory and father Robin purchased their first Luings at Castle Douglas in 2006 from Luing, Nunnerie and Merkland, then added 25 cows and calves at the Westwater dispersal. The herd numbers 110 at present and Rory thinks the ground could carry more. Cow numbers have risen, at the expense of hill ewes. Luing and Simmental bulls are used, with calves weaned down to the lowland unit, where buildings, straw and fodder are available from around 200 acres of grass, spring barley and winter oats. The cows are wintered on the hill ground, on blocks then baled silage.

Sim Luings steers are sold at 18 months at St Boswells, and heifers have been retained or sold privately. With cow numbers stabilising Rory intends selling Luing heifers at sales soon.

The good temperament of Luing cattle is fundamental to the running of the herd and calving ease along with their ability to rear a good calf from poorer ground makes them the ideal cow for Plenderleith.

MacRae, Graeme (Appointed 2018).

Married to Fiona, they have three children, Issy 17, Farquhar 15 and Marcus 12. Graeme was brought up on the family croft in Kintail on the west coast of Scotland, where the focus was on hill sheep and a few cows.

He works in the deer industry and has been employed for over 20 years with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (formerly the Red Deer Commission) as a Wildlife Management Officer.

He also runs a small herd of Luing cows and North Country Cheviots between his crofts on the East and West coasts, with limited time available the low maintenance, easily handled Luing cattle suit Kintail as they come through the winter maintaining condition on hay/silage. The cattle are outwintered and summered with the Luing bull at Knockbain Farm, Dingwall.

All bullock calves and bulling heifers are sold through Dingwall & Highland Marts.

McNee, Hazel (Appointed 2019)

Hazel and her husband Robert and their children Kate (8) and Alan (6) farm at Over Finlurg Farm, Tealing, which extends to 740 acres with some grazing ground rented. Both the sheep flock and the suckler herd are now completely closed, with only home bred replacements used for breeding tups and bulls bought at auction.

Hazel and Robert lamb 900 ewes along with 200 ewe hogs, comprising of 600 hill type north country cheviot ewes of which 200 are bred pure and the remaining crossed to the Bluefaced Leicester for producing cheviot mules. 200 Blackie ewes are crossed with home bred crossing Bluefaced Leicester to produce scotch mules, with the result being tupped with the Texel and sold as hogs with lambs at foot. There are also 100 pure Texels, and pedigree Bluefaced Leicesters which are used for breeding tups for home use and shearlings for the commercial market.

Over Finlurg accommodates 180 pedigree cows of which 100 are Luings and the remainder being pedigree

Limousins and a few Simmentals. The Luing is ideal for our farm and we enjoy producing both pedigree Luings and Sim-Luings, selling both bulls and heifers at Stirling and Castle Douglas.

Crerar, Paddy (Appointed 2019)

Paddy and Sheila Crerar have 3 children all now sort of grown up. Daughter Rowan (21) who is in her final year at Edinburgh College of Art. Rufus (20) who's at Oxford studying Real Estate and the world of beer and Fergal (18) who's desperately keen to leave home - which he will this summer, if not sooner. Rufus and Fergal are well kent faces at the Castle Douglas sales with a good few successful bull sales under their belts. Rather than pocket money the boys were allowed to pick out a bull calf each year to train and sell at Castle Douglas, with the double incentive that if they didn't sell, their Dad got them back and they would still owe him for feed costs! They sold every year with the last bulls Lammermuir Tremendous and Tip Top going to Finlurg and Tyncoed. Unfortunately, a combination of rugby injuries and exam focus have seen their bull days pass - but it's not stopped them taking a keen and critical interest in the Luings at home, with lots of authentic agricultural head shaking and tutting.

Paddy, the youngest of 4 brothers, is Oban born and bred but moved east as a teenager, his first job at 17 was an insurance salesman before turning to the hospitality industry where he quickly found his fit but still claims if he had stuck in at the insurance things might have worked out better. After 20 years of more or less success in hospitality and tourism business Paddy was able, aged 40, to realise a lifetime dream of becoming a farmer.

Of course with no farming experience beyond summer odd jobs as a boy what could possibly go wrong! Luckily his neighbours (the Broons at Stoneypath) in East Lothian were proper folk who had no hesitation in helping him learn, they made it clear they would teach him everything but only once so "pay attention". The first heifers were bought at the inaugural Dingwall sale roughly ten years ago and now he and Sheila run their Newmains Farm, Lammermuir herd to circa 60 cows retaining all followers to finish (sold predominantly through Farmstock Scotland) or sold either as breeding heifers or retained as replacements. Store

lambs are bought to fatten but really to help with grass management and a second smaller farm was bought which gives a 100 acres of arable to complement the 350 or so acres of grass. Paddy is still a hotelier and has a number of other business interests but to add to the fun the most recent adventure on the farm is a move into deer farming.

In the last 2 years Paddy & Sheila have geared up and are now running circa 250 hinds and, again like the Luings, all followers are retained to finish. Having no experience of deer farming Paddy & Sheila's attitude followed the familiar route - what could possibly go wrong!

At some stage they may take the plunge and look to employ some part time help if things go well, but it's the physical farm work and outside life that Paddy really enjoys and he'd be reluctant to let someone else take that from him. The choice of Luing Cattle was made on the basis that they are a breed that takes little to manage - Paddy is only able to farm cattle because the breed choice he made is so forgiving.

Meanwhile, apart from farming, Sheila is a developmental psychologist which Paddy claims is a founding reason why she is tolerant enough to remain married to him.

Shona Marshall (Appointed 2020)

Shona is 23, and after leaving school in 2014, decided to study Rural Business Management at the nearby SRUC, Craibstone. She helped on the family farm during her studies and is now at home working full-time, alongside her parents, Kenny and Moira, and her older sisters, Christine and Julie.

Her grandfather started the farming enterprise alongside Kenny over 40 years ago so Shona is the 3rd generation within the family business, based up in the North-East on the outskirts of Aberdeen.

Shona has 450 cows in total, made up of simmental and sim-luing cows as well as 70 pedigree Luings. The main focus is on breeding quality heifers for longevity, efficiency and easy calving.

She also lambs 1200 ewes, again trying to focus more on breeding females for selling such as cheviot mules.

Alongside the farm, the family have their own farm shop which has a very exciting future expansion planned for 2021 as well as being kept busy with the machinery refurbishment side of the business.

Away from work, Shona is an active member, and current secretary of Inverurie YFC.

Steven Murray (Appointed 2019)

Married to Elaine with two daughters Heather who is in 4th year studying Rural Business Management at SRUC and Hazel who is finished University and is currently working on a large Beef unit locally. Steven was born and brought up on an upland beef and sheep farm near Tow Law in County Durham.

After gaining a diploma in Agriculture and a certificate in Farm Management from Durham Agricultural College he spent a number of years working around this country gaining a lot of work experience. As a Young Farmer, he visited Australia through the exchange programme where he explored the country working on outback sheep and cattle stations. The Murrays moved to West Preston in 2003, this allowed them to expand the business where they now run 200 pedigree Luing Cows finishing the males as bulls and selling heifers for breeding. They also run a small flock of 150 Easy Care ewes, producing fat lambs and ewe lambs for breeding. The cows are out wintered on kale and fodder beet on a low cost system. They also winter cattle for other people in the sheds which are not required for their own cattle.

Steven is a former chairman of the Luing Cattle Society and is also a volunteer Coastguard for the local station at Portling for the past 20 years.

Charles Symons (Fieldsman)

Recently retired from full time farming Charles and Mary have now moved to The Priory at Morebattle. This is a 20-acre property and once everything has settled down Charles intends to spend some of his time training sheepdogs.

There are 3 acres of gardens to maintain so they will still be very busy. Hopefully there will be more time to dedicate to the job of fieldsman, a job thoroughly enjoyed. When on bull inspection and cow classification duty hopefully there will be more time to have a look around herds and spend more time with members rather than the usual rush in and out.

Anyone wishing to discuss anything Luing please don't hesitate to contact your fieldsman.

List of Members

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