



Registered Charity No. 1122336

Newsletter

November 2011



The Princess Royal presents Joe Henson his MBE at Windsor Castle

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GLOUCESTER CATTLE SOCIETY
Registered Charity Number: 1122336

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DISCLAIMER

Views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Gloucester Cattle Society.

The GCS regret that they cannot in any way guarantee the subjects of advertisements in the Newsletter or accept any responsibility for any errors found herein.

News Update

Registration

Please register any calves and birth notify others.

The numbers of animals are not increasing; this may become worrying if the trend continues.

PIGS

From October 1st a new movement on-line movement licensing system will be introduced in England and Wales. Alternative arrangements are being developed in Scotland and N. Ireland. Details of this change have been published in Practical Pigs magazine and all registered pig keepers in England and Wales have been sent this letter:

The BPA already collects much of the information required on the movement licence when herd book registered pigs are transferred so existing on-line and paper services will be developed to combine the pedigree information and the movement licence into a single paper or electronic document.

The existing paper licences will remain in place until April 2012 and there will be provision for keepers who do not have internet access.

A full report on the new system will be published in the next issue of Practical Pigs magazine.

The BPA will be organising a series of regional meetings over the next 6 months to introduce these new services.

Documentation Renewal for Transport

If you have the 'under 8 hours' certificate then you should automatically receive a renewal in the new year from Animal Health – so you need do nothing.

If you have the 'over 8 hours with a vehicle approval' you will need to contact Animal Health to renew.

Regulation 1/2005 requires those transporting animals in connection with an economic activity i.e. a business or trade, to be in possession of, *inter alia*, a transporter authorisation and, where appropriate, a certificate of vehicle approval.

These documents have a maximum lifecycle of five years and thus those who obtained them at the end of 2006 to coincide with the Regulation's coming into force in January 2007 will need to consider renewing them.

Further information on the renewal processes for both documents can be found on the [Transporter Authorisation](#) and the [Vehicle Approval](#) pages at www.defra.co.uk

Defra Helpline

Mon-Fri: 8am-6pm

08459 33 55 77

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOE HENSON

Joe Henson, who founded the Rare Breeds Survival Trust in 1973, was made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to conservation.

Mr Henson attended a Windsor Castle ceremony with members of his family.

The Henson family has also owned and run the Cotswold Farm Park since 1971.

Mr Henson said: "I'm delighted to receive recognition of the work that I've done to save our rare breeds, and thrilled that this continues to be born out through the work of The Cotswold Farm Park.

"I was particularly pleased that it was Princess Anne who gave it to me because she is very involved with rare breeds as well."

Joe Henson is a founder Member of the GCS and a Patron. Along with other enthusiasts, Robin Otter, Lisa Otter, Eric Freeman and Charles Martell; the GCS was reformed in 1973 following the dispersal of the last remaining herd of Gloucesters from Wick Court in 1972. The GCS held the 1st Show at Three Counties in 1974 and produced the first Herd book in 1975 which held 69 animals. Thanks must go to Joe for all the work he has put in on behalf of all the Rare breeds.

Payments to the Gloucester Cattle Society can be made by Bank Transfer. Our Bank details are:

Account Name: Old Gloucester Cattle Society

Account No.:00467416

Sort Code:30-95-75

It would be helpful when making Bank Transfers if you could let us know by e-mail that a transaction has taken place.

FROM THE EDITOR

Newsletter time again – the second to be sent out predominantly by Email. How did you get on with the last one? Out of sight out of mind? Hopefully you did read it. As with everyone, the Society is feeling the pinch- so the saving on postage is helpful.

I am going to put you to the test, the question of whether to Disbud/dehorn or not, provoked a flurry of letters, both for and against, which was wonderful. The Council is working for you, so we do need to know how you feel.

So now I am going to bring up the question of colour – not the ‘white bits’ we all know where those should be, but coat colour.

I personally don't mind too much what colour the heifers turn out as long as they are not mismarked. I do want dark points i.e. head, legs and preferably teats, but to see them in their summer coats varying in shades of mahogany is a picture. I worked with Friesian's and Holstein's so long that the world began to look black and white.

So do we have, or do we even want to have, any control over colour other than culling those we feel do not conform? Surely there are far more factors to work on according to the DNA results, which, by the way, also showed up that there is a recessive red gene in some lines. Soil conditions will affect coat colour. A low copper intake will appear as redness in the coat and a reluctance to moult before you see the characteristic ‘mealy muzzle’ and rings around the eyes. Gloucestershire is known to be copper deficient in many areas.

William Marshall in his book ‘The Rural Economy of Glostershire’ 1789 states that in the Vale of Gloucester the cows were ‘characteristically dark red provincially ‘brown’ with the face and neck inclining to black’ and in his points of the ideal Gloucester ‘the colour a dark brown marked with white along the back and about the udder, with legs, chap and head of a full, glossy dark chocolate colour’.

The native breeds of cattle in the South West are predominately red in colour and interestingly the South Devon was also dual purpose and considered Channel Island (let's not go the way of the South Devon, now considered purely a beef breed). This was a great advantage to Channel Island breeders as a South Devon bull would give them a far more saleable bull calf and heifers could enter the dairy herd still possessing Channel Island qualities. The North Devon is a much deeper red and then there is also the Hereford, we can go on speculating. It has even been suggested that there may be a Norman origin – Robert Fitzwilliam in the early 12th century conquered vast estates in Glamorgan and Gloucestershire and Earl Berkeley in about 1300 had his own ship to import ‘forren wines and wares, needful for his own use’ A shame, if this is so, that the Gloucester does not have the same reputation in Gloucestershire (and further afield) that the Normande commands in Normandy as a very highly regarded Dual –Purpose animal.

M C-S

This Newsletter may appear to be I-I-I, apologies before you put pen to paper, but I am trying to provoke some discussion as to how you see the breed and what you see as the future for Gloucester's.

I hope you saw John Torode and the Great British Food Revival Programme on the BBC last week. He was at Wimpole among the Gloucester's, Longhorn's and Shetland's. Unfortunately he didn't cook any Gloucester Beef but it was still a wonderful advert for the superiority of Native Breed Beef.

It was mentioned that the Gloucester's at Wimpole were not being bred pure at the moment, as a bull with suitable attributes had not been found.

Hopefully, this is where the DNA profiles of the bulls can help us all. I have been breeding for milk in my herd, or at least I thought I was. By studying the pedigrees and talking to breeders with far more knowledge than I, on the attributes of the various blood-lines, I thought I had done my homework. However, on receiving the DNA profiles of my cows, I have the Dairy Type I wanted, to look at, but in fact, it appears I have been breeding the milk out and going towards beef.

So I am really glad I found out before it was too late to reverse the trend, as it is a proven fact, it is much harder to improve the milk yield than it is to lose it!

Do we want to keep our Dual Purpose Breed, or go the way of the South Devon and the Shorthorn? The Shorthorn has even taken one step further and become two breeds – one beef and one dairy.

M C-S

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I am receiving requests for Gloucester steers does anyone have any steers for sale. Please phone me, Marion 01452 770915

It was rather good to read in this week's Farmer's Guardian about the Scottish scientists who have identified genetic markers associated with resistance to bTB. It is probably a long way off but apparently the next step of putting this into practice is now underway. It is good to hear of something positive in that respect as apparently there has been a 5% rise of bTB in herds in the first seven months of this year.

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Morrison's native sire cattle scheme is also going well. 360 Native cattle used a week with sales soaring by 40% at their butchery counters. They are wanting 260 – 380kg grading down to O+. Beef Shorthorn – sired cattle are preferred and get the 20p/kg premium but other Native breeds get a 10p/kg premium. Only 100 of the 360 are Shorthorns, the balance being other native breeds.

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Jenni Driver's article on Herd Health is interesting. I realise that agricultural policies in Scotland are different to those in England, but we may find England will follow. I was offered the chance to join the MYHEALTHYHERD Scheme through my vets. So far I have used the subsidised scheme to have my herd tested for

BVD and Johnes and was thrilled (and very relieved) when the results came back negative for both in the herd.

It will mean an annual test but as I have a closed herd I will not have to vaccinate unless I want to buy in.

Herd Health - The Big Four

Herd health is an important issue which can affect the performance of your cattle and as a society we should be committed to improving the health profile of our breed to ensure its safe existence for the future. It's not someone else's problem, it could be yours.

Do you know your herd health status? Are you even aware of the main 4 diseases and the implications to your herd?

Why is it important?

Cattle travel huge distances so disease can spread into a 'clean' area very quickly TB is a real problem - other diseases are being overlooked.

Farmers are increasingly asking for disease free stock including bulls.

Export requires disease free stock.

Cost - hidden costs of dealing with disease when it gets a hold and disease free cattle are worth more:

The main 4 diseases –

1 - Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)

Causes a complex of diseases in cattle, the most important of which is the effect on fertility and a cause of abortion. Infection immediately before or during the breeding season will reduce conception rates. The virus can also affect the unborn foetus causing congenital deformities and can lead to a super infection called mucosal disease these cases almost always die. However infection of developing calves during the first third of pregnancy will result in the calves which do survive being persistently infected, these calves will provide the major source of new BVD infections and will pass this on to all progeny.

There is a significant risk of infection at shows

Control this disease by identification and culling out persistently infected animals where possible as these are the carriers. There is an effective vaccine which can be used along with herd screening.

2 - Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)

Caused by bovine herpes virus1, which causes an acute upper respiratory tract disease leading to fatal pneumonia. This is very infectious, cattle shed the virus in secretions from the respiratory tract, infected bulls shed virus in their semen. Cows have reduced fertility, abortions and reduction in milk yields, however on occasions the disease may be so mild it is overlooked. Once the animal has

become infected, it remains so for life. Stress is an important factor, so keep this to a minimum.

There is an effective marker vaccine available.

3 – Leptospirosis

Caused by bacteria collectively referred to as *Leptospira Hardjo* which causes a drop in milk yields, infertility, abortion and calves which survive to birth will have a reduced survival rate.

Most cases of abortion occur during the second half of pregnancy (the period from 5 months to full term)

After infection *L. Hardjo* localises in the kidneys and urinary tract as well as the reproductive tract of both male and female.

The organism can be shed in urine either continuously or intermittently for life.

L. Hardjo arises from contact with infected urine or from water or pasture contaminated with urine. Shared grazing with sheep is also a risk, a rest period of 2 months should make pasture safe again. The bacteria have not been identified in wildlife in the UK.

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic infection so is a risk to humans, it can cause flu-like symptoms and severe headaches.

Herd blood testing will confirm infected animals, there is an effective vaccine.

4 - Johne's Disease

By far the worst as there is no cure, infected animals and their offspring must be culled and vaccination is not recommended as it only reduces the number of clinical cases and will not remove the infection from the herd thus making identification of the disease impossible.

This is a devastating disease, it is a chronic, progressive, wasting condition caused by the organism *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*.

The infection is shed in large numbers in faeces, can cross the placenta and can be found in colostrums and milk.

Animals are generally infected by ingesting the agent and young animals are considered to be the most susceptible to infection, however clinical signs of diarrhoea and weight loss do not occur until many years later. This means that infected cattle may test negative on several occasions before they test positive therefore annual testing is essential. Tests are carried out on blood or milk samples to detect antibodies and on faeces to detect the bacterium. The organism survives well in the environment making control and eradication more difficult than for the other diseases. It is essential to reduce calf exposure to adult faeces.

In Summary

Know your health status

Only buy from accredited stock or find out the sellers status

Isolate and test new cattle or cattle returning to the herd

Practice bio security

Vaccinate to control disease which cannot be eradicated

Cull infected cattle that cannot be cured

Make sure your cattle do not have nose to nose contact with other stock

We have lost so many of our breed to TB over which we have no control , to ignore herd health over which we do have control the implications will be significant not only in loss of cattle but in cost to ourselves.

Jenni Driver – Howslack Herd

FOSTERING

We all hope to have live calves every time - but as we all know - it is not possible to have livestock unfortunately without some deadstock.

How do you foster calves onto a stressed and reluctant cow? Some co-operate but some very definitely have other ideas.

It is hard and often bruising work persuading a cow with other ideas to take a foreigner's calf. You want to be confident that no harm will come to either and that it is safe to leave them to get on with it.

Jenni Driver had just such a dilemma and sent photo's of Mary Ella and her foster calf, the Longhorn, Howslack Katie. You may not recognise Katie as a Longhorn as she is wearing the dead Gloucester Calf's skin. Katie was a week to ten days old, not getting sufficient nourishment from her dam when Mary Ella's calf died.

They were penned on their own, Katie wore her coat for about a week. (It does get a bit smelly any longer) Katie has blossomed and Mary Ella has reared a useful calf relatively stress - free.

It is not easy skinning a calf and a useful tool is the Fore-end Loader on a Tractor.

I tried doing it using a branch on a tree and that is hard work!

M C-S



HOWSLACK KATIE

SINGLE GLOUCESTER WITH TRUFFLES



I have a friend, Steve Woodward (Woody), who has a farm near Wincanton on the Somerset/Dorset border. He also owns a gastro-pub called The Old Inn nearby and buys cheese from me for the menu there.

A couple of years ago, much to his absolute delight, he discovered that he has truffles growing on his farm and someone in the village has two truffle finding dogs!

So, the next thing is, Woody kept pestering me to put truffle in some cheese. I wasn't keen as good cheese doesn't need any additives. Anyway, I have given in this week, as the truffles are in season, for a trial with six Single Gloucesters which should be ready at Christmas.

I'll keep you posted on the results.

Jonathan Crump

MEMBERS' LETTERS

I read with interest and amusement the article to Horn or not to Horn in your April Newsletter.

I have always thought that the reason for a lot of breeds to become classified as rare breeds is due to the fact that breeders have not been forward thinking and meeting the challenges of farming as it has developed.

I am not sure if the member who wrote this wants to keep the breed in its original form, so that the society becomes a small exclusive club. Is it not better to meet the demands of today's farming, by developing the breed to suit a wider spectrum of farms that they would fit into.

I manage a farm in Cornwall, that diversified over 35 years ago into tourism, as well as a working farm. Last year we sold our commercial dairy herd and are solely concentrating on traditional and rare breeds of cattle to be milked on our rotary parlour for public viewing.

Obviously any cattle with horns, would not be suitable and we were fortunate to find a breeder who is actively producing animals without them.

Finally, I think if a cow with horns caught you in the chest, it would do more damage than one without.

N S Fabris

DairylandFarmWorldLimited.

I would like to add my piece to the remarks in the Newsletter about dehorning Gloucesters.

One is inclined to wonder whether, if those who think this wrong, have ever seen the resulting damage an aggressive cow or heifer can do to others. To say nothing of the impending vet fees!

Some many years ago now I had a young (teenager) heifer who decided that her horns were for damaging other cows and of course they were removed very quickly. At that time I had correspondence with Libby Henson regarding the feelings of the Society with regard to dehorning and it was agreed that was not a problem in the Society.

Pamela Sanderson

'ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA' (a further response to the horn debate)

I promised an explanation of my decision to first de-horn and then try to poll our Gloucester cattle.

I began to look seriously at the subject of de-horning when John Scott of the Hawkhouse herd bought some cows and calves from C.H.A.D.S. As we loaded the animals for their journey to Yorkshire John said "The first job when we get back is to get the bloody horns off 'em".

We have discussed the issue a number of times since then and I can confirm that he has totally converted me; as I have observed his wise words come true.

“The boss horned cow that keeps others away from the feed fence, even when not feeding herself”.

“The boss cow at the front of the herd in a narrow passage, with the frustrated cowman at the rear trying to cajole reluctant animals to push on past the aggressive leader”.

And

“The transformation to benign behaviour when the offending projections have been removed.”

So, ease of management is first base. The final incentive to remove all the horns in the Trentside herd came following the tragedy of Trentside Eidelweiss. She became unwell late in the year whilst still out at grass. Eating? Yes but not enough. Moving? Yes but not freely.

I could not define what ailed her nor could our vet – until at the third examination, Simon, who is an excellent cattle doctor cried Eureka!! I’ve got it!! He passed the stethoscope to me, directing me where to listen against her chest wall and described the malfunction of her lungs to which he had been listening. PLEUROSY. Certainly caused by a harsh dig in the ribs by another cow’s horn causing deep damage and subsequent inflammation.

Prognosis – poor, we may save her but don’t hold your hopes too high.

DILEMMA.

Does one put down a heavily pregnant pedigree cow because she is in a lot of pain? So followed days of consultation – the best treatment available and all the care we could give until she successfully calved. What a painful experience that must have been for poor Eidelweiss.

Wracked by pain, her mothering instincts were muted; her calf seemed to realise that his mother couldn’t care less about him, as he took what little milk she could provide.

What a dilemma for me as their carer. Should I wean her calf? Have her put down? Keep on trying?

It was resolved for me when I arrived one morning to find her dead.

What an awful, awful last two months of life it had been for her.

To this day I do not know if I did right by her. The only consolation is that her son, Trentside Harrier is happily settled in a herd quite near, where I call to see him occasionally.

Eidelweiss was one of those benign gentle cows, and her demise confirmed my decision to firstly de-horn and then if possible to breed a new generation of polled animals.

My action has nothing to do with personal “elf and safety” it has everything to do with good animal husbandry and the best interest of the cattle in my care.

As John said “get the horns of ‘em”

Derek Silverwood

Trentside Herd

CHADS