



Highland Cattle Society

# Newsletter

HIGHLAND CATTLE SOCIETY, STIRLING AGRICULTURAL CENTRE, STIRLING, SCOTLAND FK9 4RN

## Whats in this issue!

### Results & Reports from

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- Strong demand for Cross Highland Heifers
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- Update Oban Autumn Show
- Worcester Show & Sale
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- Dear Members

### DNA

Bulls being sold in Oban must have a DNA Certificate if born after the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006.  
DNA testing kits can be obtained from the society office.



### Stars of the Future

Young Handlers Competing for Oban Times Trophy

Karen Aitchison receives her award from judge John Crilley's daughter, Lorna

### Oban Spring Sale

All entries for Oban Spring sale to be sent to Office as soon as possible - please ensure all information is correct and included on entry form.  
Closing date is 28<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

### Subscriptions are now due!

Please note if you are paying via BACS please quote your invoice number and 3 letter unique code

### Birth Notifications 2011

Have you done yours?

### Annual General Meeting

Preliminary notice of the Annual General Meeting to be held in Oban, Argyll is hereby given for Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012 or such other date as Council may decide.

Formal notice specifying the date, venue, and time will be given in the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011.

Registered in Scotland, Company No. SC013974

Tel: 01786 446866 • Fax: 01786 446022 • Email: [info@highlandcattlesociety.com](mailto:info@highlandcattlesociety.com)

A very merry Christmas and a joyous New Year  
From Hazel, Janet & Nicola



Craigowmill Fold

Would like to wish all their  
fellow Highland Cattle enthusiasts near and far  
a very Merry Christmas  
and a  
Healthy, Successful & Happy New Year

Ken & Eva Brown



## **EuroTier**

Hanover, Germany

*The world's top event for Animal Production*  
13th – 16th November 2012

### **The Show**

EuroTier is the world's leading event for animal production. It attracts 130,000 visitors (23,000 from outside Germany) and 1,767 exhibitors. The show attracts the world's top decision makers from the animal husbandry sector.

### **The Location and Package**

The Hanover Fair ground is located in the south east of Hannover and is easily accessible from the majority of UK airports. Spaces have been secured for British Cattle Breed Societies.

This is an ideal opportunity for members to promote themselves and the Highland breed abroad. This is open to all members and grant funding is available for this event. Already we have had genuine interest shown - Spaces are limited and anyone interested in attending please do at your earliest.

Contact Hazel – [hazel@highlandcattlesociety.com](mailto:hazel@highlandcattlesociety.com) or 01786 446866 for further information.

The society office will assist in the grant application and provide society literature and assistance.

# Highland Cattle Society

## Save on Osmonds Products

Osmonds, leaders in their field of animal nutrition and health products have teamed up with the Highland Cattle Society, to offer members a 15% discount on all website orders of Osmonds Products from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 to the end of March 2012.

To take advantage of this offer, please order from the Osmonds website [www.osmonds.co.uk](http://www.osmonds.co.uk) and quote the code HCS12 when ordering. \*\*

*(Please quote your membership 3 letter holding letters)*

In addition to this, a further 5% of all order values will be returned to the Highland Cattle Society at the end of the period.

A copy of the Osmonds Product Catalogue is included with this newsletter – if your copy is missing – please contact the Society or Osmonds directly for a replacement.

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**\*\*Please note this discount excludes any shipping costs.**

# Council Corner



**EBV Recording** – don't forget there is still time to register for EBV recording – following the success of the workshops earlier this year already several members have signed up for this. Please contact Hazel for further information.



## Bull Inspection

There has been a small working committee formed to look at progressing bull inspections – the findings of this will be brought to the AGM for consultation with the members – following the AGM the committee will take peoples comments and points on board and the consultation will be finalised for the end of May. If any of you have any further views on this and would like them considered please contact Hazel at the society office at your earliest. There have been various replies from members after our last newsletter and there is an excerpt from them within the newsletter.



## Sales

**Caledonian Marts** will be holding a native bred store cattle sale on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March – more information will follow and keep an eye on the web site.

**Chelford Show & Sale** will take place on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012 by kind permission of Frank Marshall Auctioneers. They will also be holding a native breed store cattle sale on the same day. Further details will be available in the Spring newsletter.

More dates will be confirmed in future newsletters and on the web page.



## Constitution

The constitutional sub-committee will have recommendations in the AGM notice for all members.



## Project

The society has part funded Charles Bruce as part of his Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture – his dissertation was entitled “An investigation into the health and tenderness benefits present within Highland cattle beef compared to a Commercial breed”. More information to be found in the newsletter.

More information on page 6

## STRONG DEMAND FOR CROSS HIGHLAND HEIFERS AT OBAN SALE.

Well over one hundred well bred cross Highland heifers were forward at Caledonian Marts annual autumn sale on the 25<sup>th</sup> October in Oban.

The sale of cross Highland heifer calves sold to a top price of £700 for a pair of outstanding spring born calves from Castles Estate Dalmally, their consignment of twenty calves averaged £500. Glenturet Estate Crieff followed up on their highly successful open day in September with the top average of £544 for their 23 calves, selling to a top of £680 on two occasions. R S Strachan Cailaich Isle of Mull saw their pen of calves average £526 with a top of £580 for three. Gilbert Bannerman Old Manse Balmaha saw his average jump £210 to £500 for pen of six well bred April born calves.

There was an equally strong demand for heifers eighteen months of age. The consignment of eleven from Duncan Welsh all found a new home in Wales, average price £793 with a top of £850 for two. Auch Estate at Bridge of Orchy led the section at £900 with their six heifers average at £833.

Through out the day the ringside was full of buyers from all the airts, Wales, Northumberland, and the Lake District competing with buyers from the North and West Highlands, Perthshire and the Borders.

This sale continues to go from strength to strength, and augurs well for all the Highland cattle breeders who cross a portion of their herd with Shorthorn or Simmental bulls.

AR Mackay

## Ceilidh – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012

**In an effort to reduce paper use there will not be an application form for ceilidh tickets. Please apply for tickets directly through the office**

**01786 446866 or through the web site [www.highlandcattlesociety.com](http://www.highlandcattlesociety.com) and purchase through Paypal**

**Ceilidh - Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February**

**7.00 for 7.30 within Royal Hotel, Oban.**

**Dress - smart**

# Update Oban Autumn Sale

## 121<sup>st</sup> Annual Spring Show and Sale Oban 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012

### Show and Sale Schedule of Events

- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February – 6.30pm to 8.00 p.m – Drinks Reception
- Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February – The show will commence at 9.30a.m.
  - AGM – 5.00 p.m. Argyllshire Gathering Halls
  - Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February – Ceilidh & Dinner 7.00p.m. for 7.30p.m. Royal Hotel, Oban – tickets available from Society Office - £20 each.
- Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February – the sale starts promptly at 10.00a.m.

Trophies – All winners of trophies from 13<sup>th</sup> February 2011 are requested to hand the trophies to the **society office in Stirling** no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Trophies should be returned having been cleaned.

### Entries

The show and sale will be held in the Oban Livestock Centre, Oban (sale by Caledonian Marts (Stirling)) on 12<sup>th</sup> February and the sale is on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February. Entry forms are available to download from [www.highlandcattlesociety.com](http://www.highlandcattlesociety.com). To enable the office to send the entries to exhibitors for proofing the closing date for entries will be Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2011. No late entries will be accepted. Entry fee is £12.00 including VAT. (Calves at foot are included with entry fee for dam)

### Withdrawal Fees

You are reminded that the penalty for animals not put forward without a valid veterinary certificate will incur a penalty of £30.00 incl vat. Entry fees will be returned for animals withdrawn before the sale catalogue is published approximately 20 days before the sale. Any seller wishing to withdraw please contact the society office.

### Judge

The breed development committee and council have nominated Jim McConachie as the judge. Chief Steward is Robin Chilton

### Conditions of Sale

The sale is conducted under the General Conditions for Sale, which are exhibited in the Mart and in accordance with regulations approved by the Highland Cattle Society. Notwithstanding any other sale conditions, cattle at this sale will be sold subject to the National Beef Association Male and Female breeding warranties as amended for use by the Highland Cattle Society. Free copies of these warranties can be obtained from the office or alternatively download online from [www.nationalbeefassociation.com](http://www.nationalbeefassociation.com) and click on Breeding Warranties.

### Health Status

All animals put forward for sale must be tested IBR and BVD (either privately or whole herd tested) and thereafter must be kept isolated from the date of testing to the sale date. If privately tested, confirmation of test results must be submitted to the office. If testing through a Whole Herd Health Scheme again confirmation of Fold Health Status must be submitted to the office prior to the sale. **It would be appreciated if the certificates were sent with the entry form.** Any animals showing signs of anti-bodies must be notified and a declaration will be added to the animal's catalogue notes.

### Transfer Fees

No transfer fees are raised for the official Society shows/sales

### General

The following points are drawn to your attention

- All bulls are to be rung or snitched
- Any bulls brought forward born in 2006 or later must be DNA tested
- Un-haltered cattle at official sales in Oban will be sold after the haltered entries at the discretion of the auctioneer. Each entry not haltered must be so marked in the entry form.
- Purchasers must verify official identification marks before taking delivery of their purchases and if any earmarking or identification irregularity is discovered the animal in question may be rejected.
- Sellers and purchasers are reminded that from 1 January 2007, pregnant cattle cannot travel over 60 kms in their last month of pregnancy.
- Commercial cattle are not to be sold at this show/sale for reasons of health, safety and availability of pens.
- Bulls born after the preceding 28<sup>th</sup> February are not permitted to be sold at this sale.
- Calves less than 5 months of age on the day of the may only be sold at foot with their dams.

**IMPORTANT  
ALL ENTRIES RECEIVED  
BY THE OFFICE THAT DO  
NOT HAVE THE CORRECT  
INFORMATION WILL  
BE RETURNED TO THE  
EXHIBITOR – THE CORRECT  
ENTRY FORM MUST BE  
RECEIVED BY CLOSING DATE  
– 28<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER – THE OFFICE  
CAN ONLY PROCESS THE  
INFORMATION RECEIVED.**

# The 114th Autumn Sale

**The 114<sup>th</sup> Autumn Sale of Highland Cattle was a steady sale with averages well up on previous years.**

The trade may not have been record breaking, but it proved to be steady throughout at the Highland cattle breed's main autumn sale, in Oban,

That 'steadiness' was enough to see almost half of the entry sold, 52 head, make 1000gns or more and sell to a top of 4400gns. Averages also held up well, with the 92 heifers of all ages levelling at £1048, which was £137 up on last year, when one more was sold.

Breaking the trade down further, the 19 three-year-old heifer averaged £1748; the 31 two-year-olds, £1101 and 22 yearlings levelled at £673. The heifer calf section was the only one to record a small drop in trade, with 20 averaging 578. Six cows achieved made on average £1830.

Hazel Baxter, the breed's secretary, said she was delighted by the trade: "It was great to see the home market take the vast majority of the stock and at much better prices than last year. We had a lot of foreign breeders from several European countries at the sale, but they were outbid by UK breeders keep to spread their bloodlines."



*Elspeth 5<sup>th</sup> of Bien Esk*

The top bid came for the pre-sale show's reserve supreme champion, a three-year-old heifer from Patricia Smith and Paul Burns, of Craigengelt, Stirling. This was Elspeth 5<sup>th</sup> of Bien Esk, a daughter of Thorn of Bien Esk out of Susan 5<sup>th</sup> of Douneside, which has been a bit of a show star for the couple this past summer, being champion at Perth and reserve at Braco shows.

Making the final bid at 4400gns was Orkney couple, Patrick and Andrea Casey, Goutnip, St Ola. Another from the same home and by the same sire was bid to 2250gns by Gordon Snowie, Innerdunning, East Gogar, Blairlogie. This was Duchess 1<sup>st</sup> of Bien Esk, which out of the Danish-bred Neona 3<sup>rd</sup> of Hoejgaard, which, like her more expensive hard-mate, is in calf to Conan of Corriemuckloch.

The show's supreme champion, the five-year-old cow, Catriona Akeko of Lyntoun, from David Dickson, Hamilton Hall, West Linton, Peebles, came second in the bidding

stakes with a value of 3000gns. The owner of one of the biggest folds of Highland cattle in the country, Michael Poland, who farms on the Isle of Wight, but also runs stock near Oban, put the final bid in for this daughter of Angus of Rashiehall.

Sold in-calf to a bull bred by Mr Poland, Ruairidh of



*Catriona Akeko of Lyntoun*

Mottistone, this cow goes back to Glengarry stock which was used to found the fold and she has also been a bit of a show star, having been reserve champion at the Glasgow Show and second at the Highland as a three-year-old.

Well-known merchant banker, Bruno Schroder's Dunlossit Estate, from Islay, took the third top of 2600gns for Lili Ann Ruadh of Ceannacroic. This three-year-old is by Bruce Buidhe of Ceannacroic and is in calf to Tarbh Dubh 2 of Druimdearg, a sire bought for just 500gns. She is off south to join TP Radford's fold at Heydour, Grantham, Lincs.

Pick of the two-year-old heifers was the 2200gns Una 29 of Millerston, from Jack Ramsay, Millerston, Mauchline. By the 2000gns sire, Seumas 5<sup>th</sup> of Leys, her dam line goes back to Una 10, which won the big show at Dalmally many years ago.

This was one of only two animals to go for export, selling to Jan Hendrick, from Germany.



*Una 29 of Millerston*



*Eilidh Ramsay receiving the Oban Times Trophy from Stewart MacKenzie*

Jack's daughter, Eilidh, also did well when she became the first winner of the new young stockmanship trophy, after she paraded one of her dad's heifers around the show ring. Two animals hit the 2000gns mark. First off was the three-year-old heifer, Eilidh 19<sup>th</sup> of Glengarnock, from Andy and Helen Kirkpatrick, Strathmore, Glengarnock, in Renfrewshire. By Seamus 2<sup>nd</sup> of Glengarnock, she sold in calf to Arkle of Ousdale, to James Green, Holmside, Holm, York.

Also heading in the same direction and at the same money was Hadyn Garton's An Uiseag Dubh of Craigowmill, a seven-year-old black cow from 2 Low Farnham, Sharperton, Morpeth, in Northumberland. Her sire is Gille Dubh 2<sup>nd</sup> of Rigg and she was paired with her black heifer calf at foot, by Fear Cinnidh of Ardura – and she's in-calf again to that same bull. The final bid came from Amanda Ridley, Thompsons of Helmsley, Helmsley, York.



*Catriona Akeko of Lyntoun*

A small show of bulls was led by the champion bull calf which also came from David Dickson. His Blair Rannich of Lyntoun will head back down the road to West Linton with near neighbours, D and H Crane, Gray Brae Farm, Leadburn. The breeding behind him is the 5000gns sire, Ruairidh of Mottistone and he is out of Hazel of Lyntoun, a former Glasgow champion.

The nine bulls sold averaged £730, down £22 on the year but for three more sold.

## Highland Beef study confirms original findings

A new paper produced by Charles Bruce at the University of Glasgow confirms the beneficial properties of pure pedigree Highland beef, previously studied in 1997 by Dr Ivy Barclay amongst others.

Samples of sirloin were taken from all over Scotland and from Yorkshire for the study, funded by the Highland Cattle Society from the Queen's Jubilee Trust, a charitable fund set up for educational purposes. A rapid slice shear force test determined the tenderness of the samples and chemical analysis included measurements of moisture (juiciness), iron, protein and cholesterol content.

Pure Highland beef was shown to be almost 23% more tender than commercial beef, scoring, at 83.27, well below the 100 which benchmarks meat as "very tender". Compared with commercial meat, pure Highland meat contains almost 7% more protein and almost 17% more iron, averaging over 4% less cholesterol. Intramuscular fat, low in saturated fat and seen as marbling through the meat, gives Highland beef its tenderness, succulence and distinctive taste.

An interesting finding was the lack of expected correlation between fat content and cholesterol levels. Comparison of diets and the effect of more intensive rearing might explain this result.

Charles is to be congratulated on this fascinating and informative work, which forms a foundation for possible future investigation. The full report may be obtained from the society office.

**NEW MEMBERS, BUYERS  
& SELLERS  
DRINKS RECEPTION  
CEILIDH BAR,  
ROYAL HOTEL, OBAN  
SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY  
6.30 P.M. TO 8.00 P.M.**

# President's Message

Hi All,

Since the last newsletter we have had various pieces of correspondence on two items that appeared.

Firstly Bull Registration, at the Council meeting in October it was agreed to delay the implementation of the proposed new scheme until all members had been given an opportunity to comment. A sub-committee was set up and has had its first meeting, the committee is chaired by our Breed Development Convenor, Duncan Buchanan and its members are Archie McArthur, Hugh McPhail, Charlie Bruce, Jim McConachie, Jack Ramsay and Robin Chilton.

If you would like to have your views heard, please make contact with any of the members or write directly to the office. Their outline plan to take the scheme forward will be given at the AGM and further consultation with members will take place after the AGM and prior to the Council meeting in May 2012 when the final decision will be made.

The second item that appeared in the last newsletter that seems to have been thought provoking is the article written by Jim McConnachie. We have had a good number

of comments, both written and verbal, half of which fully support Jim's thoughts and half opposed. My thanks must go to Jim for being brave enough to put his thoughts forward in the newsletter; it has certainly got us all talking about the breed.

My thanks to all those members who have taken the time to write and call, it is great to see so many members who have the interest of the breed at heart.

It might be a good idea to have a "letters to the editor" section in every future newsletter as it gives everyone a chance to put forward their thoughts and also an opportunity to pass on useful experiences in caring for our Highlanders.

Can I take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families a very happy festive season and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Ian  
President

## Views from Young Handler Winners

My personal show experiences started when I was seven at the first Glasgow Pollock Show.

The calf I had shown in the calf class got away from me and so Andrew Kilpatrick very kindly gave me a loan of the very young and white Lord Malcolm for the Young Handlers, which I went on to win. At such a young age, winning gave me a huge confidence boost, sparking a love of showing which has stayed with me eight years on. No matter where you are in the line up, you will always learn something from showing: how to behave when you win; how to behave when you lose; how to improve your own skills and techniques. However the main benefit I believe I have gained from showing cattle is that I have been introduced to many different places and given me the chance to meet a wide variety of people who otherwise, I would have never had the opportunity to know.

Eilidh Ramsay

I started getting involved with Highland Cattle at the age of six when we moved to Glenstrae Estate, owned by Richard and Jennie Schuster, who have a fold of twenty breeding cows called the Glenkinglass Fold. Their interests in showing encouraged me to become interested in something I now love doing. My father is also a great influence by passing on this love through the generations of our family. If it wasn't for him I would never have had this chance.

My most enjoyable part of being involved is attending the shows around the country, but the highlight is the Young Handlers. This year I was honoured to win the Best Young Handler of The Year, which has encouraged me even more to pursue it further and given me the confidence.

The Highland Cattle World also has a great social life as well as a career and I have met many amazing people both at home and abroad. There are many more from the younger generations who are beginning to take part in it which will ensure setting up a good future for agriculture.

Being involved with Farming has inspired me and hopefully next year I will go on and do a degree at Aberdeen in Rural Business Management which will not only open many doors for me but it will also enable me to successfully achieve my ambitions in this tree.

Mhairi Dempster

# Worcester Show & Sale

The Highland Cattle Society's Southern Autumn Show and Sale at Worcester was well supported by a packed ringside and competitive if somewhat selective bidding, however quality was the real attraction which culminated in a top price of 1,800gns for a black maiden heifer Urshula 35<sup>th</sup> of Eastol Moor from M.J. Mair's Cambridgeshire based fold secured by local breeders W.E. Monk & Son, Chadwich, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. Messrs Monk were keen and strong supporters at the sale taking another black heifer from the Eastol Moor Fold at 1,320gns and a red heifer at 760gns, all by Tormod of Tordarroch.

Other females that were closely followed was second prize winner Sorcha Mhor 2<sup>nd</sup> of Lock Maree from W. Fiddler, she had been running with the bull and was out of the Newbury Show Female Champion, she sold at 760gns to N Bowen, St Weonards, Hereford.

Bulls were a selective trade but demand was brisk for the Male and Overall Champion Arthur of Hellifield, a 2 1/2 year old son of Connor of Lagg and out of Annag Ruadh of Thaggnam from Robert Phillip selling at 1,500gns to T.C. Hayes, Wootton Under Edge, Gloucester.



**Male & Overall Champion** – Arthur of Hellifield by Connor of Lagg and out of Annag RUadh of Thaggnam from R & W Phillip, Hellifield.

**Reserve Male Champion** – Maxwell of Cim by Maximus of Coverhead and out of Eilidh Ruadh 2<sup>nd</sup> of Cim from Joy Griffiths, J2 Farming, Shropshire.

**Female Reserve Overall Champion** – Rosa of West Edmondsley by Robbie 2<sup>nd</sup> of Hellifield and out of Uiseag of Ardbhan from L & L Braines, Sunderland.

**Reserve Female Champion** - Urshula 34<sup>th</sup> of Walton by Wallace of Cim and out of Ursuhla 33<sup>rd</sup> of Eastol Moor from Suzanne Hill, Shropshire.

## Results

### Class I – Cow

- 1<sup>st</sup> Morag 2<sup>nd</sup> of Wainsmore – A & P Sparham
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sorcha Mhor 2<sup>nd</sup> of Loch Maree – Mr & Mrs W Fiddler
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleur 2<sup>nd</sup> of Wainsmore – S & S Leighton

- 1<sup>st</sup> Diorbhail 2<sup>nd</sup> of Loch Maree – Mr & Mrs W Fiddler
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Donnag Ruadh 5<sup>th</sup> of Ellerdine – Mrs S Hill
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Holly 1<sup>st</sup> of Mercaston – A & P Sparham

**Best Cow – Diorbhail of Loch Maree**

## Heifer born in 2009

- 1<sup>st</sup> Rosa of West Edmondsley – L & L Braines
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Peallachag Channaidh 1<sup>st</sup> of Hisland – S & S Leighton
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Proiseag Ruadh 72<sup>nd</sup> of Achnacloich - L & L Braines

## Heifer born in 2010

- 1<sup>st</sup> Urshula 34<sup>th</sup> of Walton – Mrs S Hill
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Fia Mia of Bath House – A & S Sparham

## Heifer born in 2011

- 1<sup>st</sup> Barbara of Hellifield - R & W Phillip
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Catrina of Hellifield – R & W Phillip

## Senior Bull

- 1<sup>st</sup> Arthur of Hellifield – R & W Phillip
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Aonghas of Dams – S & E Haley

## Junior Bull

- 1<sup>st</sup> Maxwell of Cim – Ms J Griffiths

## Sale Averages

- 4 Cows and Calves £637.88
- 10 Cows running with bull £438.90
- 15 Heifers £616.70
- 2 Bulls £1097.25

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# Highland Cattle Society

## Dear Members

As we finish off a very busy 2011 with a great year for the breed including some great show results, exports to all over Europe and links constantly building with our home and international members and breeders.

## 4<sup>th</sup> International Gathering – New Zealand

### Annual Census

The annual census will be sent out in January and it would be appreciated if you can all check your forms and return any changes or updates to the office.

### Council Representative Nominee Form

You should have received your council representative form with your membership subscription- this is your chance to put forward who you would like to represent you on council – please return your nomination by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011. If you have not received the form please let the office know as soon as possible.

### Promotions

We have secure two new providers offering society members great prices on tags from Allflex and Osmonds are offering a 15% discount on their tremendous selection of animal nutrition and health products. Please support them.

### Sponsors

I would like to thank all our sponsors from this year

*CKD Galbraith*

*Tithebarn*

*Oban Times*

*Scottish Farmer*

*Farmers Guardian*

*Biobest*

*Allflex*

*And all our other supporters*

Their generous support to the society is greatly appreciated and we hope to repeat similar in the future.

### Raffle

We were delighted with the tremendous prizes we received for our raffle this year – especially the 7 tomb stone feeders from Ritchie Equipment (Forfar). We hope to repeat another raffle again in the future – proceeds from this year's will be going to Cancer Research, the society and clubs.

### Journal

I have started to collate articles for the 2012 journal if any of you have any reports from 2011 you wish to see included or any thoughts on the journal please let me know at your earliest.

### Next year

We look forward to 2012 attending various events throughout the country, a busy show and sale season and potentially a presence at Eurotier in November. We will continue to develop and promote the breed and hope that our continued promotion in the local, national and international media will long continue.

I would like to thank Janet and Nicola for all their hard work, cheery disposition and enthusiasm in the office and we all look forward to 2012 in promoting the breed and the society.

As always we welcome any members to visit the office in Stirling – the kettle is always on.

I wish you a very merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

*Be proud of your breed!*



Included in this newsletter

- Stock Bull form – please return this form if you want your stock bull to be published in the yellow pages in the 2012 journal.
- Osmonds booklet

The office will be closed from 22<sup>nd</sup> December to 28<sup>th</sup> December 2011 and 30<sup>th</sup> December to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012.



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*Reply from Michael Poland*

## Highland Cattle at a Crossroads?

Jim McConachie is right to be concerned about the future of the breed. Indeed, I believe the outlook is worse than he portrays. Firstly, I think there will soon be customer resistance to the rise in beef slaughter prices since February, especially as those private sector pensioners face a permanent and unavoidable progressive reduction in their purchasing power. Secondly, unless dependent solely upon family labour, few owners of suckler herds of any breed can be making a viable profit.

But are Jim's solutions, vis-à-vis the Highland Cattle Society, correct? With respect to him, I don't think so.

The first question to ask ourselves is why does the Society exist? At its foundation meeting in 1884 it was agreed that its object would be "to maintain the purity of the breed known as Highland Cattle and to establish a Herd Book in which to register their pedigrees." 127 years later its first objective is now "to preserve and safeguard the Highland Cattle Breed and ensure its sustainable continuance as an important icon of rural Scotland's heritage, culture and art." Jim's proposal is in breach of that object and would undoubtedly result in the Society being removed from the Register of Scottish Charities with all the undesirable consequences.

The question we therefore need to ask ourselves is: "How can we improve the commercial viability of the Highland Cattle Breed without compromising the Breed's essential characteristics?" There is ample scope to do this and, importantly, still leave room for hobby owners/breeders who are vital ingredients in underpinning pedigree sale prices.

I believe this aim can be achieved by:

- The Society and its Judges recognising that the Highlander is primarily a beef animal
- Selective breeding from existing Herd Book stock to improve the Highlander's commercial carcass value, both for size and grading
- Breeding out costly faults, such as poor temperament, poor feet, poor nursing ability, poor teats and udders etc
- Breeders embracing the concept of EBVs
- Management measures improving fertility, reducing calving intervals, and shortening the calving period
- Breeders pursuing more aggressive culling policies for uneconomical cattle, in particular poor quality and or quantity producers, or consistently barren
- Start bulling heifers as two year olds - veterinary opinion is in favour of it yet only tradition and culture resists
- Routine pre-season examination of bulls for fertility, mobility and general fitness

- Bull inspections which concentrate on gradings to inform perspective purchasers as opposed to compulsory disqualifications
- Bull beef finishing at 19-20 months instead of steers at 28-30 months

We are now pursuing the last policy by accident! So far we are achieving better grades for the young bulls, and higher prices from wholesalers, thereby saving the additional 10 months keep costs which include a winter's supplementary feeding.

Breeding out-crosses is now a must for most sizeable breeders. If, however, we are to abide by the founding principles and maintain our charitable status, out-crosses, even on a once-and-for-all basis as suggested by Jim, cannot and should not be eligible for the Herd Book. The only exception could be under its existing Appendix rules, which allow for females found to be of true Highland type but of unproven pedigree.

What then should be the Society's role, accepting there must be no violation of its responsibility to uphold the Breed Standard or breach its objectives? Firstly, it can recognise that the Highlander is essentially a beef animal and embrace that concept in its culture by steering Fieldsmen and Judges towards it. Secondly, it can compile an information bank of out-cross experiences and bull selection as a reference source for those seeking advice on best practices for Highland out-crosses. Thirdly, it can be more stringent on bio-security at breed sales. In the last two years I have imported both BVD and Johne's from Oban purchases. Also with a large private purchase which had received negative blood tests as a pre-purchase condition only for the cattle to be later identified as IBR positive! At the sales, Elite status or privately tested are insufficient by themselves and do not prevent the spread of disease at the sales venues themselves. The situation could be considerably improved if, in addition to elite status or private testing, the Society insisted on vaccinations against BVD and marker vaccinations against IBR for all stock, and faeces testing for Johne's for that over two years old. Although such a policy would not entirely eradicate the problems, it would save the breeders considerable further expenditure or losses.

I do not think this paper proposes a cure-all policy for the future, but it should answer many of Jim's concerns. If breeders were to follow the suggestions, there would be a tangible improvement in the economic viability of the breed without compromising its characteristics. The Highlander, as we know and love it, would continue as "the most beautiful breed" of cattle as asserted at the 1884 foundation meeting. I hope that this can be regarded as a constructive contribution to the debate which Jim has so bravely initiated.

### The President and Council Members of the Highland Cattle Society.

*I read with great interest the previous issue of the Newsletter, and there are some points on which I would like to comment.*

#### **1. The reintroduction of Bull Inspections.**

I am sure that all of the council members and fieldsmen will be aware of the fact that this is the fourth attempt at such a scheme and will have looked into the reasons why none of them achieved what they set out to do. That was to improve the overall standard of bulls coming to the breed sales. In my opinion the main fault was the failure to appreciate the fact that good bulls are bred and how much they are fed or how they may appear at any particular point in time will have little or no affect on their ability to produce quality stock. Visual appraisal alone will do little to improve the standard of bulls within the breed. Secondly, in my opinion, was the fact that the long established and successful breeders of that time were not prepared to set a high standard and all too often brought inferior bulls forward to the sales which might have looked the part but all too often fell well short off the mark.

If there is a genuine desire to improve the overall standard within the Highland Breed you have to look at the big - picture and the females have to be brought into the equation after all we are considered to be a cow breed. To make a visual assessment of any bull without inspecting the dam and any of her offspring or close relations would be wrong. The introduction of E B V should be a compulsory part of any bull inspection. The other part of the overall picture is that we are a hill-breed and careful consideration must always be given to the wide-ranging conditions in which the Highland breed is kept. There is a growing demand throughout Europe for real hill cattle to graze high pastures. This is where the Highland Breed comes into its own and this must never be lost sight of. There are plenty of low-ground breeds that are ideally suited to a range of low ground conditions: there is only one Highland Breed. To conclude I have to asked myself this question: Have any of our council members or fieldsmen been listening to what Dr. Basil Lowman has had to say regarding the ideal hill cow at our Highland Gathering in 2010 or at our recent Open Day visit to Glenturret? My main concern is with regard to Bull Inspections, that the society will spend a great deal of time and money and at the end of the day achieve nothing.

#### **2. A Member's View**

That is the other part of the Newsletter, which caught my attention. It disappoints me to think that there is someone so dissatisfied with all aspects of The Highland Breed. I would like to respectfully suggest, that if the writer considers size to be the be all and end all in cattle breeding, he puts his money where his mouth is. He suggests using genetics from another breed: this is not a new concept. The late Mr. David Cameron of Severie was suggesting the very same concept over fifty years ago. When one considers the foundation of the Luining Breed, it was nothing other than the grading up of the Highland female with the Beef Shorthorn fixing type and maximising the use of hybrid vigour. If the writer wishes

to go down this route he should do so and bring his females back into the Herd Book through the appendix register. I do agree with the writer when he suggests looking elsewhere in the world for Highland Cattle that could help broaden the genetics available within the breed. I have recently spent some time in Canada and the United States visiting with Highland breeders many of whom are breeding cattle with size that exceeds most of the cattle in our country. I would be more than willing to advise anyone, who might be interested, as to where they can be found

At the recent Bundesrasseschau in Cloppenburg, Germany, I saw several good bulls as big as any right-minded Highland breeder would want to use. They also had the conformation and breed character. But do we really need to look overseas for improvement? At the recent Dalmally and City of Glasgow International Highland Cattle Shows there were three-year-old heifers as big as any I have seen. The cow class at the Glasgow Show was by far the finest seen at any show for many years and a credit to all the breeders. The quality of our breed is not quite as bad as the writer is suggesting.

The reference made in relation to the quality of some of the bulls forward at recent Oban sales I would have to agree with and his own entry would have to be included in his criticism only being able to command a price of 1000gs, well below the cost of production. I have said on many occasions, that unless established and experienced breeders set a very high standard in the bulls, they bring forward to our breed sales, we must not criticise those breeders with less experience.

I would like to respectfully suggest to the writer to spend some time in real Highland Cattle country, where the true worth of the Highland breed can be assessed whether it be a pedigree fold or in a crossing programme. It is in hill-country that the Highland Breed can excel and have to be bred to suite the particular conditions, where cattle are never housed. And the ability to convert low quality inexpensive food into energy and ultimately beef is of the utmost importance.

I am of the opinion that in the forty-eight years, I have been involved with the Highland-Breed; great improvements have been made in the overall quality.

The popularity of the breed throughout the world has never been greater.

At long last the Highland steer is no longer being looked at as an inconvenience. When bred correctly and treated well, the beef will now command a premium price.

The demand for well bred x Highland Females is at an all time high, in my opinion the ultimate hill cow. To this end one would have to come to the conclusion that someone has been doing something right.

Good cattle breeders will always endeavour to breed better cattle, whether it is conformation, feed conversion, structure, or size. But ultimately this must be left up to the individual breeder, to decide depending on their own particular circumstances.

I do believe the Highland breed has a great role to play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as long as breeders are positive and proactive.

*Yours sincerely,  
Angus Mackay*

# 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL GATHERING – NEW ZEALAND

Arrangements are proceeding for November 2014. It is likely that the main event will be early to mid-November. New Zealand is a picture at the moment. We are in the last month of Spring and the country is a picture of green, lambing and calving all but over and harvesting and all other farming activities are in full swing, so there will be much to see and enjoy throughout the country. The temperatures are generally between 15 and 25 degrees, so it is a really nice time of the year to travel around.

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Keep an eye on [www.highlandcattlesociety.com](http://www.highlandcattlesociety.com) for  
more information

## *Alan Kennedy's Winter Fair Champion*

Alan Kennedy's Champion bullock 525 kgs sold at 2.20 pence per kilo and his 2nd bullock weighing @520 kgs sold at 210 pence per kilo. The Benmore bullocks from Mrs Emma Paterson averaged @ £1.80 per kilo.



## *Star of the Future Highland Heifer from Young & Brown*

Ishbel of Battle Court - February born champion heifer at Forfar Mart's Stars of the future competition on Saturday 19th November. The heifer, from Messrs Young & Brown and brought out by Roddy McNaughton is by Fraser of Callachally and out of Victoria of Battle Court



David Dickson with one of his many pieces of Silverware from the Oban show.



Mhairi Dempster – this year's winner of the Craigowmill Trophy for best young handler throughout the year.