



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Breeding Programme

Herdbook of the Society

The Herd Book of Highland Cattle registrations shall include particulars of the pedigrees of Highland cattle eligible to be entered and such other information as the Board of Trustees may from time to time decide.

Aims of the Highland Cattle Society

The aims of the Highland Cattle Society breeding programme are:

- The preservation of the breed known as Highland cattle; and
- To improve the breed and breeding practices.

Breed characteristics and desired traits

Head - As a rule, it is most proportionate to the body of the animal, and is broad between the eyes, while short from the eyes to the point of the muzzle. The forelock between the eyes should be wide, long and bushy, and any nakedness or bareness there is certain to detract from the appearance of the animal.

Eyes - should be bright and full. When viewed sideways, there should be a proportionate breadth of the jawbones readily observable, when compared with the width of the head in front, whilst the muzzle should, when looked at from a similar point, be short, though very broad in front, and with the nostrils fully distended, and indicating breeding in every way.

Horns - in the **bulls**, the horns should be strong, and come level out of the head, slightly inclining forwards, and also slightly rising towards the points. The lack of the appearance of substance or “sappiness” about the horns of the male would be very much against the animal in the show-yard.

The horns of the **cow**, come squarer out from the head than in the male, rise sooner, and are somewhat longer, though they preserve their substance and a rich reddish appearance to the very tips. The other taste is that for a female, the horns of which come more level from the head, with a peculiar back set curve, and very wide sweep.

Neck - should be altogether clear and without dewlap below. It should form a straight line from the head to the shoulder in the cow, but in the bulls should have that distinct crest common to all animals of the bovine species. This crest should come gracefully down to the roots of the horns, and, being well coated with wavy hair, the masculine appearance of the animal is fully completed.

The Highland Cattle Society SCIO, Stirling Agricultural Centre, Stirling FK9 4RN

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Shoulders - should be thick and should fill out greatly as it descends from the point to the lower extremity of the forearm.

Back, body and hind-quarters - from behind the shoulder the back should be fully developed and beautifully rounded. Any slight sinking or hollow is most decidedly objectionable. It should be as straight as possible, and the ribs should spring boldly out and be both well rounded and deep. When measured across the hips the breadth should be very great, and the quarters should be exceedingly well developed from the hips backwards. The thighs should also be well developed and should show great fullness. The quarters should be square between the hips and the tail, and from between the tail right down to between the hind feet. The legs, both before and behind, should be short and strong, the bones strong, broad, and straight, the hoofs well set in and large, and the legs well feathered with hair. The animal should be set wide between the fore-legs, and it should move with great dignity and style, as this is considered to be one of the most reliable evidences of careful and true breeding.

Hair - there should be a great profusion it should be long and gracefully waved. To have a curl is to possess a decided fault.

Colour - the usual colours are black, brindle, red, yellow, white and dun.

Skin - the thickness of the skin comes in for a considerable amount of attention, but it has to be borne in mind always that the Highlander has been adapted by nature to withstand great exposure.

Desired traits -

- Docile Temperament
- Ease of calving
- Locomotion and mobility
- Growth Rate
- Hardiness
- Longevity

Highlanders are slower maturing calving at 3 or 4 years old. Steers should typically finish at twenty-four to forty months depending on management. A slower growth is acceptable when used in environmental improvement schemes.

Defects and deformities

Mouth – teeth must make proper contact with the dental pad of the upper jaw.

Hernia – there should be no sign of either an inguinal or umbilical hernia.

Feet – there should be no signs of abnormal positioning of the feet or badly formed/cracked hooves.

Legs – there should be no sign of any of abnormal positioning or gait.

Eyes – there should be no evidence of cataract or microphthalmia.

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Geographical territory and breeding population

This breeding programme of the Highland Cattle Society is carried out within the United Kingdom including Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

There are breeders of Highland Cattle in the following countries: Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, France, Switzerland and Norway. There are also breeders of Highlanders in Luxembourg, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Faroe Islands. Breeders from the UK can import animals and they can subsequently be registered into the Herd Book once DNA Testing has taken place.

In the United Kingdom the total number of registered breeding females are 2,828 and 2,516 registered breeding males. This is according to information received from Defra UK Breed at Risk Register (UK BAR), October 2019.

System for identifying breeding animals

All animals will be identified in compliance with Union animal health law and will be identified on the Society's database by the following:

- Fold (Herd) name
- Animal name
- Ear tag numbers
- Cattle passport identification details

Registration of animals and recording pedigrees

Highland Cattle Society members register their animals via the Society's website and by paper registration. We currently use the Pedigree Plus system for recording and registration. Pedigree Plus is a computer programme to assist in the administration and registration of Highland Cattle.

Rules

- All registered Males and Females are entered into our Herd book
- The Society will not accept an entry in the Herd Book by a person or their authorised agent who is not a full annual, honorary or life member of the Society
- The breeder of an animal means a member of the Society who at the time the animal is born is the bona fide owner of the dam of the animal. In the case of embryo calves the bona fide owner of the embryo at the time the calf is born will be deemed to be the breeder
- Any member may withdraw the registration of any animal of which he is the bona fide owner and instruct the Society to accept no further registrations from the named animal
- All calves must be tagged within the statutory period
- The Society will enter into the breeding book, animals of the same breed, line or cross that are eligible for entry under the Society's breed criteria, without discrimination on account of their country of origin

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Birth notifications

Birth registrations should be notified to the Society's office as soon after birth as possible and the following should be provided:

The following should be notified to the office as soon as possible:

- Calf name
- Type of registration eg. Pedigree, Birth Notification, Appendix A or Appendix B
- Calf ear tag number
- Date of birth
- Colour
- Whether the animal is a twin
- Sex of the other twin
- Dam ear tag Number
- Sire ear tag number
- Notification of whether crop ear is applicable

The Board of Trustees reserve the right to refuse the notification of birth of a calf where the data provided is deemed to be deficient or inaccurate.

The fact of an animal being a twin or otherwise one of a multiple birth shall be notified to the Society on a birth registration document stating the sex of the other twin or other calves and which shall be mentioned in the Herd Book against the registration entry of such animal.

Bull registration

No bull can be registered in the Herd Book under the age of 14 months and every bull eligible for registration must have a satisfactory Veterinary Certificate. The mouth, testicles and locomotion are all checked and verified by vet before approval of registration.

All bull calves must be notified to the Society in the year of birth. Breeders who require a veterinary inspection for a bull should apply to the Society for an inspection certificate in good time.

Bull DNA Profiling

All Highland bulls used for pedigree breeding must be DNA profiled and a DNA profile certificate number must be lodged with the Society. The Society reserves the right to request DNA samples from any bull for DNA testing. Hair sampling is currently used by members. DNA Testing is undertaken by Neogen. Tissue sampling will be introduced, for all members, from 2021.

On receipt of the completed bull registration form, vet inspection form and appropriate bull registration fee the Pedigree Plus system will be updated to a status of pedigree. Only once the DNA profile certificate has been received in the office will the DNA status be upgraded on

Pedigree Plus to show that the bull is fully registered and the Certificate of Pedigree which includes the DNA certificate number will be issued to the owner.

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DNA kits are held in the office and sent out with vet certificates (and a stamped and addressed envelope) free of charge.

Veterinary certificates

Veterinary Certificates are required as a condition for the registration of a pedigree bull in the Herd Book. This confirms the general health and well-being of the bull with reference to mouth, eyes, testicles, feet and locomotion. This ensures that each bull has been checked and verified.

Crop Ear – cattle with Crop Ear will be accepted into the Herd book. Bulls with Crop Ear **must** be notified to the Society. It is considered good practice to notify the Society for females, however it is not a requirement.

Bulls with Crop Ear registered after 18th October 1992 can be identified in the Herd Book.

Zootechnical certificates

The Highland Cattle Society will issue an identity document for each pedigree registered animal stating the breed, breeder, owner, name of animal, date of birth, sex, Herd Book identity, Society method of marking animal, EU identity, and 3 generation pedigree.

On the entry of an animal in the Herd Book or the Appendix Register the Society shall issue to the member a zootechnical certificate containing all the information about that said animal set out in precisely that style and format.

Import of animals and germinal products

Imported animals will be allowed into the Herd Book.

Imported cattle and embryos must be accompanied by a zootechnical certificate together with a DNA profile certificate from the Herd Book of country of origin.

Export of animals

Animals for export will be accompanied by a Zootechnical Certificate issued by the Highland Cattle Society. In the case of exports from the U.K. a Zootechnical Certificate will only be issued for an animal which has been fully registered with the Highland Cattle Society.

Zootechnical certificates will be issued in respect of cattle for export if the animal is fully registered and paid up in accordance with Appendix A – Article 3 in the Highland Cattle Society Bye Laws, providing the application is accompanied by the Export Pedigree Certificate fee currently determined by the Board of Trustees.

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Artificial Insemination and Embryo Transplant

Imported semen

The use of imported semen within the Herd Book is allowed. A valid zootechnical certificate from the breed society of the country of origin together with a DNA profile is required.

Fertilised Ovum Transplant (FOT)

Cattle born as a result of the transplantation of a fertilised ovum shall be eligible for registration in the main Herd Book or Appendix Registers of the Society subject to the conditions agreed by the HCS Board of Trustees, set out below.

General

- No calf born by FOT will be registered in the Highland Cattle Society Herd Book unless all the conditions, as below, have been fully satisfied
- Members intending to use FOT should first contact the Society Office so that the eligibility of the animals can be verified, and advice given on the administrative procedures to be followed

Conditions – Donor Cow

The donor cow must be a pedigree registered Highland female registered in the Highland Cattle Society Herd Book. All donor females must be DNA profiled.

Conditions – Sire

The sire must be a pedigree registered Highland bull or semen from a pedigree registered Highland bull:

- Registered in the Highland Cattle Society Herd Book
- Be DNA profiled

Note - Imported semen from a pedigree Highland bull and DNA profiled will also be eligible providing the bull is registered in the Main Herd Book of the exporting country's Highland Herd Book.

The recipient dam

The recipient dam must be identified with an ear tag number and breed. The identification must be recorded in the Highland Cattle Society FOT documentation mentioned below.

Procedure for embryo registration

- Each embryo which is either frozen or implanted is to be registered with the Society by the Embryo Transplant (ET) Unit on behalf of the owner of the dam by the submission of the following:

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- An Embryo Registration Form completed and signed by the Veterinary Officer who carried out the flushing
- The Embryo Registration Form is to arrive at the registered office of the Society within 21 days of the embryo(s) being flushed
- A copy of the Embryo Registration Form is to be retained by the owner of the donor dam (the Breeder's copy) and one copy submitted to the HCS. A further copy of the Embryo Registration Form is to be retained for record purposes by the ET Unit which carried out the flushing (the ET Unit's copy)

DIY Embryo Transplant

For any calves born as a result of 'do-it-yourself' embryo transplant the flushing details should be forwarded to the Society office within 30 days of flushing or implanting and when the resultant calves are born they are to be registered within seven days of birth. Inspections of the relevant calves may be carried out. If registrations are received after the seven-day period an inspection will be carried out at the breeder's expense.

Registration procedure of an FOT Calf

Registration of an FOT calf will be accepted by the Society upon receipt of the following documents:

- A completed FOT Birth Registration form
- A minimum of one calf per flush will be parentage verified by DNA hair sampling. The Society office will nominate this calf after the birth form papers have been correctly completed and accepted. In the case of imported or transferred embryos all the resultant calves will be parentage verified. Where a breeder chooses to use more than one sire on a single flush, all the resulting progeny will be parentage verified by DNA hair sampling
- The relevant registration fee

Changes to circumstances

The Society should be informed of the following changes of circumstances as soon as they occur:

- In the case of a frozen embryo: transfer of ownership, embryo thawed and implanted, and embryo destroyed
- In the case of a recipient dam: transfer of ownership or death
- In the case of an FOT calf: loss of calf if this occurs at any time prior to registration. (These details are required for record purposes only.)
- Changes of circumstance are to be notified on an embryo amendment form FOT calves may be withdrawn from the Herd Book before 12 months of age for a full refund of the registration fee (only if still in the ownership of the breeder registering the calf and when the pedigree certificate is returned to the Society office)

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Export of embryos

All embryos intended for export will be accompanied by an Export Certificate and a Zootechnical Certificate issued by the Highland Cattle Society. In the case of exports from the UK an Export Certificate and Zootechnical Certificate will only be issued for an embryo which has been registered with the Highland Cattle Society.

Importation of embryos

An imported frozen embryo may be registered with the Highland Cattle Society on submission of the following:

- An authorised Export Certificate and Zootechnical Certificate issued by the Herd Book of the exporting country
- DNA profiles for the sire and dam of the embryo
- The Highland Cattle Society will not register any imported frozen embryo nor accept into the Herd Book the progeny resulting from any such importation unless the requirements above have been complied with and all other Society and Government regulations applying to the importation of pedigree embryos have been strictly followed

Thereafter the progeny resulting from an imported frozen embryo may be registered with the Highland Cattle Society in accordance with the paragraphs above.

Selection and Breeding Objectives

The main objectives of the Breeding Programme are:

- To protect the unique hardiness of the breed
- To be able to thrive on poorer quality land contributing to biodiversity through the increase in invertebrate life and the capture of carbon through the increase in organic matter
- Stimulating and feeding fungi, soil bacteria and worms providing an all the year-round food for a life cycle right up to birds of prey
- To protect their low input characteristics
- To provide employment in less favoured areas
- To enhance the tourist experience by maintaining the grand and picturesque appearance of the Highlander
- To produce a beef product of the highest quality
- To maintain the showground popularity of the Highland breed

Only Registered cattle, that conform to the Breed Standard of the Highland Cattle Society, should be bred from. This will ensure continual improvement and purity of the Highland Breed.

Performance testing and genetic evaluation (livestock performance)

The society does not undertake any performance testing. However, we do have all bulls DNA tested.

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Division of Herd book

The Highland Cattle Society Herd Book is comprised of a main section and two appendices.

Main section

To qualify for entry into the Main Section of the herd book, an animal shall be:

- Descended from parents and grandparents entered in the Highland Cattle Society Herd Book or another EU Herd Book for the Highland breed
- Identified at birth according to the rules of the Herd Book; and
- Have a pedigree established in accordance with the rules of the herd book

Appendix B registration

An Appendix B cow will be of a good Highland type and conform to breed standards. Photographs of the females head clearly showing the ear tag number and a side on photograph of the whole body of the animal must have been approved by a dedicated Trustee Member before the registration can be accepted into the herd book.

Appendix B females may be of unknown origin on one or both sides of the pedigree when applied for. They must be free of any defect or deformity and to be correct in all considerations of character, colour, locomotion, growth and conformation. The female progeny of Appendix B animals are eligible to enter the Appendix A register providing the animal is sired by a pedigree, registered Highland Bull.

Appendix A registration

Appendix A animals are female progeny from an Appendix B female and must be sired by a pedigree, registered highland bull.

The only exception is a highland female whose sire and dam are registered on the Highland Cattle Society database, but the breeder is not a member of the Highland Cattle Society, but a fully paid up member of the Highland Cattle Society now owns the animal and wishes to register it within the Herd Book.

No male progeny out of appendix cows are eligible for registration into the Herd Book.

Females entered in the appendix register are not eligible for use as donor cows for fertilised ovum transfers.

Female cattle entered in the Appendix registers include animals that have been accepted into a grading up system.

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Appendix animals at sales

All cattle from the Appendix Register entered at Society Sales shall be clearly labelled in the sale catalogue with their grade Appendix A or Appendix B as appropriate.

Appendix animals – show recommendation

The Society has no jurisdiction over show societies in determining the eligibility for Highland Classes with the exception of National Shows. Appendix A and Appendix B animals may be exhibited at shows but must be clearly identified with the appropriate suffix A or B.

Animals are not re-classified within the Herd book once they are added.

Technical activities

DNA Samples are sent to: Neogen, The Dairy School, Auchincruive, Ayr. KA6 5HU

Rules of procedure

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction you raise about something done or not done by or on behalf of the Highland Cattle Society.

This complaints process is to resolve complaints that a member of the Society, another organisation or member of the general public raises with the Society. It does not apply to decisions made by, or proper to, The Board of Trustees. Those matters will be dealt with by the Trustees in accordance with the Highland Cattle Society Constitution.

We will ensure that the complaint is:

- Treated seriously
- Handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- Treated confidentially

Complaints should be made as soon as possible and within 3 months of the event or decision that is being complaint about. Facts are generally easier to establish closer to the event. But the Society will look into complaints made after that if circumstances prevented you from making the complaint sooner. Complaints should be made to:

- The Breed Secretary, unless the complaint is about that person, in which case,
- The President, unless the complaint is about that person, in which case,
- The Vice-President.

If the complaint is made to another Board member, they will give the details of the complaint to one of the above as appropriate.

The complaint can be oral or in writing and the Society will need to be informed of:

- What the complainer thinks went wrong
- What the complainer thinks the Society should do to put it right

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When someone else complains on behalf of the complainer we will require written confirmation from the complainer saying that they agree to act on behalf of the complainer.

Complaints process

- A written complaint must be sent to The Highland Cattle Society, Stirling Agricultural Centre, Stirling. FK9 4RN and will be acknowledged within 2 working days, whether the complaint is written or verbal, the Society will always let the complainer know to expect a substantive reply within 30 days. The complaint will be recorded in our complaints tracker and the complainer will be told who is handling the complaint.
- Generally, the Breed Secretary will inform the President and Vice-President of the complaint and the date by which a response is due. They will then undertake a thorough review to establish all relevant facts.
- Where the matter can be resolved informally and with the complainer's agreement, the Breed Secretary will do so within 30 days of the complaint and notify the President and Vice-President.
- Where the matter cannot be resolved as above, three Board members (the Panel), unconnected with the complainer and the subject matter of the complaint where possible, will be selected by the President/Vice President, to decide the outcome of the complaint. The Panel will ask the Breed Secretary for a written report setting out all relevant evidence, and recommendations. They will consider the issues afresh and gather any further evidence they need. The Panel will aim to inform the complainer of the conclusions, their reasons and any proposed actions within 30 days of the complaint. If that is not possible, they will be informed of the revised date which should only exceptionally be longer than 40 days.
- Where the complaint is about the Vice-President or other member(s) of The Board, the President will acknowledge the complaint and let the complainer know when to expect a reply. They will also appoint 2 members of the Board to form the Panel with them and the process set out above will be followed. The written report, as above, may be carried out by one of the Panel, if the Panel so decides.
- Where the complaint is about the President, the Vice-President will take the President's role.

If we receive an anonymous complaint, we will look into the issues as far as possible in the same way.

Appealing the decision

If the complainer is unhappy with the outcome of the review of the complaint, they will have 1 month to ask for a further review. Three different members of the Board, unconnected with the complainer and the subject matter of the complaint where possible, will be appointed to a Review Panel. They will look at how the first review was handled, and specifically if it:

- Addressed the issues of the complaint
- Fixed any issues for the future
- Conveyed the outcome clearly and
- Was thorough and fair

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They will aim to let the complaint know the outcome within 30 days. This will be the Society's final response to the complaint.

The outcome of all complaints will be recorded in the Society's complaints tracker, and we will consider how to improve things for the future, where appropriate.

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