



Highland Cattle Club of Wales Newsletter

Issue 50 - Spring 2012



www.hccw.org.uk

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*A forum for sharing your
Highland Cattle
experiences, questions,
comments, photos etc*

A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

As we move into a new calving season I would like to wish you all a very good 2012. The club is thriving and we welcomed our 60th members, Peter and Sue Smith, at the Christmas Dinner. I am pleased to report that there were more members than ever before at the dinner this year, 34 altogether. Thank you for coming, it was lovely to see you all.

There are a few committee changes this year. The club has a new treasurer, James Williamson, who took over at the AGM. Charles Morgan has stepped down and we would like to thank him for his help and imaginative ideas during his time on the committee. Llinos Ford was co-opted onto the committee to give younger members of HCCW a voice, and has already come up with a plan to expand the club's social media profile.

The Club has various events to look forward to this year, having had a rather quiet year last year. There will be a day of practising washing and showing techniques at Gilden Vale Fold on 5th May with Angela and Duncan Handley (phone 01981 550096 to book). Aimed at the novice show-er, numbers will be limited, so book early! The May Fold are having an Open Day on 9th September at which Geoff and Annie hope to hold a demonstration of cow classification. Further details will follow. We hope everyone will find something attractive in this programme and the committee look forward to seeing you there.

I have attended the British Cattle Breeders Conference, the Oban Bull sale and Highland Cattle Society AGM since Christmas: at the beginning of March I am off to Beef Expo in Dungannon, Belfast. I shall keep you posted.....



A warm welcome to the following new members:

Peter and Ghillie Clark

Corndean, Moelygarth, Welshpool, SY21 9DA
01938 5533810

Valerie Gipps (Glaslyn Fold)

Dolgau, Llanwrthwl, Powys, LD1 6NU
01597 810067

Beverly Evans and Simon Hill

Gwarfelin Isaf, Merthyr Cynog, Brecon, LD3 9SG
01874 690483

Hilary Kehoe

Tyddyn Isaf, Tal y Bont, Bangor, LL57 3YE
01248 370244

Sue and Pete Smith (Stockley Fold)

Dorefield House, Peterchurch, Hereford, HR2 0SF
07810 873863

Cover photo taken by Mo Morgan

NEWS

Oban Show and Sale ~ February 2012

The Oban Bull sale saw a good selection of beasts in the ring. The champion was three year old Bentalla 2nd of Mottistone, sold for 3,700 guineas to the new President, Charlie Bruce. Eion Ruadh of Glengorm fetched the top price of 10,000 guineas and many animals went to Finland, France and Estonia. A full report of the sale may be found on the HCS website and in the next newsletter.

At the HCS AGM, a proposal that the Society stop looking into bull assessment was passed with 49 votes in favour. We will never know the actual view of the Society as the question cannot now be decided by all the members.

Liz McCombe

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Royal Welsh Spring Festival ~ 19th & 20th May 2012

Known to most of us at the Smallholders Show, the Club will be taking its usual stand at Builth in May. Members will be showing cattle for the second year and we hope to have a good turnout. If you are at the show, please come and see us. If you are able to, bring a plate of food and join us for a club social on the stand on Saturday evening.

Liz McCombe

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AGM & Christmas Dinner 2012

The committee are looking for ideas for this year's AGM and Christmas dinner, and are considering trying a Christmas lunch instead of the usual evening meal. Please let us have your thoughts - whether you would prefer a daytime or evening social. We would also like to have your suggestions for possible venues, as we would like to try different locations around the country, so that as many members as possible have the opportunity to attend. It may seem like a long way off, but please send your comments or suggestions to Mo or Liz (contact details on page 15).

Schmallenberg Virus (SBV)

Please be aware that a new livestock virus that causes birth defects and miscarriages in cattle, sheep and goats has been confirmed on farms in south and east England, spreading west into Gloucestershire and Cornwall.

This disease first emerged in the Netherlands and Germany in August 2011 and is thought to be spread by midges. Very little is known about it: there is no antibody test as yet and adult animals that contract it apparently recover (subsequently possibly being sold abroad). It is not yet a notifiable disease in the UK but farmers have been urged to report any suspicious cases. Officials suggest that the risk to human beings from the virus is very low.

Symptoms include reduced milk yield, lack of appetite, loss of body condition and, principally in Dutch herds, diarrhoea. Outbreaks of the disease typically last 2-3 weeks, and individual affected adult animals recover over several days. Miscarriages and stillbirths associated with congenital (present at birth) abnormalities affecting mainly sheep but cattle and goats have also been observed.

Additional information/articles may be found on the following links:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla/2012/01/23/schmallenberg-virus-results-uk-testing/>

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla/2012/01/12/schmallenberg-virus/>

Liz McCombe

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Chelford Show and Sale ~ Saturday 28th April 2012

Please note: All animals being entered in the pedigree section at the show and sale at Chelford must be **tested** for IBR and BVD and not vaccinated as stated in covering letter. Any queries please contact Hazel at Highland Cattle Society office.

Schedule available from: Frank Marshall & Co, Auctioneers
01625 861122 - www.frankmarshall.co.uk

SHOW TIME - Once you get to the show

Are you planning to show your cattle this year?

Following a request for advice on what to do when you get to a show for the first time, Becky Rowlands has put together a few pointers for any newcomers to the show ring.

Cattle ready and loaded, everything in the back of the truck.

White coats in.

Show halters in.

Some hay and straw. (Day shows don't provide straw normally. The bigger shows normally supply, but you might want to take some as well to make a good bed. You have token straw at the Royal Welsh depending how many cattle you have entered.)

Water buckets, some food.

Don't forget the shampoo and brushes. They do like to make a mess of themselves in the trailer, even after all your hard work.

Right, you're ready to leave.

Show passes... tick

Passports... tick

Packed lunch and flask (Don't forget yourselves, ha ha).

There are plenty of us showing. Try to contact one of us beforehand, so you have a contact on arrival to help point you in the right direction.

Plan your journey. Try to be at the show a good hour at least before judging starts, so you've got longer to relax and find your feet. For the like of the Royal Welsh, we normally get there on the Saturday, but you can go in on the Sunday. Again check on your schedule for the time of arrival.

They sometimes take the passports at the gate, or you go to Secretary's tent which is normally not far from the cattle lines. Also pick up your number for your cattle at the same time. I find writing

the cow's name on the back of the number makes life easier.

The lines are normally marked for your breed and your name. Just ask if you're not sure, we're all friendly enough.

Once you've settled your cows and had a chat with various other stock persons, find your ring and check the order in which you're in the ring (normally goes with the schedule).

For your first show, if you're entering more than one class, try to give yourself a gap between classes to make life a little easier on yourself. Sometimes the rings are a fare walk from the lines.

Just keep an eye on the others. The steward will come round and let us know when we're in. They try to keep to time, but sometimes rings over run.

Ask or watch how we get them finally ready. We've all got our tricks and ways.

Also keep an eye on how the judge is moving the cattle, so you know what you're doing. Try to go in the ring after a few others to get an idea.

The darling animals of ours do seem to remember where the entrance/exit bit is, so expect them to pull when passing this. Even the best trained do this.

Once showing is done, relax and chat.

If you're lucky enough to win some prize money, some shows give the prize money on the day with the rosette, or it will be at the secretary's tent or where specified, otherwise it will be posted.

Most of all enjoy your day and never worry if your animal is not perfectly behaved. Ask for advice. Even the best handlers have bad days.

Best of luck for the coming season.

Becky

British Cattle Breeders Conference Telford, January 2012

By Liz McCombe

Last year a publication called Cattle Breeder dropped through the door. Incorporating the newsletter of the British Cattle Breeders Club, it carried news of other breeds and developments within cattle farming generally, as well as details of the conference, held at the end of January and open to all farmers.

The conference, with the theme "Responsible Breeding Fit for Future Generations" lasted two days, one aimed at beef producers, the other for dairy farmers. Workshops on genomics and maximising your breed's potential were organised in addition to the full agenda.

At the meeting of Breed Societies animal health status at sales and shows was discussed. Each breed has its own areas of concern and there was some debate over the information included on health cards attached to pens at sales. These cards do not necessarily show the health status of the animal/herd and attempts to standardise information on the cards are proving difficult.

The vet from Export Certification Ltd who attended the breed society meeting, said that 199 new export licences have been agreed, 25 for bovine semen, in the last three years. He also mentioned two approaching diseases, Schmallenberg Virus (SBV) and Cattle Scab. SBV was diagnosed in the East of England in January, having come over from the continent. By the end of February reports had made the mainstream press (the Times, February 27th). More details about SBV may be found on the HCCW website. It is spreading through the south of England, so it is only a matter of time.....

It was confirmed that TB and Johnes, although different diseases, are from a similar family and as a consequence a Johnes blood sample must be taken before a TB test is initiated or there is a small chance of obtaining a Johnes 'false positive' result.

One of the most entertaining and charismatic speakers at the conference was Charlie Walker. As a Nuffield Scholar, Charlie travelled the world studying easier managed beef systems, and has put theory into practice on his beef and sheep farm in the Scottish Borders, producing breeding stock suitable for low input farming systems. He had some useful advice - use hardy stock that don't require much handling (he has Welsh Black cows and Hair sheep) and be ruthless and get rid of any animal with a condition that requires time spent on it.

Other sessions concentrated on genetic improvements, control of disease in the larger herd and breeding success through economies of scale. They were interesting but not directly useful to Highland breeders, who tend not to have great numbers of cattle.

I can recommend the Conference as a useful point of contact for those who can spare a couple of days or even one, at this time of year: all are welcome and there were some fascinating information and insights into how the industry is progressing.

Northern Ireland Beef Expo

By Liz McCombe

Beef Expo 2012 was held in the mart at Dungannon at the beginning of March. Held every two years, and aimed at the commercial farmer, it was well attended this time despite the rain and bitterly cold wind.

People passing the stand were interested in Highland cattle mainly for economic reasons and asked many questions concerning ease of calving, feeding costs and size of carcass. Crossing highland cows with bulls of other breeds was also popular, and several folk said they had a few cows and put them to whatever stock bull they had. All remarked on the ease of calving and speed of growth of these crosses, which generally compared well with other the breeds.

It was a good couple of days, and we felt the profile of the breed was raised significantly. Another popular question was "Where can I get hold of some?" so who knows where this will go next?

TB Testing Rules in England

By Olwen Ford

Jim Paice made a statement at the NFU conference on possible new TB rules that could come into effect in the near future. The first thing to remember is that these changes will affect England, and most of them seem to already be part of everyday life in Wales.

In England there are still varying TB testing areas, some are still on 4 yearly testing, others 2 yearly and the high risk areas are on yearly or every 60 days, if under disease restriction. Areas around present high disease risk will be subject to more frequent testing in the hope of picking the disease up sooner. This strategy is already in use in Wales, as yearly tests apply already, and reduced compensation will also happen for farms which are late testing and subsequently go down with the disease.

It seems that when showing cattle in England there is at present no requirement for the animals to have been tested prior to entering shows where cattle are housed or the show is more than one day. This will no longer be the case, and TB tests for multiple day shows will be required. There has also been an exemption allowing movement off farm if the movement on took place within the previous 30 days.

The most important change proposed is to close the loophole of Single Occupancy Authorities (SOA). DEFRA is looking to change the rules that, at present, allow movement between linked holdings in different TB risk areas. TB testing rules will apply when any movement between different risk SOA premises happen, despite being within a single agricultural business. This loophole is, unfortunately, still open in Wales as the whole country is tested annually.

These rules will bring England up to Wales' stricter controls, with the improvement of controlling movements from high risk areas to lower risk areas.

SHOW DIARY

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Nefyn Annual Show | 7th May |
| Shropshire County Show | 26th May |
| Royal Welsh Spring Festival | 19th - 20th May |
| Royal Bath & West Show | 1st - 4th June |
| Aberystwyth & Ceredigion County Show | 9th June |
| Three Counties Show | 15th - 17th June |
| Royal Highland Show | 21st - 24th June |
| Royal Welsh Show | 23rd - 26th July |
| Cardigan County Show | 1st August |
| Oswestry Show | TBA |
| St Mellons Show | TBA |
| Anglesey Show | 9th - 10th August |
| Chepstow Show | 11th August |
| Llanilar Show | 11th August |
| Lampeter Show | TBA |
| Mid-Somerset Show | 19th August |
| Pembrokeshire Show | 14th - 16th August |
| Denbigh & Flint Show | 16th August |
| Monmouth Show | 30th August |
| Usk Show | 8th September |
| Newbury Show | 15th - 16th September |

Some of the shows in and around Wales during 2012. Shows which have classes specifically for Highland Cattle are shown in **bold** type.

Newsletter Editor Wanted

A volunteer is needed to take on the job of editing the club newsletter. It's not a big job, but it would be a great help to the club. The newsletter is produced three times a year. You don't need to write articles (unless you'd like to), just to put the newsletter together from content that club members and the committee will supply. You will need access to the internet, and preferably Publisher or other DTP software to be able to produce the newsletter in booklet format. The committee will then arrange printing and distribution. You don't need to join the committee or attend meetings (although if you would like to, you would be welcomed). Please contact Mo or Liz (contact details on page 15) if you think you may be able to help or to find out more.



The Three Stooges (otherwise known as Daf, Annie and Geoff) captured at last year's Smallholders Show by Julian Ford!

FOR SALE AND WANTED

Advertisements are free to members, so if you have any livestock, equipment, other items or services for sale or wanted, please use this space. Sales and Wants are also listed on the website: www.hccw.org.uk Please send items for the next issue to Mo Morgan by 15th June 2012.



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Committee Address Book

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DIARY DATES

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 28th April | Chelford Show & Sale (See page 5) |
| 5th May | Show Preparation Day at Gilden Vale Fold (See page 3) |
| 19th & 20th May | Royal Welsh Spring Festival (Smallholders Show) (Club social on Saturday evening - see page 4) |
| 23rd-26th July | Royal Welsh Show |
| 9th September | The May Open Day (Further details to follow) |

Remember to check the club website

www.hccw.org.uk

for the latest news, updates on events,
show diary, adverts and more!

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of HCCW