

# A NOTE FROM



Alice

MARCH 2023  
EDITION

## DEAR MEMBERS

Well, what a month February has been. I can certainly say with confidence that it has consolidated my reasons for wanting to join the Limousin Society and made me feel very proud to be the CEO of this organisation following attendance at Club meetings, member visits and sales.

The important thing about the sales and the club meetings is how many members I have been able to meet. I thank you all for your honesty, trust and candidness in discussing with me your thoughts and views as to how the society should move forward. Watch this space.

The February sales saw a buoyant trade with a record clearance rate of 93% achieved at Stirling, with an average of £6,689, up £940 on the year. The Carlisle sale followed up with an equally impressive clearance rate of 85%, achieving an average of £8,230, up £335 on the year. Breeders bulls were at a premium, underpinned by a solid commercial trade. As well as the opportunity to meet members, I was encouraged by the conversations with commercial buyers who validated their reasons for choosing Limousin.

Congratulations must go to the Marston family who returned to Carlisle after a 10 year break and saw their breeding dream come true, topping the sale with their aptly named

Easegillhead Spoton 45,000gns. It was a real family affair, with daughter Catherine leading the bull and Dad Andrew looking on with pride in the ring. The strong trade created a wonderful atmosphere, and I left the sales feeling optimistic about the breed's future.

Over the water, the trade at Dungannon was supported by the commercial buyers. A clearance rate of 63% was achieved with an average of £3,641, which was marginally up on last year. I am looking forward to meeting the Northern Irish Club members this week at their AGM.

Looking at the live and deadweight trade, Limousin continue to consistently top the local markets which makes me feel a sense of pride knowing it is your breeding accomplishments that fuel these outcomes. Thank you to those members who have personally sent kill sheets following conversations at Club meetings, validating young age at slaughter, top weights and grades and high kill out percentages. These proof points have enormous value in validating the breed's narrative on efficiency.

Following the February Council meeting, I am pleased to share with you the three key areas I will be focusing on in the months and years ahead as we chart the course for the Limousin Breed; these are outlined overleaf.



LIMOUSIN



## Improve

### MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

There is nothing more important to me than the integrity of our breed. To stay competitive, we must have the trust of those buying Limousin, be those farmers, processors or retailers. I have been encouraged by the work of the Council in developing a set of Bye Laws that are there to uphold the integrity of the breed. I view the Bye Laws as our Brand Standards and they rightly serve to create a level playing field for breeders and give confidence to Limousin buyers.

However, listening to your feedback it is evident we can do more to raise awareness of the Bye Laws and communicate more clearly the 'why' behind their introduction. This month I have heard from a number of members who feel that changes to the bye-laws in recent years have been poorly communicated and put them at a disadvantage. I would like to reassure these members I am working closely with your Council on how we can improve communication lines and the introduction of this monthly newsletter is one of the first steps.

Delivering a consistent, responsive service to members is also essential to improving communications with members and I am working diligently to ensure we have a strong team to deliver this going forward.



## Protect

### LIMOUSIN HERD BOOK

Taurus is the foundation of our Society and underpins the operational effectiveness of the Society. It is vital the platform can support the efficient registration of animals for both members and the office team. Understandably, software development has changed considerably in the last decade and much of the underpinning code and structure of Taurus is in desperate need of a revamp.

To deliver this revamp, we have partnered with ag software developers Map of Ag to transfer Taurus on to modern software to future proof the Herd Book and improve the speed of registrations. The Herd Book team are working hard to deliver 'New Taurus' by the end of the summer while tolerating the 'clunky' work arounds they have been challenged with in recent years. I am confident when 'New Taurus' is delivered both members and the office team will feel the benefits.



## Promote

### LIMOUSIN BRAND

As we well know, Limousin cattle are among the most efficient and 'meatiest' in the world. They achieve high meat yields, have less external fat and convert feed efficiently thus, giving you more for your money, whether you are a farmer or a foodie.

I firmly believe we need to remind everyone of the reasons why, for decades, Limousin has been one of the most popular beef breeds in the UK. Increasing communications and the promotion of our breed will open the doors to new opportunities and increase demand and supply of Limousin beef.

With the general public becoming increasingly interested in the origins of and the genetic makeup of the animals they consume, the trust retailers now place on their sourcing partners is significant. We must hold that trust with the utmost importance and, whilst the requirements of Bye Laws may sometimes feel arduous, having these standards in place will help hugely in developing a compelling business case for why processors and retailers should want to partner with us.

What I have learnt over the last four months on the scientific advances you have made on DNA verifications and myostatin genotype data will undoubtedly support us in marketing the breed with complete confidence.

I firmly believe our breed has the environmental and health credentials consumers are looking for, and that gives us an advantage over other beef breeds. This area of focus may be a slower burn, but in the long term I believe it will help turn the tide on the declining share of market for the Limousin breed.

As I hope you can tell, I think there is much to be excited about in the future of our breed but recognise this is a journey we all need to take together. I am delighted to be leading this journey alongside your Council and confident we will deliver. I wish you all a successful March and look forward to meeting with many of you again soon.

Alice Swift

CEO, BRITISH LIMOUSIN CATTLE SOCIETY