

A NOTE FROM



Alice

MAY 2023
EDITION

DEAR MEMBERS

Returning from a week on the road has once again reaffirmed my love of this job.

The upbeat atmosphere amongst breeders and buyers at Stirling and Carlisle was infectious and translated into a flying trade for bulls ready to work. Responding to strong trade for the breed in commercial rings up and down the country, we enjoyed the best of the trading at Stirling with a lead average of £7,182 for 35 - up a massive £2,086 on the year. United Auctions confirmed Anside Santa set a top price record (14,000gns) for a Limousin sold at the May sale; many congratulations to the Irvine family.

Our Northern Ireland members had a flyer at Ballymena with a whopping 98% clearance rate driven by a keen interest from commercial buyers setting a 5,400gns average. This success followed them over the water to Carlisle where Martin Conway and son Shane's Craigatoke Seanog took the intermediate and overall champion in the

pre-sale show and owned the top price of 52,000gns. Almost a third of bulls made five-figures at Carlisle, with a phenomenal average of £9,178 for 80.

It's reassuring to see confidence return to the beef industry and I firmly believe Limousin is commercially the most viable breed in Britain today.

As well as sales preparations, at Concorde House it has been all hands on deck to get your Annual Journal to the printers. As well as the sales summaries, it includes a round up of the 50th celebrations and inspiring features focusing on the lives of our members. I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Alison in my team for all her hard work and contributions putting this together. It will be arriving on your doorsteps from this week, so I hope you enjoy it.

And now for an update on progress against my three commitments...



LIMOUSIN



Improve

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Recent months have been a time of change at Concorde House. We have had colleagues joining the organisation, and colleagues leaving, and I've had many conversations with the society team, the Council and with members about the change needed to drive us forward. Change is hard; it requires an open mind and it's not for everyone, especially when there have been set ways of doing things for a long period of time. But I truly believe it is needed. We can't shy away from the fact that Limousin has lost its number one spot in registrations. This decline isn't driven by the cattle - the animals speak for themselves, and I firmly believe Limousin is commercially the most viable beef breed in the UK (recent trade is testament to this fact). But the bigger picture, the reputation and commercial understanding of all the benefits of Limousin beef, is one we need to focus on and promote. This requires new and different ways of working. That's a shift for the team, and for the members, but I want us all to take this journey together, and that's why I remain focused on clear and effective communication with members.

The feedback I have received by the overwhelming majority suggests there is excitement across members for this approach. I know there are a handful of people who mistrust my motives - I only ask that I am given the chance to deliver over the longer term. I am always happy to discuss my approach and thinking with any member and I love visiting your farms, but I will not be drawn into hateful or abusive exchanges.

I consider myself fortunate that I was raised in a close knit, supportive and loving farming community. It is this feeling of community that has allowed me to thrive in roles in the agri-food industry where I've successfully bridged the gap between farmers and retailers. It is this feeling of community that fuels me when meeting Limousin members and advocates at Sales and Club meetings. I am also heartened by the continued support I receive from our Chairman, Council and team.



Protect

LIMOUSIN HERD BOOK

We're into the final stretch of the mammoth project that has been revamping Taurus. It is the backbone of our society and a huge undertaking, but I am so pleased the resource and finance to deliver this was prioritised by the Council who made the strategic decision to invest. I have

faith in our tech partner Map of Ag to deliver this, given the track record I've seen them deliver for Sainsbury's and Arla supply chains. The aim is to go live in the autumn and I have no doubt this will transform the efficiency of our Herd book service. Transforming systems and process to become a modern, efficiently run business will benefit members and reduce administrative frustrations in the years to come. There's a more detailed article on this project for anyone who wishes to read more about the project and the impact it will have.



Promote

LIMOUSIN BRAND

Breed promotion is what drives my passion and the potential is huge. Six months into role I firmly believe the Limousin breed is commercially the most viable in Britain. Informed genetic selection is delivering outstanding females that are recognised as sustainable modern cows. Genetics also play a significant role in producing beef with a lower carbon footprint, and the F94L gene found naturally in Limousin cattle has been scientifically shown to develop attributes that are environmentally beneficial. Many of you refer to this gene as the "Profit Gene"; to me it is the "Green Gene" and has the potential to improve our appeal and relevance to retail customers today. Limousin can help the industry solve a problem, just like it did those 50 years ago when it brought more meat yield to the industry. It is these same carcass traits that enable Limousin cattle to perform favourably in carbon assessment models that make them attractive to the retail world who have ambitious net zero plans to deliver. You'll hear me talking more about this in the months to come.

As CEO, it's also my job to balance the books for your society. With ample space at Concorde House and excellent meeting facilities the Council and I have been considering ways to use the space to generate revenue. We are now in the final stages of negotiations with a company that will help support with the running of the additional space as a conference centre, the revenue from which will help us deliver the big ambitions we have.

I'm looking forward to the Council meeting 24-25 May with a meaty agenda, and I would encourage you to get in touch with your regional Council representatives to keep up to date with developments.

Wishing you all a marvellous May.

Alice Swift

CEO, BRITISH LIMOUSIN CATTLE SOCIETY