

A NOTE FROM



Alice

JULY 2023
EDITION

DEAR MEMBERS

With the show season well underway, it was a pleasure to attend the Royal Highland Show; and a joy to watch the Limousin classes judged in glorious sunshine (by Michael Cursiter) with a packed ringside. I was in awe of the levels of stockmanship and turnout on display and the buzz around the ring was electric.

Grahams Ruth deserves a special mention, who was tapped out to claim the prestigious overall breed and interbreed Championship, skilfully shown by the notable Lynsey Bett. A three-year-old cow with French breeding, out of dam Gigue (homozygous polled, F94L/F94L) and by Claragh Franco, who was shown with heifer calf, Trixie, at foot. She showed off everything there is to love about the breed - milky, smooth-fleshed and tabletop topline. Limousin dominated the Interbreed classes with a clean sweep, winning all five classes.

In many ways, the Highland show was time out from my day job. It's a joy for me to

spend time spectating and having upbeat conversations with members. It was a realisation of how proud I am to represent the breed and, whilst I'm aware there is a tough road ahead to strengthen the society, I firmly feel we are on the right track.

Thank you to the members who invest time and patience in attending the shows, be it local, county or national level and pedigree or commercial classes. They prove a great opportunity to see the depth and breadth of the breed traits we have and it is always pleasing to see Limousin come out on top.

Beef is what it's all about though, so it was apt that a stone's throw away from the show ring at the Highland was the SRUC mobile sensory booth, where sirloin steaks from 1,000 Limousin cross Holstein carcasses were being sampled by the public for eating experience. These animals form part of the concluding phase of the Defra funded



LIMOUSIN

AHDB and SRUC beef feed efficiency project, with results expected next spring.

Meeting with the agriculture and commercial teams of the beef processors and retailers at the show confirmed there is scope for us to collaborate and raise the profile of Limousin. Whilst this won't happen overnight, the interest is there. It is clear from my conversations that our focus now needs to be on working together to capture the proof points behind the *Green Gene* narrative - efficient cattle delivering reduced days to slaughter and high meat yield percentage.

The narrative couldn't be more relevant with the continued contentious debate around how the industry will achieve this, and surely the recommendations proposed by the Climate Change committee to achieve this needs balance. 'Reduced consumption of meat and dairy' is not a silver bullet and contradicts the demand we see for unprocessed protein to feed a growing population. At a time when food is the most inflated category at 18.3% (ONS data), nearly double that of general inflation (8.7%), food production needs to be at the heart of the debate. Efficient food systems must be the solution, farmers are too often used as the scape goat for climate change and in time they will regret blaming farmers when they realise more meaningful actions surrounding production are needed to curb food inflation.

Last month I had the pleasure of visiting Limoges, the home of the Limousin. The love and passion for Limousin from the public made me smile. Limousin is named on every menu, road sign and in every shop. Lénau Station (where the Herdbook team, Euro Lim and Ingenomix team are based) opens its doors to tourists and functions and is a popular wedding venue.

The Limousin dominance and understanding was to be expected, but as the first time I've experienced this level of breed awareness I found it very thought provoking.

I spent a day at the progeny testing farm Crealim ('creating Limousin' from AI) gaining an insight into how they quantify the maternal traits. Six years of data capture to identify and qualify bulls that breed efficient, profitable female lines. The Crealim team have kindly agreed to host Harper Adams placement student, Merryn (who joined us last month), later in the year to help capture calving data and get an insight into how the maternal traits are measured.

Time with the French Herdbook team was hugely valuable, and I enjoyed watching the RJ (top 60 performance recorded bulls) sell.

The latest Notice to Members should now be with you, confirming the AGM will take place at Concorde House on 21st September 2023. Six Council members have completed their term of office providing an opportunity for members to stand. Cahir McAuley has also taken the decision to step down a year early. Nomination forms must be returned to the office by 27th July 2023.

Thank you to the Clubs for organising such a strong summer calendar of open days and herd competitions. I've had the pleasure of attending a few and love the opportunity to meet with more members and hear your feedback.

Wishing you all a fabulous July.

Alice Swift

CEO, BRITISH LIMOUSIN CATTLE SOCIETY

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