



A NOTE FROM



Alice

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EDITION

DEAR MEMBERS

What a year 2023 has been for Limousin! As I think back to this time last year, it's a stark reminder of how far we have come. I am indebted to the support you (our members), the Council and the team at Concorde House have provided while we've got our house in order and pushed forward. The highlight has been spending time with members, at shows, sales, club meetings and on farm while the cattle speak for themselves dominating the headlines.

But Beef is what it's all about, and I've been enthused by the responses from members around the Green Genes activity we have created in recent months. I firmly believe Limousin's 'green credentials' are the point of difference that will allow us to create a retail demand for Limousin.

The 'Green Genes' narrative (backed up by data), allows us to illustrate why Limousin plays an essential role in the British Beef market, if we are to reduce the overall emissions of the beef sector in the UK.

My experience tells me, the only way to engage a retailer is to help them solve a problem; the problem they must solve is how to achieve net zero. Reducing emissions from beef starts with genetics, which is an area we specialise in, yet the industry doesn't think to come to us for help. There's still a long way to go here but the activity we have created this year has started to be noticed. We need to continue to work with the data and with industry groups such as AHDB to help show why genetics has such an important role to play and



why it should be more of a focus for our industry overall. But I truly believe that this will help reclaim the importance of Limousin and drive sales in retail and other commercial sectors. For anyone doubting the relevance of net zero after recent Government announcements, retailers are still emphasising its importance. This week M&S has reiterated the priority of net zero saying, "if we are going to get anywhere near net zero we have to work with our agricultural supply chains". This is the outcome we are looking for in launching 'Green Genes'.

I know some concern has been raised about our Green Genes activity by members who have Q240X and NT821 genes within their herd. This concern is understandable, but please be assured it is not my intention to negate the need for these myostatin genes in the Limousin breed. As the recent Red Ladies trade confirmed, there is a market for these genes and we are not actively trying to dissuade this. We have to be realistic that the characteristics associated with F94L are those where Limousin has an advantage in the eyes of the retailers. The reduced emissions and the consistency in breeding play into this and create appeal for more commercial farmers. But as we all know, the Q and NT genes can also bring benefits, particularly to a herd that is looking to increase muscle or shape, and will remain a key interest to breeders. This does not have to be an 'either or' situation. There is an opportunity to promote the benefits of the F94L gene whilst maintaining demand for Q and NT genes.

I am also aware that, for some, this focus on retailer needs may be frustrating when the demands on you all are already high. I completely understand the resistance to focus on a retailer problem when many farmers are trying to deal with their own more imminent challenges. I get that - the weather is dire, and we still have a long winter ahead of us. But I'm asking you to trust me on this one. My job is to look at the bigger picture and create the demand for Limousin in the years ahead. I am deeply committed to representing farmers and getting a fairer return for them. I have achieved this for lamb, dairy, veal and beef farmers supplying Sainsbury's, and dairy farmers supplying Arla Foods, but only because we captured the data and proof points to justify why those farmers should be paid more.

I simply ask that we work together to quantify why Limousin should command a premium for the retail space, the market where 75% of all meat is sold.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Best wishes,

Alice Swift

CEO, BRITISH LIMOUSIN CATTLE SOCIETY

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