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## JOURNAL 2021

ISSUE 32

# SALERS

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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

By Tom Walling

Looking back over my 2 years as Society Chairman, one word I would not use to describe my time would be "uneventful"! This is true whether thinking about changes within the Society, the increase in popularity of the Salers breed, the outlook for livestock farming in general and the trading relationship of the UK with its neighbours. Now, of course, there is the pandemic which is affecting lives and livelihoods in every country of the world. Politically, the direction of travel did at least become more certain after the election in 2019 but here we are, a year on, and we still don't know what effect Brexit will have on trade and the future of UK livestock production.

The pandemic has dominated this past year. Agriculture may not have been affected as much as other industries – but boy have we missed the Shows and other events where we can meet, look at other breeders' stock and promote our breed. This, of course, has also been Sian's first year as Secretary of the Society. She has settled into the job exceptionally well but how disappointing for her and us that she has not had the opportunity of meeting everyone at shows and putting into operation her promotional skills. I know that this is an area she has had a lot of experience in and was the part of the job that she was looking forward to. Hopefully things will begin to get back to normal next summer. I do want to thank Sian for the way she has kept things going and adapted to these tricky circumstances and for all the help she has given me.

The one sale that did go ahead before Covid-19 took hold was at Stirling in February. This was a tremendous success with the average up a whopping £1,301 on February 2019. The quality of bulls was very good and a great advertisement for the breed. The market was buoyant with lots of new faces buying Salers for the first time. More recently a successful sale was held at Welshpool, which was good to see after all the restrictions and the quiet summer we've had. There was a good selection of commercial and pedigree females finding new homes. There were a limited number of bulls forward with a top price of 4,000 gns for a Rigel bull.

It was also really pleasing to see an upbeat premier sale at Castle Douglas, considering the unpredictability brought about by ongoing restrictions. Pedigree females were in high demand, with 100% clearance and an increased average of £1,189. There were a high quality selection of bulls on offer with an average up £268 from the previous year. Patrick Boyd of Drumaglea Salers, Tiree, had a tremendous day with top-priced female at 7,000 gns and top-priced male at 10,000 gns – our congratulations to Patrick. The commercial females were again in high demand with A. R. Lee of Lumbylaw topping the in-calf females and Colin McClymont of Cuil topping the bulling heifers – all in all a good day for my last Castle Douglas sale as Chairman. Can I also thank Sian again for her tremendous work for the sales. In an open letter to the Society, Wallets Marts referred to our new secretary working tirelessly, creating a fantastic catalogue and brilliant promotion of the breed – well done Sian.

Even through this difficult year and constrained selling conditions the popularity of the breed continues and demand for pedigree and commercial Salers has been good. I make no apology for repeating myself in saying that for the efficient production of high quality, low-carbon meat from grass – well look no further than the Salers!

Despite my opening observations I have enjoyed my time as Chairman. It has been a great experience. However I must thank the Council and all Members for their support and friendship and I wish the new Chairman all the best for his tenure.

If this last year has taught us anything it's that, just like our cattle, we need company and we need to socialise. The Shows and Sales will be a big miss to a lot of farmers as farms can be a lonely place to work. So let's all keep in touch and hope for a bit of normality next year.



**TOM WALLING**  
2020 Chair, President 2021  
& Council Member Area 2a

# VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

By Andrew Sleigh

We have had a seamless transition from Liz to Siân who has shown tremendous enthusiasm for the job. Unfortunately, due to the Corona virus she has met very few of the Salers breeders.

In the commercial markets the Salers steer calves seem to have gained ground on the main breeds in price per kilo and some of the heifer calves are well above all breeds. The close down of the hospitality industry in France, Belgium and Luxembourg has seriously affected the cull cow trade.

The latest figures from the ICBF maternal bull lists make excellent reading from the Salers point of view. The top four bulls are all Salers. Beguin has been overtaken by Ulsan and Knottown Roy (son of Beguin) is one point behind his father. The shorthorn, which is one of our main competitors, was ranked 57th, 100 points below the Salers. The Salers breed has led the maternal bull list for many years now.

As for the future we must never forget we are the easy calving maternal breed which makes us the envy of many breeds.

I sincerely hope that by November 2021 we can host a Premier show, sale and dinner where we would once again be able to auction a special cake baked by a wonderful lady from near Newton Stewart.



**ANDREW SLEIGH**  
2020 Vice-Chair, Chair 2021

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Siân Sharp

My first anniversary of my appointment to the role of Breed Secretary is quickly approaching and during my first year I have taken a great deal of pleasure in speaking to so many dedicated and enthusiastic breeders of Salers.

I was extremely fortunate to be able to take over from Liz who was committed wholeheartedly to the Society and extremely passionate about the breed. She made the transition into the Society particularly easy and her knowledge and administrative capability made the training process a lot easier. It was an honour to take over from someone I admire and respect and I feel privileged to have made a new friend. Liz assures me she is always on the end of the phone and on occasions I do give her a call which is particularly reassuring in a role like this, where some situations do not arise regularly. Similarly, Council and the office bearers have been extremely supportive, and I cannot thank them enough.

The year however has been not without its challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions have caused havoc across the globe. Closer to home the cancellation of agricultural events, whether these be sales, exhibitions, shows etc has impacted the industry and our members, inconceivably. I have however been immensely heartened with the determined approach demonstrated by all I have come across. Members have sought out new ways of doing things, adopted new technology and techniques, and found ways of allowing business to continue. We have sold cattle in timed auctions; livestock markets have adopted online bidding facilities and the Council even met via zoom!

Likewise, the way I have had to work, and my priorities have had to change in 2020. The meeting and greeting of members and stakeholders I expected in my first year, was severely curtailed, and instead I have had to develop and progress other initiatives handed down from Council such as the new website. I wish to use this new platform coupled with social media to promote and increase the popularity of the Salers and therefore continue to expand the marketplace for this exceptional maternal breed.

The historic decisions taken by the UK and French Societies that there is no place for the mutations of the myostatin gene in the Salers breed makes it possible that the Salers breed in the UK, the Society and all its members at some point in time, may be able to capitalise on a unique status and an unprecedented marketing tool. There are opportunities to adopt a system, whereby herds are classified or accredited as Myostatin free. This would make the Salers stand out from any other breed and allow us to effectively market our maternal breed to maximum effect. More information on how to prepare for this is contained in the myostatin article on page 78.

I would like to thank our sponsors and advertisers who despite an exceedingly difficult year have continued to support this edition of the journal. I am grateful to them and will endeavour to share adverts and articles online throughout the year to maximise their contribution.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the 32nd edition of the Salers Cattle Society of the UK Breed Journal. Whilst the normal sale and show reports are absent, I hope it brings some educational, technical and most of all entertaining articles to keep your interest. On behalf of the Council, and myself we hope that you enjoy this edition and let us look forward to a productive and progressive year for the Salers breed, the Society, and all of its members. Stay safe.



**SIÂN SHARP**  
Breed Secretary



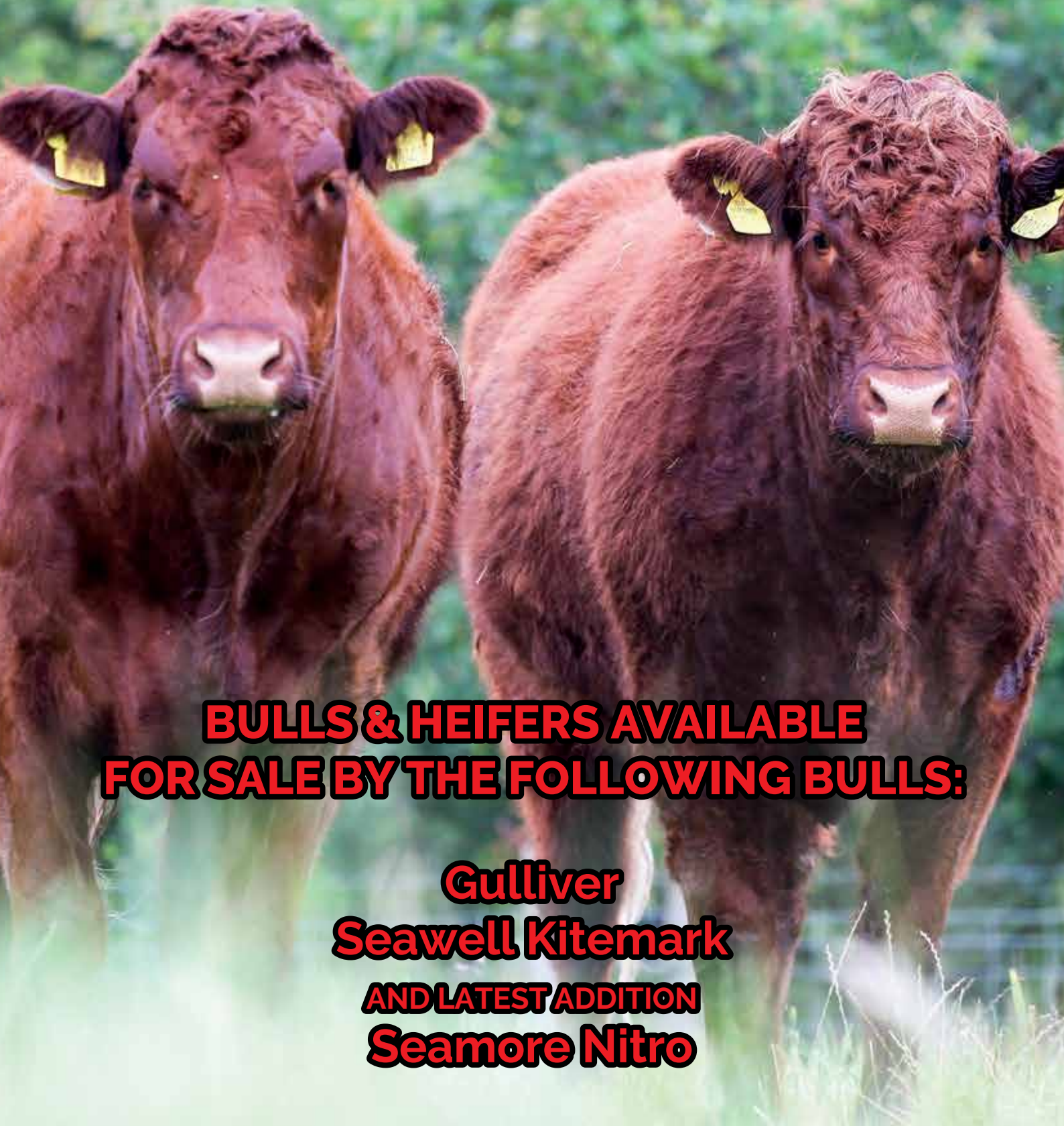
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**Alun & AR Jones** (Glan-y-Mor), Glan-y-Mor, Ynys, Talsarnau, Gwynedd, LL46 6TR, 01766 780377

**C F Jones** (Clywedog)

**E & E Jones** (Ionedd)

**GG & PA Jones** (Bowi), Blaenbowi, Capel Iwan, Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire, SA38 9NG, 01559 370263

**JP & CM Jones** (Terran)

**Mathew Jones** (Dragon), Glan-Y-Mor, Ynys, Talsarnau, Gwynedd, LL46 6TR, 01766 780377

**TH & ME Jones** (Plascoc), Plascoc, Dolanog, Welshpool, SY21 0LA, 01938 810553, 07778 590361

**T T Jones & Son** (Glynne Clywedog)

**VG & M Jones** (Brynhesglyn), Bryn-Yr-Hesglyn, Lidiartywaen, Llandilo, Powys, SY18 6JU, 01686 413566

**E Lean** (Troed-Y-Rhiw), Troed-y-Rhiw Farm, Pen-y-Bryn, Kenfigh, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, CF33 6RB 01656 740531

**DJP & Lewis Son** (Treforgan), Treforgan, Dolau, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5TL, 01597 851757, 07989 064528

**Chris Lloyd**, (Coed-Y-Dinas), Church House, Tregynon, Newtown, Powys, SY16 3EH. 01686 650760, 07710 801474

**Melissa Lloyd** (Draig Goch), Nantyllyn, Tallgarreg, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 4HG, 01545 590355

**JB Morris** (Litton), Lower Litton, Presteigne, Powys, LD8 2NS, 01547 560202

**TL & Morris Co** (Coed Detton), Stud Farm Cottage, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1NE, 01547 529192, 07833 704447

**Andrew Powell** (Grove Farm), Grove Farm, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1LN, 01547 520400, 07787 556345

**G & A Powell** (Glanmiheli), Glanmiheli, Kerry, Newtown, Powys, SY16 4LN, 01686 670917, 07786 068597

**D W Price** (Ackhill), Ackhill Farm, Presteigne, Powys, LD8 2ED, 01544 267541, 07974 387995

**HG & SG Pritchard** (Felin), Llwyn Gwyn, Llangybi, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 6SR, 01766 819159, 07773 383389

**L J Pritchard** (Nebo), Bryn Gro, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon, LL54 6SY, 07949 874615

**CVJ & PM Pugh** (Cwmwhitton), Cwmwhitton, Whitton, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1NL, 01547 560209

**AV & OE Roberts** (Derwin), Derwin Fawr, Pantglas, Garndolbenmaen, Porthmadog, LL51 9LZ, 01766 530369, 07974 703642

**AD & PM Rogers** (Cleddau), Coland Rise Farm, Hayscastle, Haverfordwest, Pembro, SA62 5PS, 01437 710295

**Carwyn Roberts** (Dwryd), Gwelldwryd, Bryn Gwyn, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd, LL48 6DA, 07810 167238

**DI & HM Rogers** (Coland), Penlan Mabws, Mathry, Haverfordwest, Pembro, SA62 5HZ, 01348 831000

**Nathan Rogers** (Tanybryn), Coland Rise Farm, Hayscastle, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 5PS, 01437 710295, 07854 713076

**Alun Thomas** (Hendre), Tyw Hendre Farm, Aber Road, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 3YP, 01248 362871, 07769 793073

**CR Thomas** (Bryndraenog), Bryndraenog, Baguildy, Knighton, Powys, LD7 1YD, 01547 510226

**John Edward Thomas** (Morfa), 1 Morfa Mawr, Llanbedr, Gwynedd, LL45 2EQ, 01341 241974, 07769 954332

**Thomas W S Thomas** (Troedrhwyfych), Duffryn Farm, Pontlloftyn, Bargoed, Caerphilly CF81 9RN, 01685 841449, 07771 733640

**G G Williams** (Fedw),

**Messrs Wilson** (Middlepool), Middlepool Farm, Pendine, Carmarthenshire, SA33 4PS, 01994 453240, 07833 438860



## Area 4, Northern Ireland

**Area Rep - Seamus Connell (Ballykeel), 61a Ballykeel Road, Rathfriland, County Down, BT34 5AZ, 02830 851512, 07921 267977**

**Robert Alexander** (Glenocum), 9 Clonetrace Lane, Broughshane, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland, BT43 7HX, 02825 684131, 07801 356599

**JR & EW Beggs** (Ballyvernstown), 171 Carrickfergus Road, Ballyvernstown, Larne, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland, BT40 3JZ, 02828 278976

**David Boyd** (Knockagh), 15 Slievetrue Road, Monkstown, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland, BT36 5BS, 02890 852837

**Francis Carragher** (Glencara)

**Oliver Carvill** (Mourne), Grangehill Farm, 24 Lurganconaray Road, Grange, Kilkeel, Co Down, BT34 3LL, 02841 763095, 07751882614

**Thomas Clokey** (Ballyellough), Horsepark House, Magheragall, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 2QU, 02892 621217, 07885 677975

**Seamus Connell** (Ballykeel), 62 Ballykeel Road, Rathfriland, County Down, BT34 5AZ, 02830 851512

**Francis Connon** (Ballylesson)

**J Cousins** (Brackenagh), 118 Head Road, Brackenagh West, Kilkeel, Co. Down, BT34 4PX, 02843 768026

**Noel & Marian Crudden** (Drumherriff), 33 Shanvalley Road, Drumhariff, Kinawley, County Fermanagh, BT92 4GU, 02866 348106, 07792 402656

**EP Donnelly** (Maghernahare), Maghernahare House, 24 Ballinlea Road, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, BT54 6NL, 02820 76254 / 07730 621958

**S Doonan** (Molly), 19 Corgesh Road, Kinawley, Co Fermanagh, BT92 4DU, 02867 741067, 07703 026727

**J Dowdall**, 20 Ferry Hill Road, Clontigora, Newry, County Armagh, BT35 8RT, 02830 848813, 07468 481853

**J. & EA Elliott** (Drumlegagh), Drumlegagh, Newtownstewart, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland, BT78 4HH, 02881 661654, 07771 701086

**Ernie Gregg** (Ballybollen), 27 Ballybollen Road, Agohill, Ballymena, Co Antrim, BT42 2RE, 0282 5871063, 07895 255584

**D Johnstone** (Cleggan), Cleggan Estates, 162 Carnlough Road, Ballymena, BT43 7JW, 07751 301290

**Kelly Farms** (Ashcroft), 95 Ross Downey Road, Londonderry, N. Ireland, BT47 5SU, 02871 347411, 07801 105655

**C & A Kennedy** (Mileview), 45 Templepatrick Road, Ballyclare, Co Antrim, N Ireland, BT39 9TX, 028933 42091, 07800 787831

**PJ & Maginn Sons** (Lisnamaul), 129 Ballydugan Road, Lisnamaul, Downpatrick, Co. Down, N. Ireland, BT30 8HG, 02844 614301

**JJ Maguire** (Drumcannon), 186 Old Coach Road,, Drumcannon, Derrylester, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, BT92 3DH, 02866 348472, 07936 388348

**WJ & M Maxwell** (Millrow)

**GA McCall** (Carrick View), 27b Ballymacawley Road, Collone, Armagh, N. Ireland, BT60 2BP, 02837 551614

**D & Sons McClements Ltd.** (Emerald), 13 Ardminnan Road, Portaferry, Co. Down, N. Ireland, BT22 1QJ, 02842 772203, 07971 424946

**R J Whann McCrea** (Templereagh), 9 Templereagh Road, Stewartstown, Dungannon, Northern Ireland, BT71 5JJ, 028 877 38244, 07599 827244

**J McFarlane** (Broughderg), 88 Davagh Road, Broughderg, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, BT79 8JE, 07818 093664, 02886 751559

**M McMahon** (Alderwood), 15 Altaveedan Road, Breakly, Fivemiletown, Co Tyrone, BT75 0NB, 02284 418138, 07884 418138

**Martin Patrick McNally** (Ballynagilly Salers), 95 Fegarron Road, Ballynagilly, Cookstown, Co Tyrone, BT80 9TA, 02886 751142, 07754 049491

**Noel Melly** (Bradoge), Manger, Belleek, County Fermanagh, N. Ireland, BT93 3DJ, 02868 658879

**Robert Millar** (Ballywillan), 20 Ballywillan Road, Gleno Larne, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland, BT40 3LQ, 02828 276633

**Roy Moore** (Ardstraw), 6, Brocklis Road, Ardstraw, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, BT78 4LS, 07771 808380

**O'Kane Bros** (Ovill), 410 Foreglen Road, Ovill, Dungiven, Co Derry, BT47 4PN, 02877 741388, 07802 583860

**Brian & Pearse O'Kane** (Lower Bolie Salers), 34c Dunlade Road, Greysteel, Co Derry, N Ireland, BT47 3EF, 02871 812481, 07761 743935

**William O'Neill** (Carrickatane), 22, Carrickatane Road, Donemana, Strabane, BT82 0NG, 02871 398512, 07803 161940

**Robert Pollock** (Drumard), 37 Tamlaght Road, Kilrea, Co. Derry, BT51 5UL, 07855 182178

**A Quigley** (Ardmachree), Ardmachree Farm, 06 Truston Glebe, Macken, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, BT92 3EN, 07976 926632

**S Thompson** (Deersleep), 11 Tattynure Road, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland, BT79 7TP, 02882 247227

**Declan Ward**, 52 Glenroe, Dungiven, Co Derry, BT47 4DZ, 07582 085007

**G Wilson** (Brookfields), Backna Mullagh House, Hillsborough Road, Dromore, Co. Down, BT25 1QW, 02892 692304

## Area 6, Lancs, Yorks, Humberside, Cumbria, Northumberland, Teeside, Newcastle

**Angus Gowthorpe (Approach Farm), Approach Farm, Hollicarrs, Escrick, York, YO19 6EE, 07971 795762**

**Aidansfield Salers**, Lowick Hall Farm, Lowick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2UA, 01289 388523

**P & T Allison** (Harperley), Devereaux Farms, Low Harperley Farm, Nr Fir Tree, Co Durham, DL15 8DY, 01388 762130, 07917 461341

**T & C Atkinson** (Mickleton Mill), The Mill, Mickleton, Barnard Castle, DL12 OLS, 07810 094072

**Lucinda Bird** (Benridge Pedigree Salers), Benridge Farm, Blackhall, Hartlepool, TS27 4BT, 07846 893109

**RA & J Blyth** (Marwood), Middleton House Farm, Elwick, Hartlepool, TS27 3EN, 01429 274549, 07977 997326

**W & MM & Case & Sons** (Nab Point), Plumpton Cottage Farm, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 7SH, 01229 861030, 07777 564208

**Clapham Brothers**, Cliffe Farm Cottage, Bank Hey Bottom Lane, Rishworth, Sowerby Bridge HX6 4RA, 07769 973740

**Liam Claughan** (Frederick), Potters Farm, Elwick Village, Hartlepool, TS27 3ED, 01429 270449, 07814 442291

**D & Curr & Son** (Bowerdale), Bowderdale Head, Newbiggin-on-Lune, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4NB, 01539 623333

**P Dean** (Ravensdale), Hill Farm, Heaton, Bolton, Lancs, BL1 5DN, 01204 846855

**JA Driffield & Son** (Driff), Huntwich Grange Farm, Streethouse, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF7 6ES, 01924 894869, 07889 778455

**M Dumbreck** (Crowgarth), 37 Skelton on Ure, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 5AJ, 07933 917832

**C Ellwood & Sons** (Park House), Park House Farm, North Driffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 5RX, 01757 288343, 07801 384612

**Mark W Fisher** (Moorside), Moorside Farm, Moorside, Cleckheaton, W Yorks, BD19 6JX, 01274 877365, 07973 726087

**A B Forrest** (Stanners), 6 North Street, Byers Green, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 7PT, 07800 814233

**R & K Gemmell** (St. Johns), St. Johns Cross Farm, Bradshaw, Halifax, W. Yorks, HX2 9UT, 01422 240048, 07831 670816

**Gilbertson Livestock** (Maxxum), Bridge Farm, Biggin, Leeds, LS25 6HJ, 07885 374074

**Angus Gowthorpe** (Approach Farm), Approach Farm, Hollicarrs, Escrick, York, YO19 6EE, 07971 795763

**S & R Hallos** (Beeston Hall), Beeston Hall Farm, Ripponden, Halifax, W. Yorks, HX6 4LW, 01422 823272, 07748547475

**G & O Lawrenson** (Parkfield), Parkfield Lodge, Mosshouse Lane, Pilling, Preston, Lancs, PR3 6BX, 01253 790328, 07901 822412

**A R Lee** (Lumbylaw), Lumbylaw, Edlingham, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2BW, 01665 574277, 07789 390400 810398

**MJ & DI Livingstone** (Oaklands), Far Hills, The Plains, Wetheral, Nr. Carlisle, Cumbria, CA4 8JY, 01228 560518

**T Marshall** (Sanguine)

**D & J Nightingale** (Brookside), Brookside Farm, Kelstedge, Ashover, Chesterfield, S45 0DZ, 01246 890667, 07977 684992

**M J Oliver** (Toft Green), Woodside Farm, Toft Green, Buglawton, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 3QE, 01260 223303,

**S & P Padfield** (Field House), Field House Farm, Everingham, York YO42 4LH, 07879 817152

**Nick Pancisi** (Stanton), Stubbs Farm, Stubbs Lane, Stanton, Ashbourne, Derbys., DE6 2BY, 01335 324639

**Rigel Pedigree** (Rigel), T & J Pye, Leven Fields, Middleton-on-Leven, Yarm, North Yorkshire, TS15 0JX, 01642 595100, 07982 813596

**Kent & Muriel Springett** (Ochrelands), Ochrelands Farm, Fellside, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 1SB, 01434 607244

**Paul Stobart** (Kirklington), The Square, Kirklington, Carlisle, CA6 6DN, 07720 395708

**T Quirk** (Corvalley Salers), Corvalley Farm, Stockfield Road, Kirk Michael, Isle of Man, IM6 1HP, 01624 844487, 07624 491074

**W Tomlinson** (Herders), Herder, Wycollier Road, Trawden, Colne, Lancs, BB8 8SY, 07970 158418

**J Watson**, Wynfield Moss Road, Askern, Doncaster, S. Yorks., DN6 0NB, 01302 702443

**R A Watson** (Apesford)

**A Waugh** (Kilnstown), Kilnstown Farms Ltd., Bewcastle, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA6 6PP 01697 748655, 01697 748258

**Steven J White** (Norland), Bents Farm, Norland, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX6 3RP, 01422 834014

**E Woolhouse** (Stillbeck), Church Farm, Ravenfield, Rotherham, Yorkshire, S65 4NA, 01709 850402, 07799 525503

## **Area 7, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcester, Gloucester, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire**

**Area Rep - James Hallett (Ledwyche), Lower Wood Farm, Hopton Cangeford, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2EE, 01584 823788**

**WJ Burrows** (Hampton), Kampala, Little Green, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13 2JW, 01948 830027

**Dr. M Carter** (Orton), Glenfield Cottage, Sheepy Road, Sibson, Nr. Nuneaton, Warwicks, CV9 3RR, 01827 880169

**P & N Darlington** (Spring Farm), Spring Farm, Moss Lane, Minshull, Vernon, Crewe, CW1 4RJ, 07973 621571

**Michael Evans** (Ebna), Ebna Lodge, Gobowen, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 7BL, 01691 661243, 07989 308868

**James & Emma Hallett** (Ledwyche), Lower Wood Farm, Hopton Cangeford, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2EE, 01584 823788

**Adam Quinney** (Sambourne), Reins Farm, Oak Tree Lane, Sambourne, Redditch, B96 6EX, 01527 892820

**TJ & LS Roberts** (Onley), Crumplebury Farm, Whitbourne Hall Park, Whitbourne, Worcs, WR13 5PR, 01886 821562, 07736627008

**Fred & Bryn Robinson** (Preenbank), Highfields Farm, Church Preen, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 7LQ, 01694 771357

**BW & Speakman Son** (Stagbatch), Stagbatch House, Stagbatch, Leominster, HR6 9DA, 01568 612557/07929 739988

**A St. John Williams** (Queenshead), Red House, Woolston Road, West Felton, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4LB, 01691 610319

## **Area 8, Berkshire, Hants, Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Avon, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall**

**Area Rep - Malcolm Light (Ashbury), Venn Barton, Ashbury, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 3PF, 01837 871203, 07506 483885**

**M Austin** (Morwenstow), Stanbury Manor, Woodford, Bude, Cornwall, EX23 9JQ, 01288 331279

**JB Carter** (Nodes), Nodes Farm, Northwood, Nr. Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 8AD, 01983 292036

**R & J Cuzens** (Brunyee), Grove Cottage, 27 Martinstown, Dorchester, DT2 9JP, 01305 889542, 07971 233652

**Mssrs. Heard** (Cheristow)The Lavender Farm, Higher Cheristow, Hartland, Devon, EX39 6DA, 01237 440101,

**J & L Heard** (Yes Tor), Hughslade Farm, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 4LR, 01822 852067, 07799 100075

**R & R Jordan** (Moortown), Moortown Gate, Gidleigh, Chagford, Newton Abbot, TQ13 8HU, 01647 433912, 07786 088372

**Malcolm Light** (Ashbury), Venn Barton, Ashbury, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 3PF, 01837 871203, 07506 483885

**N Panniers** (Wellington), Wellington Farm, Bishops Frome, Woke, WR6 5BY, 07709 842829



**M Parr** (Exeter), Higher Bagmores Farm, Woodbury, Exeter, Devon EX5 1LA. 07738 256126

**A, DM & DAS Robinson** (West Knapps), West Knapps Farm, Wembury Road, Wembury, Plymouth, Devon, PL9 0DQ, 01752 402007, 07733 325440

**Carol, Steve & Sophie Simmons** (Kington), Horridge Farm, Romansleigh, South Molton, Devon, EX36 4JR, 01769 550366, 07875 334949

**Simon & Sarah Thorne** (Romfordian), Romford Mill Farm, Station Road, Verwood, Dorset, BH31 7LD, 01202 822392, 07718 761985

**P & D Trowbridge** (Duncliffe), Gore Farm, Gore Common, St Margarets Marsh, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0PZ, 01747 852195, 07787 447236

**FJ & CH Williams** (Caerhays), Caerhays Farms (Hamish), Caerhays Barton, Gorran, St. Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6LY, 01872 501296

**Area 9, Notts, Lincs, Leics, Northants, Cambs, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Herts, Beds, Bucks, Surrey, Kent, Sussex, London**

**Area Rep - Carolyn Fox (Manor Lane), Manor View, Dry Doddington, Newark, Notts, NG23 5JA, 01400 282044, 07788 105892**

**James Bonner** (Whitfield), Whitfield House Farm, Whitfield, Nr Brackley, Northants, NN13 5TQ, 07823 881473

**P & R Burbage** (Oakfields), Oakfields Farm, East Haddon, Northants, NN6 8DS, 01604 770013, 07740 733197

**C.B. Farms** (Green's Park), Green's Park, Woodend, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 8SD, 01327 861072

**Clarke Farming Partnership** (Steeple), Manor Farm C/O Midwinter Cottage, Steeple Aston, Bicester, OX25 4RS, 07963 874482

**PM & SM Donger** (Seawell), Seawell Grounds, Foxley, Towcester, Northants, NN12 8HW, 01327 860226

**Bertrand Facon** (Gentons), Lessor Farm, Milcombe, Banbury, Oxon, OX15 4RT, 07785 221961/079060529895

**Peter Featherstone** (Bidwell), Stable Cottage, 11A Baggrave End, Barsby, Leicestershire, LE7 4RB, 07931 769144

**Carolyn Fox** (Manor Lane), Manor View, Dry Doddington, Newark, Notts, NG23 5JA, 01400 282044

**Simon Hill** (Luchabolsh), Park Farm, Tyringham, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, MK16 9ES, 01234 240408, 07887 548003

**M J Howkins** (Peggy), Anchor Farm, Anchor Lane, Peggs Green, Leicestershire, LE67 8HA, 01530 223425, 07776 051020

**Richard Lamb** (Great Casterton)

**Ben Roughton** (Gidding Grove), Gidding Grove Farm, Great Gidding, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 5PD, 01832 293407, 07973 188435

**Peter Willcox** (Erpingham), Erpingham House, Erpingham, Norwich, NR11 7QD, 01263 761208/7

**H Wright Jnr.** (Fellside)



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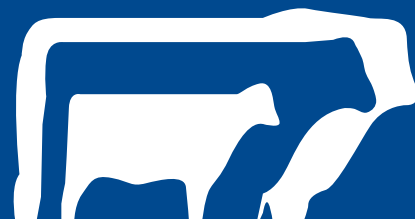
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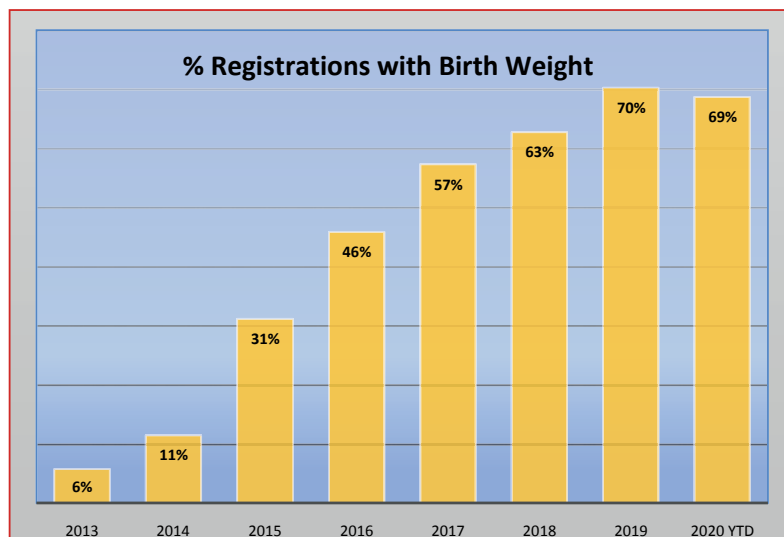


### Protecting the Salers Ease of Calving

The Salers effortless unassisted calving is the most important trait driving the growth of the breed in the UK, and this is underpinned by the low birth weight of Salers calves compared to those of other major breeds. Protecting this trait is a vital responsibility of Salers breeders, and the birth weight EBV is a powerful tool to help breeders select future breeding animals accordingly.

The accuracy of the birth weight EBV is therefore critical, and this depends on breeders weighing calves at birth and submitting this information to the Society with their registrations. Achieving 70% of registrations with their birth weight demonstrates an exceptional commitment from our breeders across the board, whether they have large herds or just a few cows, or be they longstanding or new members. Give yourselves a well earned pat on the back (you know who you are) and keep up the good work.

Consequently, the accuracies of our birth weight EBVs are generally excellent, and breeders and commercial farmers can confidently use them to guide their selection decisions.



### Published Sires Explained

The table opposite is an extract from the September 2020 Published Sires Report (which is updated monthly and available to all Performance Recorders via the <Download Files> option in Breedplan). The number of sires making the list has increased every year from 35 bulls in 2016 to 87 bulls this year.

***To qualify, a sire must have performance recorded progeny in the last five years, and one or more of his 200 / 400 / 600 Day Weight EBVs must be at least 70% accurate.***

Even if a breeder is not a Performance Recorder, the breeder can still satisfy the first criteria by submitting birth weights when they register or birth notify their calves (and the accuracy can be improved if they submit birth weights from all of their calves, including from any that were stillborn).

The accuracy figure associated with an EBV is an indicator of the degree of confidence that an animal will transmit that trait to their progeny, and is based on the amount of performance information that is available on an animal and its close relatives, particularly the number of progeny analysed. The heritability of the trait and any genetic correlations with other traits are also considered. Accuracy can be interpreted as follows,

Below 50%, EBVs are preliminary and could change substantially as more information becomes available

50-74%, EBVs usually based on animal's own records and pedigree, and still can change significantly

75-89%, EBVs now include some progeny data, but still subject to change with more progeny data

90%+, EBVs are a high estimate of an animal's true breeding value and are unlikely to change much

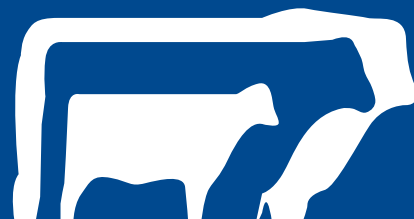
### Selecting for Easy Calving

The hallmark of the Salers breed is its unrivalled calving ease, and as breeders we can confidently advise potential customers that "all Salers are easy calving" (excepting complications of twins, malpresentations etc.). Of course, there is strong market pressure to constantly improve conformation and growth rates, which ordinarily would lead to increased birth weights and eventually the risk of calving problems. Breedplan provides a way to protect our low birth weights and simultaneously increase growth rates by identifying those bulls that have a "curve bending" combination of low birth weight and strong growth rates (all three EBVs highlighted green). There are 17 curve bending bulls in this report, up from just 6 such bulls two years ago.



# BREEDPLAN

Demonstrating Salers Commercial Advantages



## PUBLISHED SIRES

Sire	HB Number	Birth Wt EBV	200 Day Wt EBV	400 Day Wt EBV
Rigel Kale Poll	PYE2015674	-2.7	-10	-9
Rigel Kurt	PYE2015684	-2.4	3	19
Rigel Pluto	PYE2011090	-2.3	1	14
Rigel Logan Poll	UK122086601781	-2.0	4	3
Rigel Verdun Poll	PYE2012027	-1.6	0	9
Seducteur	SIM201302	-1.5	3	4
Rigel Mojave Black Poll	UK122086401835	-1.2	-1	2
Drumglea Kes	UK541069400536	-1.1	5	13
Rigel Macduff Poll	UK122086601823	-1.0	4	7
Cleuchhead Dick Dastardly	UK562060301028	-0.8	15	28
Cleuchhead Legacy	UK562060301161	-0.6	15	30
Oaklands Urgent	DIL2003011	-0.6	0	-6
Rednock Mauriac	UK542858700064	-0.6	16	29
Rigel Kirk Poll	PYE2015659	-0.6	10	30
Rigel Oak Poll	PYE2013002	-0.6	7	7
Cleuchhead McTavish	UK562060201209	-0.5	18	30
Rigel Byron Poll	PYE2010030	-0.5	9	15
Rigel Mycroft Poll	PYE2013031	-0.3	6	7
Rigel Orlando	PYE2008071	-0.3	3	14
Rigel Perth	PYE2012006	-0.3	9	18
Seawell Franko	SEA2010044	-0.1	7	-2
Rigel Khamsin	PYE2015661	0.0	7	21
Rigel Picasso	PYE2011027	0.0	8	11
Rigel Rourke Poll	PYE2014568	0.0	21	26
Rigel Tybalt	PYE2013004	0.0	5	11
Cleuchhead Yoda	RAB2009023	0.1	4	9
Gulliver	IMP2012010	0.2	14	26
Rigel Lennox	UK122086701775	0.2	5	5
Casper	IMP2012004	0.4	13	24
Cleuchhead Xerox	RAB2008009	0.4	10	22
Denver	IMP2010054	0.4	9	8
Domino	IMP2012005	0.4	7	10
Drumlegagh Brandon	DRU2008012	0.4	7	6
Seawell Houston	SEA2012074	0.4	12	16
Gourmand	IMP2010087	0.5	12	19
Lataster Hector	IMP2009047	0.5	6	6
Preenbank Izac	RFP2011011	0.5	17	31
Rigel Orton	PYE2013033	0.5	7	7
Cuil Godfather	MCC2013028	0.6	18	34
Rigel Drambuie Poll	PYE2014620	0.6	12	21
Cleuchhead Murdo	UK562060601283	0.7	13	25
Cleuchhead Noah	UK562060401323	0.7	14	17
Hockey	IMP2013005	0.7	9	13
Bruno	172/6386051716	0.8	12	18

Sire	HB Number	Birth Wt EBV	200 Day Wt EBV	400 Day Wt EBV
Eveil	IMP2014029	0.8	10	9
Cleuchhead Norman	UK562060301371	0.9	8	12
Kracker	IMP97053	0.9	2	2
Cammel	IMP2012006	1.0	20	35
Cumbrian Capermello	FSG2013034	1.0	9	14
Vaillant	IMP2009026	1.0	14	27
<b>Breed Average</b>		<b>1.0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>
Approach Farm Murray	UK127167400713	1.2	11	27
Oaklands Genesis	DIL2011028	1.2	7	16
Seawell Kitemark	UK202227103508	1.2	10	4
Rigel Munro Poll	PYE2011026	1.3	5	21
Seawell Juggernaut	UK202227203138	1.3	14	14
Cumbrian Roge	FSG2014746	1.4	13	21
Whitebog Kracker	UK502146502883	1.4	17	17
Ledwyche Llewellyn	UK313482700169	1.5	22	32
Seawell Lithium	UK202227103844	1.5	19	37
Tolquhon Bonaparte	AAS2009003	1.5	11	17
Iron Man	IMP2014030	1.6	17	32
Whitebog Fury	XHO2010005	1.6	15	18
Beowulf Polled Montana	BEE2011004	1.7	11	22
Cleuchhead Kingpin	RAB2015056	1.8	19	26
Cuil Madrid	MCC97004	1.8	13	17
Cumbrian Joker Poll	FSG2008007	1.8	17	25
Seawell Lancelot	UK202227203677	1.8	9	6
Rednock Lagerfeld Poll	UK122086501773	1.9	16	32
Tolquhon Trafalgar II	AAS2013004	1.9	22	31
Upperlands Banker Poll	RSB2001002	1.9	11	18
Illien	IMP2013011	2.0	9	12
Inka	IMP2013053	2.1	24	29
Rigel Kirsch Poll	PYE2015719	2.2	23	33
Seawell Extra	SEA2009050	2.3	17	25
Cleuchhead Compo	RAB2013001	2.4	20	33
Highland	IMP2012050	2.4	17	29
Larry	IMP2014067	2.5	16	21
Preenbank Kester	RFP2013005	2.7	20	21
Cleuchhead Killycrankie	UK562060701123	2.8	12	13
Manor Lane Firework	CAF2012001	3.0	15	23
Rigel Officer	PYE2012025	3.0	18	32
Domino	324/4688016097	3.2	21	37
Noble (Nobel)	IMP2016026	3.6	23	29
Approach Farm Kruger	GOW2015610	3.9	21	34
Harperley Lazlo	UK116219600169	4.3	16	26
Lascaux	IMP2015008	4.3	19	17
Nomad (Nicolas)	IMP2016025	4.9	24	22

Source: September 2020 Salers Group run. Green highlight indicates EBV equal/better than breed average  
Blue font = 90+% accuracy, purple font = 75-89% accuracy, red font = less than 75% accuracy

★ ★ ★ ★ NO CONTEST ★ ★ ★ ★

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★ When used as part of a comprehensive approach to BVD including culling of PIs and biosecurity.

References: 1. Yarnall and Thrusfield (2017) Vet Record doi: 10.1136/vr.104370. 2. Kynetic (2018) BVD sales data by value. Full year 2018. 3. For active immunisation of cattle against BVDV-1 and BVDV-2, to prevent the birth of persistently infected calves caused by transplacental infection. Bovilis (lyophilisate and solvent for suspension for injection for cattle contains modified live BVDV-1, non-cytopathic, parent strain KE-39, 10<sup>11</sup>-10<sup>12</sup> TCID<sub>50</sub>, modified live BVDV-2, non-cytopathic parent strain MY-92, 10<sup>11</sup>-10<sup>12</sup> TCID<sub>50</sub>). UK: PCM-V. Further information available in the SPC or from Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health UK Ltd, RG42 8YS, UK. Tel: 01344 746667. Email: [veterinary@boehringer-ingelheim.com](mailto:veterinary@boehringer-ingelheim.com). Bovilis is a registered trademark of Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica GmbH, used under license. ©2018 Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health UK Ltd. All rights reserved. Date of preparation: Jul 2019. AH012633. Use Medicines Responsibly.



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# WHITEBOG

## SALEERS

WHITEBOG KIPPER, CHAMP STIRLING FEB 17



WHITEBOG KRACKER, BREED RECORD PRICE FEB 17



WHITEBOG KIM  
JNR CHAMP  
FEMALE RHS 17  
& BREED CHAMP  
ECHT SHOW 17



WHITEBOG KARBOLIC, RESERVE CHAMP RHS 17  
RESERVE CHAMP CASTLE DOUGLAS 17



WHITEBOG KICKASS, CHAMP STIRLING MAY 17

**Alister MacKenzie**  
WHITEBOG, FORTROSE, ROSS-SHIRE IV10 8SW

Mobile: 07999 834549 Telephone/Fax: 01381 620006



# LOW MAINTENANCE SYSTEM ALMOST SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ITS SIMPLICITY

*Journalism and photographs by Jelignite Ltd*



## Peter Willcox has lived and farmed at Erpingham House Farm, Norfolk, his entire life.



Born and brought up on the family farm, he took on the role of sharing the management of the business, alongside his mother, from an early age. He was given the trust and authority of a cheque book and at the age of 17 and made his first major purchase, his first tractor.

The family have farmed at Erpingham house since 1904, where Peter now lives with his wife Kate and their two children aged three and one. Peter was very keen to point out that at the age of 87, his mother Mary still plays an important active role in the business, to this day, and one of those vital roles is looking after the accounts and online VAT returns.

The farm currently runs a herd of 40 beef suckler cows, of which  $\frac{3}{4}$  are now Salers cross. Alongside the cattle enterprise, the farm produces hay and haylage, for horses and yards in the area. They have also diversified into several different enterprises; these include their own livery yard and holiday cottages. Two key

seasonal markets they have capitalised on are asparagus in the early part of the year and for winter they also produce Christmas trees. Kate is a florist and with that they have recently diversified into growing around an acre or so of peonies. This level of diversity keeps them busy all year round.

The farm consists of two main blocks of land, with Erpingham House having around 100 acres, to the North of the City of Norwich and the second block of land, of similar size (100 acres), located on the marshes directly to the South of Norwich. Around 15 miles separates the two and until the recent opening of the Northern Distributor Road, in 2018, travelling between the two necessitated going directly through the city.

The focus for the cattle enterprise is down on the marshes. Norfolk has over 25,000 acres of these very fertile grass floodplains, that are used primarily to support livestock. Although Norfolk is best known for its arable land, livestock numbers are considerable, and you only have to look at the number of entries for the annual Royal Norfolk Show to see how important livestock is to the area. Cattle and sheep, grazed on the marshes and supplemented with the by-products of the arable industry, make for an efficient and cost-effective system. Straw is also not a scarce resource in these parts, although the increase in biomass power generation has had some impact on supply and prices.

Historically the cattle enterprise began with Peter's grandfather who set up the herd of Red Polls, for milking, just after the second World War. The herd grew to number 50 head of cows, until they decided to get out of milk and the cows were eventually sold to a Welsh dairy farmer, who wanted their milk for cheese making. Peter says the decision to sell the milking cows occurred at the most inopportune time, right between the end of the first "Golden Handshake" era and before the introduction quotas. The herd was then restarted, this time with a focus on beef. Sticking initially to the Red Polls, but soon beginning an era of experimenting with the introduction of continental bulls, looking for easier calving.

Initially using Simmental bulls, the herd grew to 150 cows across some 300 acres of marsh grazing. Although the marshland was spread around in pockets and became a 70-mile round trip just to check on the herd. As the herd grew the Red Poll cows were slowly replaced with Simmentals and then began a move toward using Blonde d'Aquitaine bulls. This proved successful, to a point. Peter says that with a careful choice of bull, the Blonde was a good cross, however with a run of several Blonde bulls they experienced increasing calving difficulties, culminating in three caesarean deliveries one spring. With that, the Blonde's time had passed. Peter could not see any benefit in having to absorb the increasing vet bills and difficulties around calving time.







Looking to return to easier calving, Peter was recommended to try Salers. Peter took that recommendation and the nucleus of the Salers started with six heifers, bought from Ian Livingstone. The herd was downsized to the current level and likewise the area grazed was reduced to 100 acres on this the single continuous block of marsh land, thus reducing the overall travelling time and difficulties of managing a larger herd spread over a wide area. Another benefit to this was they now produced more hay than the needs of the herd, which could now be turned into a business opportunity, selling on to the horse market.

I met Peter down on the marsh. The land lies on the inside of an oxbow, formed by the river Yare as it meanders its way east towards Great Yarmouth. Characterised by the thick peat underbelly and criss-crossed with drainage dykes, with a plentiful supply of nutrients and water. The banks of the Yare and the dykes are lined with reeds and in places the land lies beneath the water level of the Yare itself. Although hard to imagine, while the cold rain was falling on us as we walked across the marsh, Norfolk has a very low annual rainfall and Peter tells me that, within reason, he is able to control the height of the water table using a simple dam of planks across the dykes. The marsh is an incredibly open, flat area and despite the drier climate it is prone to the cold in the spring compounded by the bitter easterly winds. The cattle start off grazing one half and are then allowed to graze across the whole area once the hay has been taken from the remaining half.

Although he has various people who come to check on the herd, he tries to get there himself at least three times a week. The cattle stay here throughout the year, grazing the marsh from mid-April until November. They then spend the winter in an open straw-yard to protect them from the worst of the weather. Peter finds this promotes good lung health and cases of pneumonia are exceptionally rare. Muck from the deep beds is given to another local farmer, in exchange for the following season's straw.

Apart from the recently purchased yearling bull, yet to be introduced, it is a closed herd and they are within a four-year TB testing area. This keeps disease away from the herd. In fact, the biggest health hazard for the cattle comes from snakebites. Adders are commonplace on the marsh, especially during the warmer summer months. Although the snakebites themselves are not lethal to the cattle, Peter says that they develop a fever and in order to cool-off can end up drowning in the dykes or river.

Calving starts as early as possible in spring and since introducing the Salers he has not had any need to use the calving jack. *"We've probably saved at least £2000 per year in vet's bills alone"* says Peter. That's key to how the system works. Lower maintenance and almost self-sufficient in its simplicity, rather than pushing towards diminishing returns. The cattle from the previous year are sold as yearlings the following spring. Peter sells exclusively through the local Norwich Cattle Market. It's a vibrant market which is well supported in the region and Peter says the prices there are always good. *"I really like the way Salers breeders are very mindful of the commercial side of the business"* says Peter. They produce animals that are reliable and consistent, which is just what he needs. *"The store buyers at the market always comment on how good my cattle are"* says Peter, *"They like to see a margin in it; something they have room to bring on themselves"*. Historically this has always brought Peter a good price and a ready market for his animals. "Buyers also like to take from the market and put them straight back on the marsh", he said, "They can see through the woolly coats and know these animals won't be knocked back after being turned out".

The calves are all started on 16% protein creep, in the spring. If needed, he will creep feed in the Autumn, too, although grass has been plentiful this year. Milk is particularly important and plays its part in deciding which heifers to keep as replacements; "good milkers bring on the best calves and those are the ones we keep", he said. This 'self-selection' reflects well on the system and as the Salers impart greater and greater influence, the improvements are self-evident, with lower costs and strong margins. The heifers are then bulled-up, aiming to calve them at just over two years old.



The standing stock bull is a Black Salers out of a Rigel cow, Rigel Perdita, which Peter bought as a heifer from the Newark multibreed Sale. He is sired by a bull from A & M Austin, Morwenstow. He is 7 or 8 years old now and Peter has bought a yearling bull as his replacement for next year. The youngster is this time a Red Salers from Harperley Salers; Peter's focused on bringing more red through the herd, because the local buyers better associate the Salers with the red colour and so he feels they are more distinguishable as Salers when brought into the market.

Peter prides himself on producing good cattle, for a good market with good prices. Combined with a strong advocacy for supporting the local market he believes that *"The cattle should keep you, not you keeping them"*, which highlights the fact that life is very busy and your time is finite. Choosing the Salers and producing them in the way he does allows him to not only produce profitable, well sought-after, store cattle, but also to have time for the many diversified enterprises and a young family.





# THE PERFECT BREED FOR THE PART-TIME FARMER!

*By Seamus Connell*



Northern Ireland is a small country with 247,000 beef cows divided across 25,000 suckler farmers. The average suckler herd size is 18 cows. Due to the profits in Suckler cows, most of these farmers work a second job during the day and farm during their evenings and weekends. For this reason, myself and many others have chosen the Salers cow as their chosen breed in their herd. Other farmers are now starting to realise what the Salers breed can do to add the benefits of ease of calving, low maintenance, fertile, milky cow with a good temperament.

I am very lucky to live with my wife, Christine, and my parents on a small family farm in the south of County Down, here in Northern Ireland. I work full-time for a local engineering firm and farm 'part-time' when I can. The recent Covid-19 lockdowns have made me appreciate the farm we have even more. Although only 40 acres in size, it is a welcome treat to stretch your legs in the evenings and walk the paddocks through the Salers cows with their Salers and Charolais calves at foot. The latter bred into the herd for exhibiting to potential customers.

The cow type we like are medium framed, thick and square. They should have good milk, good on their feet with an easy temperament. Farming part time, you want to be able to move and work the cattle without difficulty.

We are members of a Beef Development Group. We have learnt to run a paddock grazing system to get the most out of the grass. The cows are moved daily into fresh grass with the previous paddock topped and rested for 21 days until the next rotation. We find that regularly moving the cows into fresh grass, gets them used to you. They will follow you anywhere.

The above project all started more than fifteen years ago. We would have travelled to the weanling marts in autumn, trying to buy the best Charolais or Limousin 'lumps' we could reasonably afford with the aim to house over the winter months. They would then be

grazed the following year to be brought onto beef. At the time, weanlings were getting dearer to buy and we decided to investigate breeding our own.

We first saw the Salers breed at the Balmoral show in the old Kings Hall, Belfast. They were very impressive on the cattle lawns and for us, they stood out among the other popular breeds. A few months later, we read a write up in our local farming newspaper to advertise the annual Salers breeding sale. The article included how this breed can calf unassisted to any breed including heavy muscled Charolais. This in-turn also reduced vet fees and helped to add some profit. The slogan on the advert was 'sleep easy – breed Salers'. We thought we would give it a go.

August that year, I was working away from home, and I had asked my father to go to the then Annual Salers sale in Omagh and see if he could buy two Salers cows as a trial. My Father, went to the sale and came home with our first two springing Salers cows from the Woodlawn herd, Killyleagh. Within 6 weeks, both cows had calved the two nicest dark red Salers heifers - unassisted. We were hooked.

Over the next few years, we reduced the stock of weanlings and increased the cow numbers, buying from other Salers herds across Ireland. Upon joining the Salers society as a member, we were invited to join the local area 4 meetings. The meetings are a good way to talk more about the breed, discuss upcoming promotional events and making friends with other breeders. Before long, I had got myself a job helping to show cattle at the Balmoral show, later that year.

This taught me more about the characteristics of the breed and it was not long before I began to exhibit my first Salers heifer under the prefix of Ballykeel Salers at a local show. We were placed last in the class that day, but it did not matter, it was the taking part that meant more.





Throughout the next few years, we have learnt more about the bloodlines, improved our genetics with the use of artificial insemination and aimed to buy nice females as our foundation stock from other top Salers breeders.

I have got more involved in the Society by taking up the position of secretary in our area 4 group. I was later voted in as council member for Northern Ireland, giving me some involvement in the Salers council meetings with representatives from other areas of the society.

We upped our game showing our cattle, the competition improved with banter and craic amongst the other breeders. The highlight of our shows was winning champion out of seven out of eight shows. Winning a champion at Balmoral show is still on my bucket list. The points collected from the shows helped us to achieve UK animal of the year with our Salers cow, Indiana.

This year, we are now running 20 head of Salers with 20 followers. Half of the Salers cows going to our stock bull, Jocker and the remainder, mostly his daughters being inseminated with Salers semen imported from France. Recently, we have been using straws from the Salers bulls, 'Imperial' and 'Icare'. We try to keep two or three heifers each year to build the herd with the rest of the females being sold from the yard through local advertising.

The best of the Salers bull calves are sold for breeding at 12 to 16 months. We AI one or two of our average Salers cows to a Charolais bull to show visitors what the breed can do commercially. This year we have used Caveland Fenian and Doncamillo.

Since we have had our first Salers cow on the farm, we have only assisted one calf at birth. This calf was not presented correctly. We find the breed just calve themselves.



Over the last 18 months, the demand for the Salers breed is starting to take off, in particular the females. Breeders across Northern Ireland have no trouble selling Salers heifers, with demand outstripping supply.

Many of the larger Salers breeders in Northern Ireland also run Charolais or 'Culard' Charolais bull onto their Salers cows. Their calves are being born unassisted and the trade that they are making for their 'golden eggs' at the suckler sales are a welcome advertisement for the rest of the Salers breeders in the country.

Our plans for the future, will be to stick with a pure Salers herd. We would like to improve the quality of our bloodlines. Due to daughters kept, we will replace our 'Trin' stock bull Jocker with a bull of equal or greater quality. We hope to get back out to the local shows soon and continue to help to promote the breed to others.

We find the Salers breed to be the breed for us, the part time farmer and we hope many more realise that the Salers has a place in today's low labour cost system.





# SALERS - THEY DO EXACTLY WHAT A COW SHOULD DO!

By Lynsey Clark and MacGregor Photography



**In a quest to simplify their cattle system, increase profits and for ease of management, the McIntyres introduced Salers to their Aberdeenshire-based suckler herd back in 2009, and the breed has delivered on all of those points and more.**

*"We were previously buying in replacement heifers, which was causing us to spend too much time away from home at breeding sales, plus they were costing too much money and we were not getting the consistency we were looking for with the calves. We wanted to be able to breed our own replacement females that we could cross with the Charolais, to produce calves that we could sell at any stage of life,"* says Jamie McIntyre, who farms in partnership with his dad, Ian, at Milton of Cullerlie, Echt. Also involved are Jamie's mum, Audrey, his wife Kirsty, and their three young sons, Hamish, Lachlan and Robbie.



Alongside the farm, the father and son also run a ground and garden maintenance business, which takes them away from home three to four days a week – so having an easily managed system at home is a must.

*"We knew the Salers crossed well with the Charolais and that they were good mothers, so we bought some heifer stirks from Castle Douglas in 2009, from herds including Cuil and Mains of Penninghame, and continued to do that each year until 2013. We aimed to buy growthy, square females with good tops that were good on their feet and legs,"* explains Jamie.

As the herd has developed, the heifers and second calvers now go to the Salers bull, to breed replacement females, while third calvers go to the Charolais. However, Jamie says they will occasionally bring some of the older, most consistent breeders back to the Salers bull.

*"By breeding our own replacement females, we can afford to be particularly selective when choosing the traits we want to breed for and can make longterm improvements to the herd. It's also better for herd health – we're essentially a closed herd now, only buying in breeding bulls."*

With this system, the McIntyres have increased their herd size from 45 cows to 85 and have put their 150 ewes away, to solely concentrate on making the most of the cattle.



Jamie says: *"With the simpler system and the cows now being easier managed, it has allowed us to increase the numbers which we keep at home – we have 160 acres at the farm and rent ground away from home for silage and yearling male stirks. Because we're working away a lot, it's easier for us to have most of the cattle at home, in the one place, and I don't think we could have carried the numbers we have now with any other breed."*



The majority of the herd, and most of the Charolais calves, calve in the spring, from March 10th onwards. Bulls go out on 1st June for 12 weeks, however, Jamie says the majority (73.5% this year) calve in the first three weeks and the rest in the following three weeks.

*"All except the heifers calve outside. One of the traits that attracted us to the Salers was their big pelvis and we really have very few calving issues. This spring, we had to help one cow with twins that were coming backwards and we had one heifer that needed a pull."*

After calving, the spring cows and calves are rotationally grazed in paddocks through the summer, maximising grass utilisation for the cows to produce lots of milk for their growing calves, with the calves creep fed from mid-August until they are weaned mid-November.



*"With the combination of rotationally grazing paddocks and the Salers natural foraging ability, we can carry around 20% more cows and calves on the same grazing platform than we did previously," says Jamie.*

Last year, Charolais cross bullock and heifer calves averaged 352kg off their mothers. With an average 40kg birth weight, that's an average daily liveweight gain of 1.3kg.

Jamie adds: *"The calves aren't creep fed a particularly fancy feed, the emphasis is on getting milky cows to produce plenty of milk."*

Cross calves are wintered on silage, home-grown barley and bought-in dark grains. They're then sold the following spring, through the ring at Thainstone Mart, at 12-13 months, weighing 450-480kg.

Jamie says: *"Charolais crosses sell very well at Thainstone, there's always plenty demand for them. We graze the spring-born Salers bullocks and any heifers we're not keeping for breeding and fatten them to sell in the back-end, aiming for a maximum 380kg on the hook for bullocks and a bit lighter for heifers. The bull calves not being kept for breeding or selling are all castrated for ease of management, we don't grow enough barley to fatten beef bulls."*



The McIntyres have seen a noticeable improvement in the consistency of their calves, which was one of the main aims when moving to Salers. This makes it easier to determine which cows and calves are performing best, but it also enables them to market the calves better in batches, despite not having huge numbers.

*"Before, when we had different breeds, the calves were all sorts of sizes and colours, but now they're like peas in a pod. The Salers calve easily, with a good vigorous calf, which is easily sellable through the live ring," says Jamie.*

The back-end calves are mainly calving to the Salers bulls (currently Cuil King and a home-bred bull by the French AI sire, Geronimo). They are AI'd for heifers to calve from mid-September and cows from 1st October, with the Charolais



bull put in to sweep anything that's left. Those calves suck all summer, which helps prevent mastitis and they are weaned 5-6 weeks before the cows are due to calve again.

The majority of pure females are kept for replacements, but they sell some commercial bulling heifers at 15-18 months-old and some in-calf heifers.

When selecting which heifers to keep for breeding, Jamie says they first go by the history of the dam, then good feet and legs are a must, as are a good top and a wide frame. And he says they like femininity too.

*"We like a cow that looks like a cow, if that makes sense! They should also be able to walk the earth without needing their feet trimmed and have plenty milk. We don't have an age cut-off point for cows; if they are producing and rearing a good calf every year then we'll keep them. Breeding our own replacements allows us to be very selective in which females we keep."*

*"The Salers are great mothers – they do exactly what a cow should do; have a calf unassisted, look after it well and get back in calf again, and they do that year after year."*

Jamie also finds them easy to work with, which he says is essential. *"We wouldn't have the breed if we were worried about their temperament – we genuinely find them very quiet and easily managed. It's not something that we'd tolerate, especially with Dad and I working away and our three wee boys here. We need to be able to trust the cattle."*

As well as simplifying the cattle system, the family hoped to make it as efficient and low cost as possible, which they feel they've achieved with the Salers and Charolais cross. But, they're not complacent; they plan to continue to improve the breeding herd and keep pushing for higher output.

*"The cows are easily kept through the winter – we can put an extra couple of cows to a round bale and they can winter on fairly low quality silage. For what we're aiming to achieve and for the system that we have, I can't think of a better cross than the Salers/Charolais," adds Jamie.*





# FINISHING BULLS AT A YOUNG AGE MAKES MORE SENSE

By Countrygirl Media



**A simple system which fits around the farm's other enterprises makes Salers the ideal choice for Pwllheli-based Aled Jones, his brother, Endaf and mother, Catherine.**

Running alongside a 150-ewe Lleyn flock and an extensive caravan park and holiday cottage business, the 110-cow Wenol herd has to be easily managed and efficient.

*"We are a busy farm, with the tourism diversifications taking up a significant amount of time during the summer months, meaning we want our farming system to be allow us the time that business demands."*

*"The suckler herd fits well in our system, but we need a cow which can calve herself, mother her calf well and get back in calf easily," he explains.*

Having first introduced Salers to the farm with a batch of heifers bought from France, the family have since converted the entire herd to pedigree Salers, with the herd run on a commercial basis and every cow treated exactly the same.

*"The herd now numbers 110 cows, with calving taking place from early April onwards and 70% of the herd calving in the first three weeks."*

*"This exceptional fertility is one of the main reasons we've moved across to the Salers breed and continues to be a key driver in our commitment to the breed. On top of that the breed is particularly easy calving, with just one needing assistance at calving this year."*

Cows calve outside, having been housed for as short a period as possible through the worst of the winter months to allow grass a recovery time. *"Being on the Llyn peninsula our grass does tend to keep growing well through the winter and we take in 300 ewes for wintering, but it wouldn't be possible to keep cattle out all year round," he explains.*

Cows and calves are housed in November, with creep introduced to the calves from late August onwards to prepare them for weaning which takes place in January and ensure all calves grow on well ahead of housing.



*"Cows are out full time by the middle of March, with 40 acres left ungrazed over winter to give plenty of grass for cows at calving."*

*"While housed cows and in-calf heifers receive a simple diet of grass silage and minerals, with the aim being to have them in good condition for calving, but not too fit."*

To maintain the herd's high level of performance Aled operates strict culling policy whereby any cow requiring assistance at calving or any other issues are culled, as are those calving outside the preferred pattern.

*"Anything due to calve outside of a 12-week window is sold as an in-calf animal, maximising the value in them. However, due to the highly fertile nature of the herd that is generally only two or three a year."*

*"Heifers are calved into the herd at two-years old, with about 20 heifers retained each year, with the aim of keeping the age profile of the herd reasonably young. Surplus heifers are sold for breeding, with anything not suitable for retention or sale finished on-farm alongside the bull calves which are all kept entire and finished as bull beef at about 13 months old, with all of these sold deadweight to ABP."*





Aled says the aim with the bulls is to finish them as soon as possible, but also to ensure they have a good level of fat cover when they are sold. *"We finish them on a blend which we have used for a number of years, it is higher in maize content than previous rations and this helps ensure they lay down fat at the right stage to meet the processor specification."*

*"Finishing the bulls at a young age makes more sense for us than taking them to the maximum weight as we have to buy in both feed and straw to finish them. With the higher maize content in the ration we are able to finish them easily at 12-14 months old, at an average carcass weight of 360kg and all grading either U3 or R3. Once they get past that age their feed intake tends to increase significantly and we don't tend to see this back in the extra weight they gain."*

A few top end bulls are also retained for sale as breeding bulls with these sold from home in recent years. *"We sell heifers from home too, with a good demand for strong bulling heifers."*

When it comes to serving, the herd is split in to three groups, bulling heifers, first calved cows and older cows. One bull runs with the bulling heifers, another with the first calved cows and two with the older cows, with all pedigree bulls run with the whole herd.

*"We don't use any other breed and it works well. No doubt if we were selling the finished bulls on a liveweight basis they may not be suitable for some buyers, but on the hook they come to good money, so there is no need to change. On top of that we have the surplus pure heifers to sell which command a premium price,"* he explains.



With the herd having a high health status there is a ready market for these surplus heifers as recipients for embryo transfer programmes, adding another string to the herd's bow.

Stock bulls are sourced both privately and at Society sales, with the aim being to buy easily fleshed, correct bulls with the ability to breed medium sized cows with plenty of milk, but correct udders. "A bull's dam line is an important part of our selection criteria and we currently have bulls from the UK and France in the herd, including Drumlegagh Granville, the overall champion at Castle Douglas in 2015 and Illamani, a French import from the Fourtet herd.

*"Another recent addition is Drumlegagh Hamish, another bull from John Elliott's herd in Northern Ireland where a number of our early females came from."*

Aled says the benefits of running a self-replacing herd mean he would be hard-pushed to switch now and the ability to cull hard due to the opportunity to replace problem cows with homebred heifers makes for a much more efficient and productive herd.

*"We never think twice about culling a cow that has had a problem of any sort, it simply doesn't make sense to keep problems or carry passengers. We have enough work to do between the farm and the holiday park without making life any more difficult than it needs to be."*

*"Salers are the perfect cow for us and our farm and give us great versatility and flexibility in herd management,"* he adds.





# FARM PROFILE

Article Credit: *Farmers Guardian*, Author Jez Fredenburgh, Photographer P. Lack & Tim Scrivener

Share farming, care farming, and fine dining mix at Whitbourne Estate, Worcestershire, to create a more circular system. **Jez Fredenburgh** meets Joe Evans to find out more.

## Estate combines commercial and charity diversifications

**T**he 607-hectare (1,500-acre) Whitbourne Estate is in an enviable position. Just east of Worcester, it lies between the Shropshire and Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty, and the Brecon Beacons National Park. But sharing its natural assets with the public, alongside a growing list of commercial enterprises, is at the heart of its ethos.

Joe Evans, managing director and sixth generation to farm at Whitbourne, believes their estate can demonstrate to wider society that farms such as theirs are not 'just about making money'.

He says: "We do lots of other things as well. That doesn't need to

be at the cost of farming, it can all work together in tandem. The industry is going through a lot of change and if we can be on the front foot of demonstrating our wider benefits, that can only be a good thing to secure the industry."

### Experience

Joe took over from his father, Bill, seven years ago to allow him to retire. Using his banking experience working in the Channel Islands, India, London and South East Asia, Joe has been expanding the estate's commercial enterprises since then, while paying close attention to family values.

Joe says: "We decide our objectives together as a family. It's normally about what we want to do in terms of environmental impact and what we want our farm to look like."

A key aim is to create a more circular economy. The estate's 182ha (450-acre) organic farm hardly buys any inputs other than straw for winter bedding, and a proportion of its finished beef and lamb is sold to the estate's hospitality businesses.

One of these businesses is Green Cow Kitchens, a 30-seater fine-dining restaurant which

Joe launched in a converted pig shed. A chef prepares seven-course tasting menus based on the seasons and uses as much from the estate as possible – wild boar, pheasants, partridges, apples, pears and herbs and foraged foods, such as damsons and elderflower. Joe would also like to try temporary stocking, such as ducks, for the restaurant.

"We can do eight to 10 lambs a month, but beef is more of a challenge because you end up with so much mince," says Joe.

"But we want the restaurant to be a showcase for what British agriculture can do."

Demand for the estate's produce will soon increase, following the family's investment in a new 200-person event venue and business, Crumplebury, complete with 13 bedrooms. It will be powered entirely by a woodchip boiler using byproducts from Whitbourne's forestry management activities.

The on-site care farm, Longlands, also makes use of the estate's farm, with young students getting hands-on farm experience and providing extra help for activities such as moving stock. In addition, the estate has four let farms and 19 cottages.

But it is still a lot to juggle and

has meant an expansion of the team.

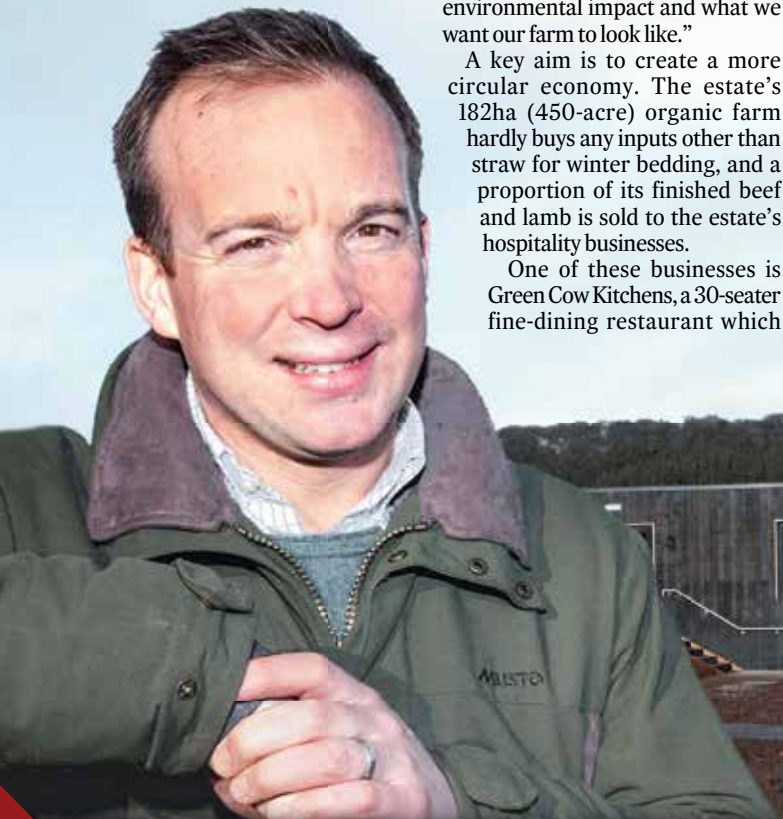
Joe says: "When I took over, there were four of us at the Christmas dinner in the first year – last year there were 52, including staff and volunteers. It's a big job to make sure that I have the brain space to help everyone do what they need to do."

"Before, we were just a very sleepy estate that could afford to be a bit more reactionary, but now we need to have a clear plan."



The industry is going through a lot of change and if we can be on the front foot of demonstrating our wider benefits, that can only be a good thing

JOE EVANS



Joe Evans on the Whitbourne Estate, Herefordshire.



# FARM PROFILE

“The biggest challenge now is making sure Crumplebury is a success – we’ve borrowed a lot of money and will be opening the estate up more to the public. I need to make sure we don’t get too distracted by this beast and compromise our farm values.”

## Share farming

Part of that plan was taking nearly 121ha (300 acres) of farmland back in-hand to create a 182ha (450-acre) beef and sheep unit.

Tim and Lara Roberts run the organic unit with a hybrid agreement between contract farming and share farming. Tim is self-employed and farms on a contract basis, with all sales and bills going to the Evans family. But as the livestock builds up, a proportion of them will be owned by the Roberts. Tim and Lara bought half the farm’s existing flock of Lleyn sheep when they took over and have gradually built them up to today’s 400 ewes.

Tim says: “The aim is to sell breeding females as yearlings.

“We are crossing about 50 per cent to a Hampshire ram, which has been giving us higher growth rates, easier finishing and we’ve been getting some very good commercial carcasses.

“They thrive off fresh air and a good view, which suits us since we’re very low input. We’re trying to be the best we can from what we grow.”

The couple also added their own herd of pedigree Salers cattle to the farm’s existing pedigree Beef Shorthorns. Now, numbers are up to 45 Beef Shorthorns and 30 Salers, and finished stock is sold to Meadow Quality and retailed under super-market organic meat labels.



There’s quite a mixture of animals being sold, which helps with cashflow

TIM ROBERTS

Tim says: “They’re maternal beef breeds, so we also sell breeding females and the odd breeding bull to fatten. So, there’s quite a mixture of animals being sold, which helps with cashflow.”

To keep outside inputs to a minimum, the couple grows 4ha (10 acres) of spring oats, but is looking to expand the arable area. Tim grew 10-12ha (25-30 acres) of brassicas for the sheep this year in a rotation of temporary grass and red clover, but the brassicas suffered from flea beetle.

## Care

The Roberts also work in partnership with Longhands Care Farm, which Joe’s mother, Julia, established a decade ago and still leads. The charity is paid by local authorities and police to give vital support and education to vulnerable young people.

Through hands-on farm experience they can gain qualifications, including equine studies and tractor driving, and a new teacher will now teach GCSEs in maths, English and art. Up to 30 young people attend each week.

Under a large amount of supervision and safeguarding, the students



Tim Roberts runs the organic livestock unit for the estate.

PICTURE: PAUL LACK

take part in various farming activities.

Joe says: “It’s really handy if I need help moving cattle of moving animals up the race.

“They arrive in their white trainers and hoodies on day one, nervous about being on-farm. My mother has a smart tactic of first introducing them to the guinea pig, and before you know it, they’re helping to handle cattle.

“They’re given gentle encouragement and they gain confidence, which is part of equipping them with life skills. These kids are in a perilous position in society, so it’s about trying to get them out of that cycle and give them a bit of belief. Being trusted to help Tim halter-train cattle is a pretty big step.

“It’s hugely gratifying to see



The estate’s flock of Lleyn sheep.



# FARM PROFILE WORCESTERSHIRE



Before, we were just a very sleepy estate that could afford to be a bit more reactionary, but now we need to have a clear plan

JOE EVANS

improvements in their chances and outlook.

“It’s part of what an estate can offer, which goes beyond the traditional and is about adding a little bit of societal good, sharing our natural environment and improving these kids’ lot.”

The estate also has 158ha (390 acres) of trees managed by a forestry team. Oaks are grown for high-quality timber, while general coppicing and thinning activities provide enough material for a small firewood business.

## Nursery

Joe says: “We also sell acorns to a nursery – trees themselves can be a yielding crop. You don’t have to cut them down to do something with them.”

The estate is also looking ahead with climate change in

mind, to which species of fast-growing non-native species might thrive there.

“We’re working with Tim to identify areas of grassland that aren’t particularly productive and thinking about turning them into forestry, as I think that’s going to be a really big part of where Government policy drives us.”

Managing the estate might be hard work, but it beats corporate life, says Joe.

“It’s a wonderful privilege to be able to do this because there are relatively few of us that are given the responsibility of managing land in this country. I have the privilege and responsibility to try and get it right.”



The interior of the Crumplebury restaurant and event facility.



The care farm on the estate.



Crumplebury restaurant and event facility.

PICTURES: TIM SCRIVENER





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*“We have seen tremendous results while using Davidsons Excel Beef Nuts on farm, putting great condition on youngstock to achieve great results in the sale ring. Recently, we sold a batch of Salers X Charolais store calves at 11 months old with an average weight of 440kg (average 1.2kg DLWG) bringing in an average return of £1060 per calf.”*

**Murray Lyle, Strathallan Salers**

**Contact Sales: 01501 820 473  
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# FORAGE KEY TO SUCCESS FOR STRATHALLAN

By Lorna Shaw, Davidsons Animal Feeds

**Salers are famed for being a quick fleshing maternal breed that calve down easily to produce fast growing calves ideal for any production system. What makes them so successful at this is their ability to utilise any forage making them an ideal breed in the UK due to the variety of land we have to offer.**

It is this ability to make the most from a forage based system that attracted Murray Lyle to the breed, establishing his Strathallan herd from french genetics in 2014 with forage being the key ingredient in the yearly feed plan.

The winter preparation starts early on in the year getting fields shut off for silage production with the intention of making a few different classes of silage. Murray always prioritises grass management for his herd with a good grass rotation in place with an annual reseeding plan in place. This means there are fields of varying maturity available in order to make silage suitable for all age groups on farm. Each year the aim is to make a field of high quality silage for young stock, a silage of slightly lesser quality ideal for feeding to cows pre and post calving and a haylage/ hay ideal for feeding to dry cows and finishing stock. Once the silage is cut, baled and wrapped it is then left to ferment for a minimum of 6 weeks before a core sample of the bales can be taken by an on farm nutritionist for analysis using NIR technology in order to determine the quality of forage from each field cut. By analysing the silage, it allows us to determine important parameters such as dry matter, crude protein, metabolizable energy, fibre content and also assess preservation of the crop.

By having access to this knowledge, it allows better winter planning allowing us to allocate which forage should be fed to each age group on farm.

*Table 1 shows key nutrients analysed in silage and target levels we are aiming for to achieve a top quality forage.*

Nutrient	Importance	Target
Dry Matter (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>High dry matter silages may reduce intakes and can be more susceptible to spoilage.</li><li>A low dry matter silage can lead to excess acid production affecting stability and intakes also.</li></ul>	25.0 - 40.0
Crude Protein (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If protein is low the diet will need to be supplemented from concentrate particularly for breeding and growing stock.</li><li>If protein is too high, silage tends to be rapidly degraded and is poorly utilised especially if ME is low</li></ul>	12.0-15.0
ME (MJ/kg)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Metabolisable Energy is an estimate of the energy content of the feed available to the animal after losses.</li><li>A good level of ME is important in order to promote daily live weight gain.</li></ul>	>11.0
NDF (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>High NDF levels are associated with mature crops at cutting and may slow digestion and reduce intakes.</li><li>Low NDF silages can digest rapidly a may lead to reduced rumen performance.</li></ul>	45.0 – 55.0

As cows mature and go through the production cycle their nutritional requirements alter. By working alongside Murray and having a tailored feed plan using forage available and supplementing with concentrate where required on farm we can ensure we get the most from maternal stock at each stage of production to ensure longevity and performance throughout their life cycle.

## Youngstock

The growing stage is one of the most important stages of a cow's life cycle. It is important to provide the best start for young stock on farm to ensure longevity of future cows and support them during this development phase when they are still forming their rumen, growing frame and building muscle. During this period it is important that the diet provides sufficient nutrients, vitamins and minerals in order to support this growth and development. When allocating forage it is worth keeping the best quality silage on farm aside for young stock. Ideally we are looking for silage with a good dry matter within the target range, higher protein vital for growth and high levels of energy - vital for ensuring daily live weight gain. In order to aid rumen formation, the addition concentrate to the diet at this stage may also be beneficial particularly during winter or when only a poorer quality silage is available. When looking for a concentrate suitable for young stock ideally we are looking for a good quality high energy concentrate that is between 16 – 18% crude protein such as Davidson's Excel Beef Nut, a high energy, 18% crude protein maize based growing ration. Choosing a feed that provides a good level of bypass starch and protein at this stage is essential for improved rumen efficiency. A triple starch formulation (maize, wheat and barley) can help provide a better rumen balance at this crucial stage, keeping maize near the top of the formulation in order to provide essential bypass starch. In terms of bypass protein, ensuring a good balance of proteins such as a high soya inclusion is essential to provide bypass protein in the diet promoting growth of frame in young heifers. Excel also provides a great source of nutrition to growing Saler cross calves with a recent batch of calves from Mid Cambushinnie sold as store achieving 440kg at 11 months of age showing outstanding average weight gains of 1.2kg/ day from birth selling at an average of £1060 following grass and Excel fed as creep during summer.



## Pre Calving

It is important when determining a feed plan pre calving for cows that we consider body condition and age at calving also. Ideally pre calving we are aiming for a body condition score (BCS) of between 2.5 – 3.0 at the time of calving. If cows are in good condition or have some additional reserves, the diet should only be providing maintenance for the cow in order to avoid laying down any excess body condition pre calving which may lead to issues such as difficult calvings or ketosis post calving. A forage based diet is best at this stage with either a decent quality silage that can also be mixed with straw in order to increase dry matter if required or a good quality haylage. It is important that the diet still provides sufficient crude protein and energy in order to support the cow and her developing calf, therefore feeding just straw close up to calving should be avoided. For cows with a low BCS or younger heifers calving down at 24 months an additional source of protein and energy is required in order to provide maintenance to ensure adequate colostrum quality at calving and that the growing calves needs are met. This should be provided at no more than 2kg per cow per day, taking forage availability into consideration.

## Post Calving

It is at this stage that cows requirements increase in order to provide for their young. Graph 1 below shows how the energy requirement of a cow alters throughout production increasing greatly at calving. It is common for cows to lose body condition post calving as they start to utilise body reserves in order to find the excess energy required with a target BCS 60 days post calving of 2.0 – 2.5. It is important post calving that nutrition is sufficient to prevent excessive condition loss and provide sufficient milk for the growing calf. Preventing excessive condition loss is especially important to ensure fertility is not compromised ready for bulling again.

## Dry Cows

The main aim with dry cows is to ensure body condition is maintained. During the dry period the diet should keep cows full providing sufficient dry matter without providing excess energy or protein. This is where the poorest forage on farm is best utilised. Ideally looking for a forage higher in dry matter with average protein and energy. If there is no high dry matter forage available straw is also a good addition in a dry cow diet providing a vital source of dry matter ensuring cows are kept full without laying down excess body reserves which could become an issue as we move closer to calving again.


Forward planning and analysing silage allows Murray to assess feed plans closely, working alongside myself on farm to formulate rations tailoring to the forage available. This not only ensures efficient use of forage over the course of the year but also ensures maximum efficiency and performance in the Strathallan herd to ensure the herd continue to produce top quality progeny for years to come.

# STRATHALLAN SALERS



Mid Cambushinnie Farm, Cromlix, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 9JU, United Kingdom

**Murray Lyle** Tel: 07971 298933 / 01786 880631 Email: [murraylyle@hotmail.com](mailto:murraylyle@hotmail.com)

 [murray.lyle.9](https://www.facebook.com/murray.lyle.9)



# SALERS TICK EVERY BOX FOR SCOTSTOUNBANK

*By Siân Sharp, photographs by Isla Campbell*

**Set on a typical steep Peeblesshire farm, Scotstounbank is home to the Aitken family, William and Avril alongside their son Michael and his wife Fiona and daughter Ava.**

The family run 300 cows and around 1000 sheep, over 770 acres of owned land and a further 100 acres of rented ground which reaches from 700ft to 1150ft above sea level.

Michael and Fiona have recently moved into the farmhouse where Fiona, as well as looking after 15-month-old Ava, also operates her beauty business 'BeautiFi'. William and Avril are close at hand in the nearby village of Blyth Bridge and the family are also ably assisted by Robbie who now works full-time on the farm but has assisted seasonally and part-time since 2014.

William grew up at Carlophill Farm where his brother, John, and John's son, William still farm, and which can be seen on a clear day from the top of Scotstounbank. The family purchased part of the current ground in 1969 with the second half of the farm being purchased a decade later in 1979.



Most farms of this topography would consist of parcels of very rough ground and woodland, but the vast majority of the land is utilised for grazing stock and producing fodder. Michael said, "it would be a great shame to come out every morning and see this land covered in trees, rather than livestock". Some of the permanent pasture on the farm has not been reseeded for at least thirty years but comparative analysis against more newly sown pastures shows only minor fluctuations in quality and nutritional value. The silage ground is reseeded regularly.

The sheep enterprise consists of Scotch Mule ewes, their Texel X ewe lambs are put to a Texel tup and lambs are finished and sent in batches of between 150 and 250 to Dunbia Carnaby, Yorkshire. In addition, approximately 300 Blackface wedder store lambs are purchased from Lanark and put on to grass then housed in mid-December to be sold by February each year.

The 300-cow herd consists of Salers, Salers cross, Angus cross, with a small pedigree herd of eighteen Aberdeen Angus. The family run two pure, pedigree Salers bulls,



Rednock Louis and Bacardi National Treasure, and the remaining bulls used on the farm are Aberdeen Angus.

Salers Cross bulls were introduced some years ago and after initially having purchased Salers Heifers from his brother John, at Carlophill Farm, William and Avril decided to start breeding their own replacement heifers.

Today, the family believe in a strict selection policy, with a large farm being run by a small family they place a huge emphasis on temperament. All the cows calve outside and recently they adopted a policy to calf at two years of age, therefore, the most valuable trait to the Aitken family is the Salers ease of calving and milk. Michael said, "I like cows with good black feet, that show signs of growth, milk, conformation and a good temperament and they have to calve easily and unassisted". He said, "Salers tick every box for us", and William added, "they really are the ultimate suckler, we stick with Salers because there really isn't any better!"

Each year around 40 replacement females are kept, another 20 Angus cross heifers are sold as breeding replacements and the remainder of the females are finished. Males are either sold as store or finished depending on the trade in the year. The Aitkens keep a keen eye on market prices and have also established long term relationships with repeat customers, which is always a sign of great success.

Around seventy proven and stylish females are selected for the 'A Team' to run with the Salers bulls, younger females





are put to the Angus but the Aitken's adopt the same policy with their cattle as they do with their sheep, they do not keep  $\frac{3}{4}$  bred females for breeding as they feel this compromises their breeding strategy and those females don't have the 'hybrid vigour' that is all important to them.

Finished cattle go through Dunbia Highland Meats and have done for a number of years with finished steers going off farm at around 700kg liveweight and heifers between 620-650kg live weight. The majority consistently meet carcass industry requirements and grade out at a U4L or R4L. Previously the family had used the Charolais bull across their Salers which both Michael and William agreed, "was a very good cross and did produce a 'cracking' golden calf," but with weight penalties applied by abattoirs and consumers looking for smaller cuts, it seemed a natural choice for them to move to the Angus sire where they also capitalised on a premium for their finished cattle with the added advantage of less de-horning and less labour costs.

The cattle are housed in cubicles or slats in the winter reducing the bedding costs. Welfare however is of the utmost importance and comfort mat slats have been applied to all of the older slats, and cubicle mats are being added to the cattle sheds. To protect the longevity of the sheds, new roofs have been applied and at each turn there are signs of small modifications to make life easier for both man and beast.

The most recent investment is a purpose-built shed containing a new handling system, installed, and modified, by themselves to suit their needs. This makes for easier and safer cattle handling, with the new race being adjustable in width to accommodate everything from small calves to mature bulls. The cattle crush and shedding gates are worked hydraulically, for ease of handling and safety.

The Aitkens are not afraid of experimenting and embracing new concepts. Three years ago, they used sawdust to bed the calf creeps, last year they trialled a combination of sawdust and paper gypsum and oat husks with their extremely dry matter content will be used in the winter of 20/21.

Rotational grazing was also adopted this year, whereby a 25-acre paddock was split into four sections and seventy bullocks were moved regularly between the sections.

Michael said, "It was hard to ascertain the level of success from this, as 2020 had been so dry early on, however I do believe the grass lasted a lot longer, given the conditions, than it would have otherwise."

The family diversified in 2012, in the form of three small wind turbines, set on a perfect location of a horse-shoe ridge, capturing the wind from a 300-degree angle. "It was imperative any diversification project did not distract the family from its key objective and priorities, the livestock farm," said William. So, the small windmills were perfect,



they have a simple structure that can be dropped by the family for annual maintenance and they capitalised on the 20-year Feed-In-Tariff available at that time. The turbines are fondly nick-named after William and Avril's daughters Clare, Alison and Louise!

Another experiment this year is a Kale/Rape hybrid crop which was direct drilled straight after first cut silage. This is a cross of two separate brassica parent plants, the kale plant and forage rape. The resulting hybrid provides high protein forage and is ideal for winter grazing, since it is fast-growing, vigorous, and winter hardy. The intention is to wean calves slightly earlier this year and strip graze 80 to 100 cows on it.

The Aitkens are active in the local area, supporting and taking part in competitions held by the local Peeblesshire discussion group as well as being involved with the Peeblesshire Agricultural Society's annual show, where Michael is currently the Commercial Cattle Steward, Avril does the show photography, and William is a Past President.

Looking to the future it was refreshing to find both Michael and William were incredibly positive and optimistic. Both believed that challenges often presented opportunities and that a positive outlook was key to a positive outcome.

For the Aitkens, their future is about capitalising on the strong foundation they have built around their livestock and in particular their easily managed Salers which they have proved, suit any sire and suit any system. Going forward the next generation will continue to experiment with new systems, feeds, crops and bedding with the aim to increasing efficiency and outputs but without compromising the existing high standards.

Scotstounbank is the type of farm which turns grass into meat. Within this, the Salers breed is at the core, providing them with the flexibility and adaptability needed in current times whilst producing a quality product that meets market requirements, attracts premium prices whilst all the time, living up to its name of the ultimate suckler.



# SALERS SALES 2020

## February 2020 – Stirling Bull Sales

Topping the February Stirling Bull Sales for the Salers at 8000gns was Strathallan Navigator bred by Murray Lyle an April 2018 born bull, sired by Seamore Kawaski out of Seamore Jenna. The bull stood as intermediate and overall champion and was knocked down to the judge of the show Mr William Aitken of Carlopshill, Penicuik.

Two lots hit 7000gns the first was Rigel Nirvana, a Rigel Byron Poll son out of Rigel Desire Poll that was born in March 2018 and was senior champion and reserve overall champion. Nirvana was knocked down to R Mackie of Motherwell.

The second bull to secure 7000gns was the junior champion from Farmstock Genetics Lot 248 Cumbrian Nadal Poll born in June 2018 by Ideal out of Cumbrian Hyacinth 661 Poll. He goes to the home of W N Douglas from Catslackburn. The next top price was 5800gns for Mr P Boyd with Lot 231 Drumaglea Natural an April 2018 born son by Halley out of Drumaglea Yo-Yo, who was purchased on the day by A V Hamilton, Dumfries.

### AVERAGES

17 bulls topped at 8000gns, average of 4600gns / £4830 with a clearance rate of 77%, up £1301 on February 2019.

### PRE SHOW RESULTS

**Judge:** Mr William Aitken, Carlopshill, Penicuik

<b>Senior Male Champion</b>	Lot 229	Rigel Nirvana
<b>Reserve Senior Champion</b>	Lot 221	Rednock McQueen Poll
<b>Intermediate Champion</b>	Lot 234	Strathallan Navigator
<b>Reserve Intermediate Champion</b>	Lot 233	Cleuchhead Noah
<b>Junior Champion</b>	Lot 248	Cumbrian Nadal Poll
<b>Reserve Junior Champion</b>	Lot 246	Darnford Nelson



STRATHALLAN NAVIGATOR



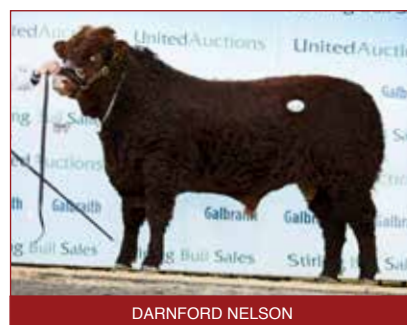
RIGEL NIRVANA



CUMBRIAN NADAL



CLEUCHHEAD NOAH



DARNFORD NELSON

LOT	SELLER	GUINEAS	BUYER	
221	REDNOCK ESTATE	3000	KLONDYKE FARMS LTD	Dumfries
222	DRUMAGLEA LTD	4200	J & A DUNLOP	Maybole, Ayrshire
223	LYBURN	2000	KLONDYKE FARMS LTD	Thornhill, Dumfries
224	MACKENZIE	5000	G T & S COGHILL	Orkney
225	MACKENZIE	3500	J M FISHER LTD	Stranraer
227	LYBURN	3000	G T & S COGHILL	Orkney
229	RIGEL PEDIGREE	7000	ROBERT MACKIE	Motherwell
230	LYBURN	4500	N & D AUSTIN LTD	Castle Douglas
231	DRUMAGLEA LTD	5800	A V HAMILTON & CO	Thornhill, Dumfries
232	LIVESEY	3500	R H BRUNTON	Arbroath
233	LIVESEY	5500	G BROWN & SONS	Dunbar
234	LYLE	8000	J M AITKEN	Penicuik
243	WATSON	3000	R MCCARLIE LTD	Shotts
244	WATSON	4200	T & I ALEXANDER	Caithness
245	WATSON	4000	GENOCH MAINS FARMS	Stranraer
246	WATSON	5000	SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT	Inverness
248	FARMSTOCK GENETICS	7000	W N DOUGLAS	Selkirk







## February 2020 - Thainstone Spring Show

No sooner had Terence Pye returned from Stirling Bull Sales when he hit the road again, this time heading further north to Thainstone on Wednesday 26th February 2020. He took the overall champion (Any Other Breed) at the Spring Show and sold his champion Rigel Nike for 4200gns. Other Salers bulls sold to 2200gns.



## May 2020 - Stirling Bull Sales



A move to directly market pedigree bulls following the cancellation of Stirling Bull Sales was hailed a success.

The sale's organisers, United Auctions, were forced to cancel the May instalment of the sales due to Covid-19 restrictions. Rather than carrying out an online timed auction, the firm launched a direct marketing service whereby auctioneers negotiated a price for individual bulls with prospective buyers. "All those involved were confident that the right customers found the right bulls that best suited their individual needs," said United Auctions auctioneer Raymond Kennedy. He said 121 bulls had been sold so far. Salers topped at 5,000gn for Rednock Nevis from Port of Menteith breeders

Malcolm and Gill Pye. The Salers average for three sold was £4025;

## October 2020 - Stirling Bull Sales

Topping the Salers trade at Stirling Bull Sales on Sunday 18th October 2020 was Lot 302, Cammock Nova, for Niall and Katie Blair. Cammock Nova is a September 2018 born son by Bacardi Herbie out of Cammock Libra, a Gulliver sired daughter. Cammock Nova sold to W S L Muir, Upper Onston, Stenness, Orkney for 5500gns. Next to sell was Lot 304 from Murray Lyle, Strathallan Orateur sired by Seawell Kawasaki the sire of the February 2020 Salers Stirling Bull Sales Champion. Strathallan Orateur sold for 4500gns to Q. Limond for his 120 head herd at Barskelly Farm, Ayrshire. Rigel Pedigree sold Lot 301 Rigel Newton, a Lascaux son out of a 12 year old Othello bred cow Rigel Pascal Poll. At 3000gns, Rigel Newton joined Cammock Nova on the boat to Orkney as he travelled to his new home of Millburn Farm, Harray, owned by Steven Sandison. Three bulls sold out the six bulls present to an average of 4333gns, £4550.



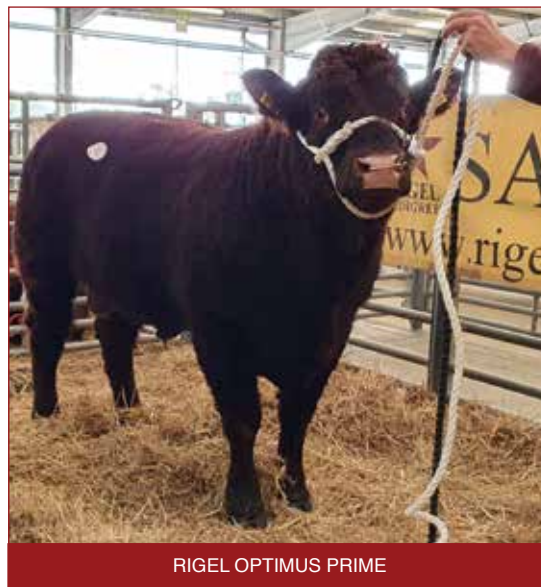


## October 2020 - The Welshpool Autumn Sale

The Welshpool autumn sale of pedigree and commercial Salers took place on Saturday 10th October 2020. The market was a lot quieter affair than normal due to the Covid-19 restrictions with only vendors and buyers being allowed to attend the market.

Traditionally it is always difficult to ascertain the real reasons as to why prices and clearance rates fluctuate from sale to sale but over the weekend it became very apparent that one of the key factors dominating this sale was the concerns of straw shortages and increased prices for straw over the winter months. Nonetheless the averages were up in every section.

Leading the trade at 4000gns was Rigel Optimus Prime, a March 2019 born bull out of Cleuchhead Gentle by Noble. Optimus had strong conformation and an excellent growth rate. His sire, Noble (origin Fourtet) descended from Beguin and Variegeois, two very influential French bulls. His dam was purchased from Messrs Livesey and was chosen for the strength of her female traits. Both Optimus Prime and his dam have milk EBVs in the top 5% of the breed.



RIGEL OPTIMUS PRIME

The commercial section averaged £1184.38 for 16 animals sold and had a healthy clearance rate of 84% which was £105.38 a head up on 2019. A & M Austin had a steady and consistent trade and commanded a top price of £1800 for lot 4 an 18-month-old in-calf heifer which sold to D J Nightingale, Ashover. They also achieved the 2nd and 3rd highest prices in this section with £1600 and £1400 for two other 18mth old in-calf heifers which travelled to the same home of J S Abel, Llanidloes, Powys.

The pedigree female average was also up £383.27 per head on 2019 with 11 out of 18 females selling to a top of £2415 (2300gns) for P M & S Donger's, Seawell Orma an Iron Man sired female out of Seawell Fanny and PD'd in-calf to Norbert she went home to BJ & MY Davies, Gorse Farm Rhayader, who also purchased lot 30 from PM & S Donger, Seawell Okama, a Landmark daughter out of Seawell Kama and again PD'd in calf to Norbert. Topping the production sale from J F Robinson and Sons was lot 35 Cuil Kylie born in 2015 by Ballymackeogh Leo ET out of Cuil Eileen.

Kylie was bought by Edward Bros, Glashirfryn, Oswestry who also purchased one of the Seawell female consignments.

Mick Dumbreck put forward the only led pedigree female heifer lot 22, Crowgarth Orchid, a February 2019 born heifer by Baron and out of Cuil Klot. Orchid was purchased by R A Watson, Woodcock Farm, Asbourne for 1300gns (£1365).

Lot No.	Class	Seller	Price	Buyer
1	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,400	J S ABEL
2	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£950	LJ & IR POWELL
3	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,050	I M JONES
4	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,800	DJ NIGHTINGALE
5	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,200	P & M DAVIES
6	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£850	LJ & IR POWELL
7	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,600	J S ABEL
8	Commercial	A GOWTHORPE	£1,250	J W BUFTON & SON
9	Commercial	A GOWTHORPE	£850	I M JONES
10	Commercial	A GOWTHORPE	£1,200	P & M DAVIES
13	Commercial	J F ROBINSON & SONS	£1,350	A GARDNER & SONS
14	Commercial	J F ROBINSON & SONS	£1,350	A GARDNER & SONS
15	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,000	P & M DAVIES
16	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,050	J W BUFTON & SON
17	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,050	J W BUFTON & SON
18	Commercial	A & M AUSTIN	£1,000	P & M DAVIES
22	Pedigree	M DUMBRECK	1300gns	R A WATSON
24	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	1950gns	EDWARDS BROS
25	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	2000gns	C LLOYD
26	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	1950gns	A G TEESDALE
28	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	2300gns	B J & MY DAVIES
30	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	1950gns	B J & MY DAVIES
31	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	2100gns	C LLOYD
32	Pedigree	PM & SM DONGER	1900gns	A G TEESDALE
35	Pedigree	J F ROBINSON & SONS	1800gns	EDWARDS BROS
37B	Pedigree	J F ROBINSON & SONS	1600gns	DJ NIGHTINGALE
38B	Pedigree	J F ROBINSON & SONS	1550gns	C LLOYD
43	Pedigree	RIGEL PEDIGREE	4000gns	G G WILLIAMS

## November 2020 - Premier Sale of Pedigree and Commercial Salers, Castle Douglas

Pedigree female Salers were in high demand at the 29th Premier sale of pedigree and commercial Salers at Wallets Marts, Castle Douglas on Saturday 7th November 2020.

Mr Patrick Boyd led both the pedigree male and female sale. First with Drumaglea Nymph, a May 2018 born heifer, in calf to Cantal, sired by Bronson and out of Drumaglea Arabella. Her dam also produced Drumaglea Kes who sold at Stirling for 12,000gns. Drumaglea Nymph found her new home at Trayboyack Salers owned by A & J Wright based at Pinmore Mains, Ayrshire.

Rednock Estate added four females to their Stirlingshire based herd. Drumaglea Naomi an April 2018 born heifer by Halley out of Cumbrian Rouge 472 was secured at 4000gns, Drumaglea Nubile another Halley sired female born in May 2018 out of a Ringo sired dam, joined Rednock for 3400gns. Gill & Malcolm Pye also purchased Drumaglea Nevus, a September 2018 heifer in-calf to Django for 3000gns and paid 2800gns for Drumaglea Nougatine again another Halley sired daughter this time out of the milky dam, Drumaglea Kay.

Topping the Cuil production females was Cuil Nesta a November 2018 born female by Knottown Nector out of Cuil Daisy and guaranteed in-calf to Cuil Nero. Nesta heads home to Cammock Salers owned by Niall & Katie Blair.

Andrew Tullie bought Drumaglea Nippy and John Martin & Sons bought Drumaglea Nan both paying 3600gns each. D Anderson, Strocherie Farm purchased the second highest price Cuil production female, with Cuil Nadia an October 2018 born female out of Cuil Gin, making 3100gns.

Trayboyack Salers purchased a Halley sired female, Drumaglea Nimbale born in May 2018 and in-calf to Baron for 2800gns and Northern Ireland breeder David Boyd secured two Cuil heifers at 2400gns and 2600gns respectively for Cuil Natalie and Cuil Needy for his Knockagh herd.

The final Drumaglea heifer from a line that goes back to Vendee was sold to Mr A Henry, Knockallan for 2200gns.

**13 females sold with 100% clearance at an average of 3408gns / £3578.08 and increase of £1189.33 on 2019.**

Trayboyack Salers had to bid to 10,000 guineas to secure their pick of the bulls Drumaglea Nuggett, a Halley sired son born in September 2018, out of Drumaglea Chelsea. Nuggett joined the two Drumaglea females Nymph and Nimbale on the short journey home to Ayrshire.

N & D Austin, Boreland of Girthon purchased Cuil Oslo for 6000gns. Oslo was sired by Drumaglea Kingpin, out of Cuil Flo and took the second highest bull price of the day.

Jack Sleigh and Sons sold Tolquhon Napoleon a Sligo Ohmy son to Aidansfield Salers for 5500gns and Murray Lyle sold Strathallan Optimal a Seamore Kawasaki sired bull to John Mitchell, Greenlaw for 4000gns. Seamore Kawasaki was also the sire of the Breed Champion at Stirling Bull Sales, February 2020.

Mr D Grant, Kirriemuir headed home with Rigel Nebraksa Poll a May 2018 born Rigel Byron Poll son for 3800gns. Donald Gilder, Cheltenham purchased Rednock Otto Poll for 3700gns, whose sire Rednock Lagerfeld was placed 1st at the Royal Highland Show.

The Aitken's at Carlopshills took home Drumaglea Napoleon for 3500gns and William and Michael Aitken purchased Drumaglea Neptune for 3400gns for their herd at Scotstounbank, Blyth Bridge.

Douglas Brown selected Cumbrian Odeon Poll for his females at home at Mosshall, Lockerbie for 3000gns and Angus Fettes of Essil Salers purchased Kaimburn Ozzie and Bacardi Orly for 2000gns each.

**11 bulls sold with a clearance of 84.62% and averaged 4263gns / £4476.82, up £268.07 on 2019.**

Mr J Wright of Trayboyack Salers had been asked to judge the commercial pens of four Salers or more and his Champion and winner of the Willie Davidson Memorial Trophy along with his Reserve Champion ticket both went to Colin McClymont and family for Lots 6 and Lots 4 respectively. The McClymont's also topped the commercial bulling heifers' section, realising £1820.

Leading the in-calf heifer section was A R Lee of Lumbylaw who sold four in-calf heifers to J R Graham for £2000 apiece.

**32 in-calf heifers were sold at an average of £1554.69 and 168 bulling heifers were sold at an average of £1165.60.**

Finally, in the absence of a show and the normal presentation dinner, a special announcement was made in the sale ring. Vice-Chair of the Salers Cattle Society of the UK Andrew Sleigh, awarded fellow Council Member, breeder and exhibitor, Alan Howatson the coveted Cuil Salver donated by the McClymont family in recognition of the enormous contribution made by a member to inspire, encourage and promote the Salers breed and the Society.



DRUMAGLEA NUGGETT - 10,000GNS



CUIL OSLO - 6,000GNS



TOLQUHON NAPOLEON - 5,500GNS



STRATHALLAN OPTIMAL - 4,000GNS







# IN VITRO EMBRYO PRODUCTION FOR CATTLE BREEDERS

By Gavin Tait BVMS, MRCVS

In vitro embryo production (IVP) has been trialled in the UK numerous times over the last 30 or so years and has always struggled to compete with conventional MOET (Multiple Ovulation and Embryo Transfer) flushing in terms of cost, reliability and consistency. In the last decade however, it has become more popular around the world and numerous large scale breed improvement programmes are using this technology with great success.

This article focuses on what we have learned during our transition from traditional MOET flushing into IVP and how we can use our experiences to shape our future.

## Introduction

ABEurope was established in 2014 when ABS New Zealand and Innovis Breeding Services formed a new partnership with the intent to establish an IVP system in the UK. ABS NZ (Animal Breeding Services New Zealand) had a fully functioning and very successful system in New Zealand which was producing around 4,000–5,000 in vitro embryos annually, predominantly in the flourishing dairy industry and often under contract with larger companies such as LIC and CRV.

Worldwide IVP was gaining significant market share from traditional MOET flushing and we could see a market opportunity within the UK for a successful IVP system. This would complement the sheep breeding business which was already well established; ABEurope is the largest provider for Artificial Sheep Breeding services in the UK.

## IVP/Bovine business staff

We started with 2 full time staff on the bovine side but in 2020 now have 5/6 full time staff:

- 1 Laboratory Manager (Embryologist)
- 2 Embryologists
- 2 Cow side Technicians
- 1 full time vet + 1 part time vet

*(Also, some extra staff support from the bovine side of business when available)*

## Services provided (Bovine)

- IVP production of embryos
- Embryo implantation
- MOET flushing
- Embryo storage
- Embryo import/export
- Semen collection
- On farm service and livery service

*The advantages offered by IVP over MOET were fairly clear as shown opposite (Table 1).*

**Table 1:** Advantages offered by IVP over MOET.

Explanation: stimulation (stim) is where cows receive FSH injections to stimulate follicles, and hopefully increase the competence of the oocytes we collect.

	IVP (no stim)	IVP (stim)	MOET
No. collections per month	4	2	1
No. semen straws per donor	1 (or less!)	1 (or less!)	3 - 5
Average no. embryos per collection	2 - 3	4 - 6	4 - 6
Average no. of embryos per month/donor	8 - 12	8 - 12	4 - 5
Collect from <b>pregnant</b> cows	Yes	Yes	No
How soon after calving can we collect	4 weeks	4 weeks	8 weeks
Interval between collections	1 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks
Handlings per collection	1	7	13
Vet/Drugs cost to programme donor	£0	£50	£100+
Pregnancy hold rate (fresh embryos)	60%	60%	60%
Pregnancy hold rate (frozen embryos)	45%	45%	50%

The MOET flush is relatively invasive in that we pass a catheter into the horn of the uterus and flush the embryos from the horn by flushing fluid in and out of the horn through that catheter.

With IVP we don't go through the cervix of the cow so the lining of the uterus and cervix remains undisturbed. We simply collect the unfertilised eggs directly from the follicles on the ovary using an ultrasound guided needle which passes through the vaginal wall straight into the ovary.



**Gavin Tait** BVMS, MRCVS  
Veterinary Surgeon, Animal  
Breeding Europe,  
Westruther, Scotland



**Figure 1:** An anatomical description of the process illustrates the less invasive nature of TVR/IVP when compared to MOET.

A new wave of follicles is produced every 7 days or so, and so there is a continuous supply of oocytes available for collections every 5–7 days (or every 14 days where we are using stimulation).

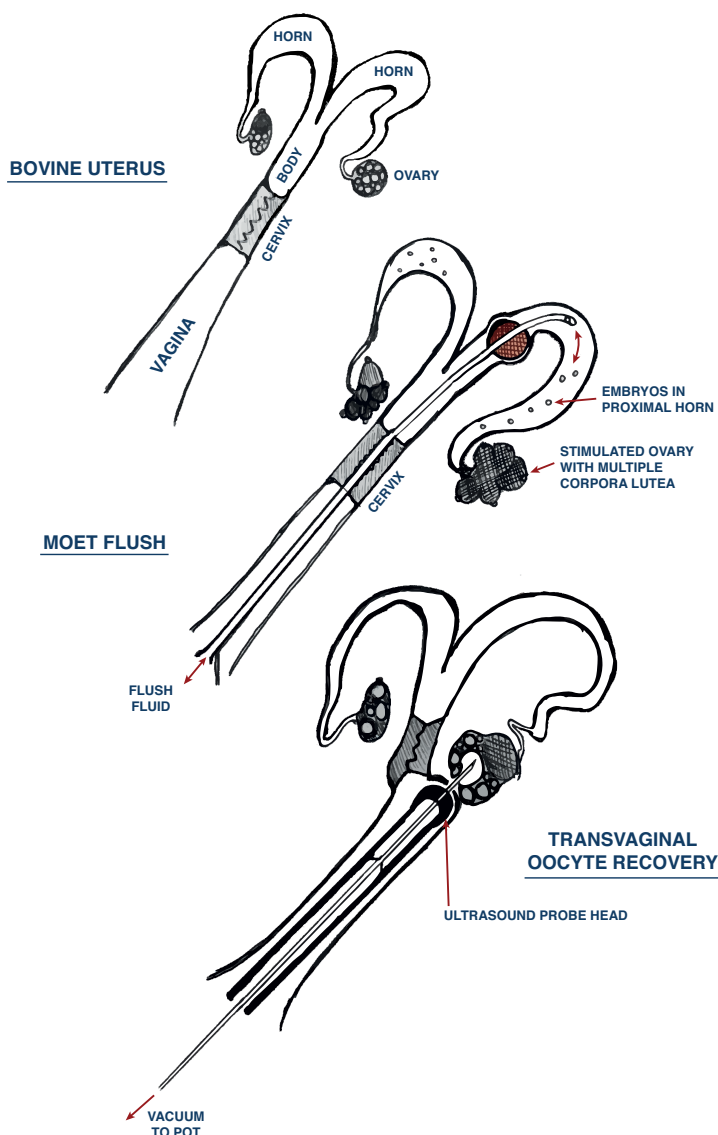
Including preparation, a TVR/OPU collection can be performed in around 15 minutes – the part where the operator is working inside the cow takes only 3–4 minutes in a normal donor (with an experienced operator). It is possible to collect from around 10+ cows in a morning to 20+ in a day.

It is commonplace to collect from pregnant cows up to around 12 weeks of gestation; this offers a tremendous advantage where clients are attempting to keep a tight breeding/calving period.

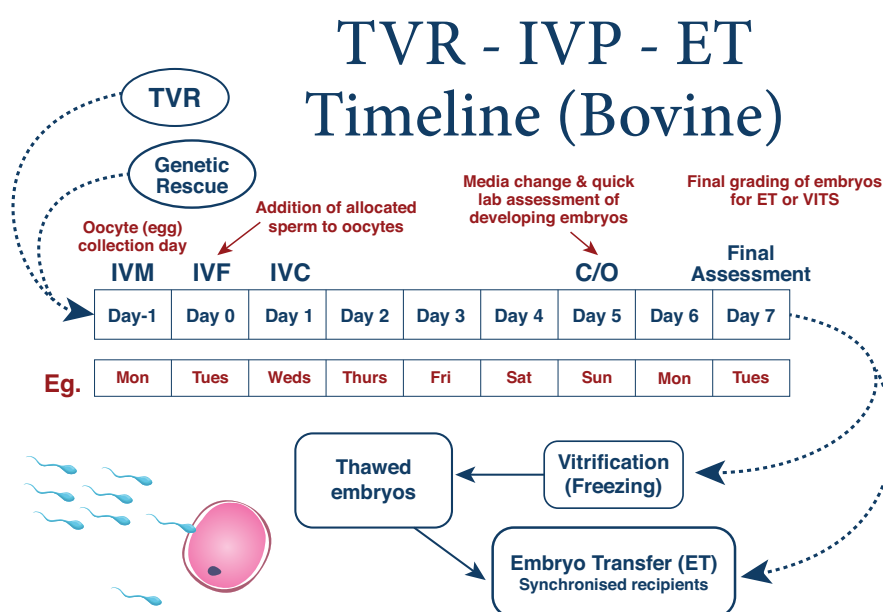
From a welfare and 'on farm labour' point of view the advantages of IVP are remarkable:

- 13 handling episodes and 9–10 injections of hormone for a standard MOET programme
- 7 handling episodes and 4 injections of hormone for a stimulated IVP programme
- 1 single handling episode and no injections of hormone for unstimulated IVP programmes

We are collecting unfertilised oocytes directly from the ovaries – these are collected and matured (IVM) for 24 hours before being put into a fertilisation media (IVF) with semen, and then a day later into culture media (IVC) where they are grown on for 7 days. So, 8 days after a collection we should have blastocyst stage embryos which are suitable for either implantation into recipients or freezing for later use (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Timeline



commercial runs began in 2015. We began to produce good numbers of embryos and indeed pregnancies followed with good hold rates.

This was against a general negative murmur from some people within the industry towards the technology (partly based on previous experiences); this was the first hurdle we had to overcome.

Our most obvious problem was that although ABS New Zealand had several thousand calves on the ground, we had none in the UK, so we had no proof of concept in the UK.

By late 2016 we had 100+ calves on the ground; word was getting around that some clients were having good results; runs with 8–10 IVP calves being born on individual farms. 2016 was a good year for us and we were producing around 2.5 embryos per donor. At this point we made the move to upscale which caused a few difficulties; we moved from 290 donor collections in 2016 to nearly 600 in 2017. From late 2017 to late 2018 we were having some very good results, but lacked the consistency that we would have liked in some runs; our embryo production dropped to around 1.5 embryos per donor in some months; not commercially viable and damaging for our reputation.

By early 2019 we had done 12 months of intensive troubleshooting and optimisations in our system/advice on donor management/laboratory etc and things seemed to turn around significantly. By mid-2019 we were seeing some excellent results. In many weeks we were averaging 4–5 embryos per donor and we were doing this consistently.

We were at a level where we knew we could seriously compete with MOET flushing in terms of viability, particularly when bearing in mind that many of the donors which we were being presented with had failed in MOET systems or were 'last chance saloon' cows at the end of the line.

We were averaging 4–5 embryos with poor quality donors. Many of our better donors are producing 10+ embryos per collection (every 1–2 weeks).

### What have we learned?

We learned very quickly that any break in the long chain of links that make up the process of IVP will lead to frustrating failure. Each link becomes just as important as the next despite the natural inclination to treat some aspects as if they are much more important than others.

Attention to detail throughout the whole process is the key. We also learned that our clients who had good results loved the simplicity and ease of IVF compared to the laborious process and multiple handlings/stress involved with MOET flushing. The quick collections and quick turnaround of donors was a major bonus. The ability to collect from pregnant animals meant it was possible to keep a tight calving interval which was also very attractive.

### The main factors for success

1. Semen
  2. Laboratory
  3. Donor Management
  4. Collection Process
1. Semen – Choice can be critical. We find that around 80% of semen batches work well, but with the 20% that don't they become 100% of the reason for failure. From the same bull we will find some batches which work and some which don't. We will always try to use proven semen where possible; either batches which have been used before, or have been trialled in a slaughter house run (oocytes collected from slaughterhouse ovaries).
  2. Laboratory – These are highly specialised processes and staff and protocols are critical; attention to detail and consistency is paramount. We run constant quality control and trials to test equipment/media/procedures and regular verification and optimisation.
  3. Donor Management – Consistency is important in terms of environment/group/housing/feeding. Body condition; not too fat/too thin, a stable/rising plane of nutrition with attention to detail on trace elements and disease control. Livery animals seem to tend to do better after they have been in for around 4–6 weeks on a stable regime.
  4. Collection process – We use highly specialised equipment and temperature control is vital most of our kit is electrical and designed to keep oocytes at a stable temperature of 35–38°C at all times. Good restraint of the animal is important and we need to be working in a sheltered environment, out of sunlight/shelter from rain/wind.





## Where do we go next?

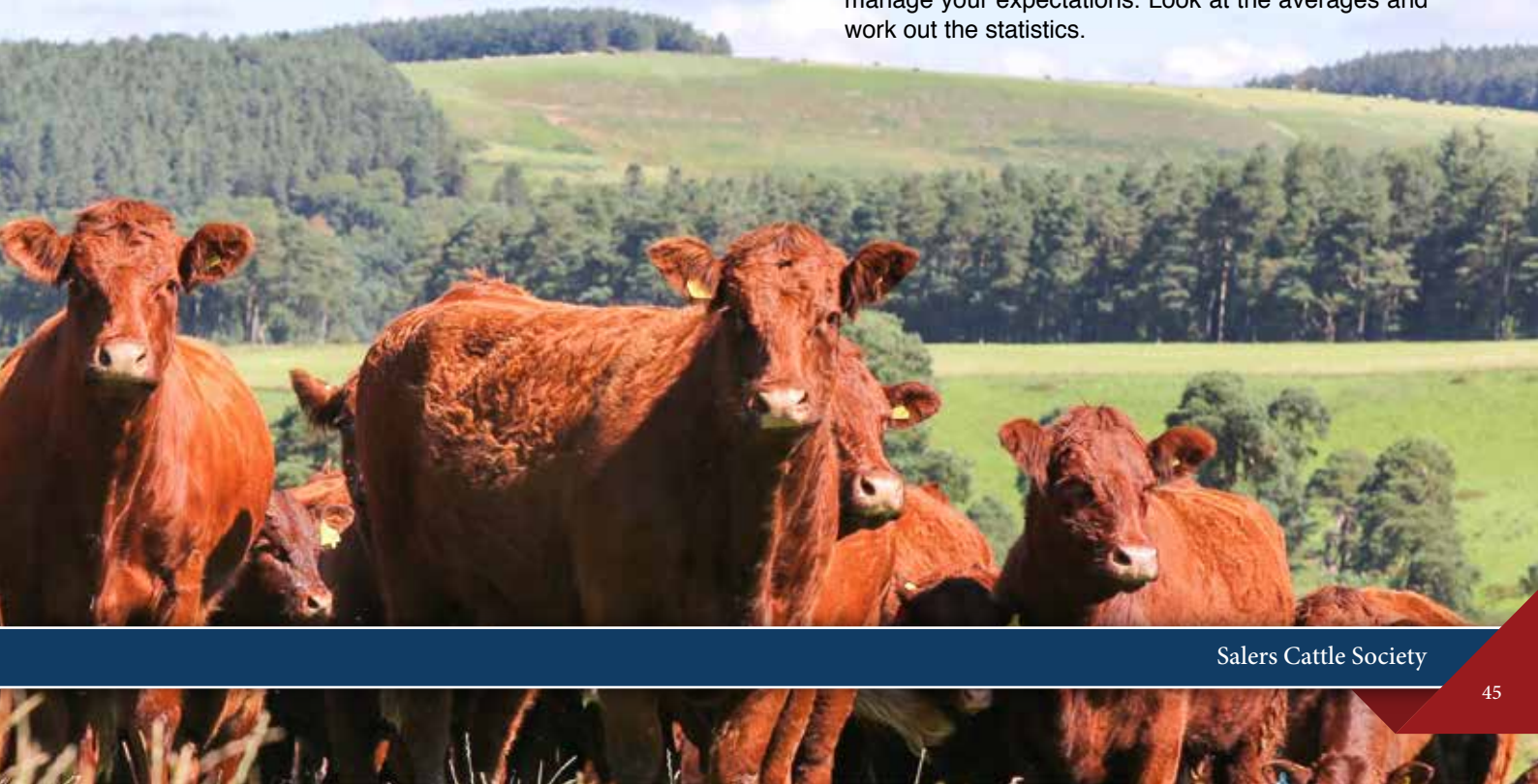
1. A few things have become very apparent in the last year or so:
  - We can select good donors from a group with initial ovarian ultrasound screening
  - From a scan we get an idea of how to manage donors in terms of:
    - a. Will this be a good donor for weekly collections?
    - b. Do we need to stimulate this Donor, or is she likely to perform well without stimulation?
    - c. Does this cow need more time (e.g. postpone for a month)?
2. All of this allows us to better manage client expectations
3. Programming and Stimulation – can make a huge difference in donors which aren't producing much on weekly collections (various options for drug choice and dosage for tailoring to individual donors)
4. Donor management – diet/stability is all important. Don't rush; plan ahead! At livery we are analysing all silage and keeping separate batches from individual fields to cut down on any inconsistency when feeding donors/recipients. We can select the best batches of silage and save these for livery animals; analysis allows us to supplement appropriately with tailor made concentrate rations (including fish oils etc)
5. We need to encourage clients to collect from better donors – aim to get away from collections from problem animals/infertile cows/cows living with chronic pain/stress/infection/inflammation
6. Ideally look to collect from 2–8 year old cattle with good breeding histories/sound fertility
7. Freezing – at the moment we freeze embryos on hooks where they are vitrified and snap frozen. We believe this can lead to better quality freezing, but Direct Transfer (DT) embryos can be more convenient and easily tradeable. If we can get DT's to hold as well as Vitrified embryos, we may make a move in that direction, but if the Vitrified embryos are showing an advantage in terms of results.

8. Dairy – at the moment most of work is elite pedigree Beef work. As we move forward, we would like to be doing more dairy work
9. Sexed Semen – improvements and screening to find batches which work well; we have used sexed semen with some success where batches of semen are good!
10. Semen – generally slaughterhouse screening/trials to verify that it's working and care to avoid batches which are sub optimal or introduce infections.
11. Optimisation of the system leads to improved results which reduces the cost per embryo/pregnancy/calf
12. Proactive approach based on experience rather than reactive approach to failures

In November/December 2019 we collected from 55 donors and averaged 13.5 oocytes per donor producing 4 embryos per donor on average. This included a lot of problem donors. The aim has to be to keep up these good results and aim to improve our approach to donor selection and optimising all aspects listed above.

## Advice to farmers considering using IVP

- Do it as part of a planned process after consideration/consultation. Avoid rushing in or using it as an emergency/salvage operation. Plan at least 3 months ahead where possible to allow preparation of all aspects and proper pre-management of donors/recipients
- Use a breeding group with an established programme and consistent results: ask for references and speak to people who are using the technology
- Ask questions and learn about the process; do your research – when you are managing the donors and recipients yourself, YOU will contribute a large proportion of the potential for success or failure. Work with your vets and nutritionist to attempt to optimise all aspects
- Expect failures as well as success; spread the risk and look to make an average over a number of seasons. Be realistic about what you are likely to achieve and manage your expectations. Look at the averages and work out the statistics.



# CUMBRIAN



*Cumbrian  
Ladybird*

**Champion Royal  
Highland Show**

*Cumbrian  
K. Rodger*

**Homozygous Polled  
Sold to Parkfield Salers**



*Cumbrian  
Hyacinth*

**Champion Royal  
Highland Show**

*Hector*

**Ireland Bull Calf Champion  
Sire of Capermello, Velocity  
and Champion Heifer 2012  
Premier Sale**



*Cumbrian  
Joker*

**Exported to France**

*Cumbrian  
Moonraker*

**Male Champion RHS 2019  
sold to Cuil Salers**



*Cumbrian  
Capermello*

**Sold to Messrs Donger,  
Sire of Lieutenant**

**Semen for Sale**

*Cumbrian  
Royal*

**Homozygous Poll -  
All Calves will be polled**



# SALEERS

**FARMSTOCK  
GENETICS**



## *Cumbrian Lieutenant Poll*

**Exported to France,  
Semen Available (ELITE Expot)**

**FARMSTOCK GENETICS**  
OVER WHITLAW, LINDEAN, SELKIRK  
SCOTTISH BORDERS TD7 4QN

Email: [twwalling@aol.com](mailto:twwalling@aol.com)  
or [ianjwalling@aol.com](mailto:ianjwalling@aol.com)  
Tom: 07870 869822 Ian: 07749 724349

# PELVIC MEASUREMENT – WHY?

By Siân Sharp & Stevie Rolfe

## Why has the Salers breed grown in popularity over recent years and why should this breed be the number one choice for the suckler herd?

Calving difficulties result in major economic loss to the beef cattle industry. Calving difficulties influence the economics of an enterprise through increased calf loss, increased labour and veterinary costs and reduced subsequent reproductive performance of the cow.

Several factors affect calving difficulty, including:

- Birth weight of the calf
- Pelvic area (shape and size)
- Gestation length
- Sex of calf
- Inadequacies in heifer development
- Body condition of the cow at calving
- Abnormalities in hormone profiles at the time of birth
- Abnormal presentation of the calf at birth

A major cause of dystocia is the disproportion between the size of the calf at birth (birth weight) and the cow's birth canal (pelvic area). Pelvic size, independent of cow weight, affects calving difficulty. Heifers of increased skeletal size usually have larger pelvic openings, but also tend to have heavier calves at birth. Hence, selection for cow size alone is ineffective.

An increasingly popular selection tool being used by beef farmers to reduce the economic impact of calving difficulties is pelvic measuring and scoring. Pelvic measurements are a useful management tool to eliminate heifers with a higher potential for calving difficulty. Structural traits in cattle tend to be highly heritable and pelvic area is no exception. This means there is a large genetic influence on pelvic area.

Stevie Rolfe (Stevie Rolfe Cattle Services) specialises in providing services to farms in and around Scotland. Stevie Rolfe's contracting business started in 2004 and he has just won the Contractor of the Year category of the British Farming Awards 2020. His company undertakes a range of cattle husbandry tasks from artificial insemination (AI), freeze branding, pelvic scoring and pregnancy scanning.

Stevie says *"pelvic measurements can be taken prior to the first breeding season and should be combined with a reproductive tract examination. Pelvic measurements should be used in addition to, not in place of, selection for size, weight, and above all, fertility. Demand for pelvic scoring, which is carried out by hand in my company, rather than with callipers, is increasing, especially within commercial beef herds, as farms realise the value of knowing whether or not a heifer is suitable for breeding, thus reducing the cost and stress of difficult calvings."*

The reason Stevie prefers the manual method rather than callipers is that he is able to check the uterine tract and ovaries for any abnormalities at the same time. Stevie said, *"the important factor is that the pelvis should be symmetrical and roughly the size of a small football."*



Pelvic measurements can be used to successfully identify abnormally small or abnormally shaped pelvises. These situations, if left unidentified, are often associated with extreme dystocia, resulting in Caesarean delivery and even death of the calf or cow. It is important however that the person doing the measuring has a thorough understanding of the birth canal, pelvic structure, and reproductive tract. Practice and experience are necessary before accurate measurements can be obtained.

Stevie Rolfe added, *"in my experience, the Salers cow does on average have a better than average pelvic measurement"*.

The increased popularity of the Salers breed is driven by the need for unassisted calvings, lower costs, more calves weaned, more profit and less stress. Calving ease for beef farmers will continue to be an important consideration as the industry moves forward and strives for systems that provide financial stability, easy maintenance, lower inputs, and improved productivity. Future systems will need to look at the flexibility of breeds to adapt to different systems, delivering good environmental management whilst underpinning the social and environmental contributions of farming.

Therefore, it is important that commercial beef farmers develop a cow herd that excels in maternal calving ease. The Salers influence contributes a large, well developed pelvic area in replacement females and will allow today's commercial stock men and women to utilise terminal sires in a crossbreeding situation with less concern about birth weight and calving difficulties.

The continued and increased monitoring of pelvic size, and use of pelvic scoring, will assist farmers in their decision making and will substantiate the maternal claims of the Salers breed with hard statistical evidence and data.



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Palnure  
Newton Stewart  
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# CUIL

BVD Accredited  
Johnes risk level 1  
for 5 years



"Cuil Oslo"  
Sold at Castle Douglas for  
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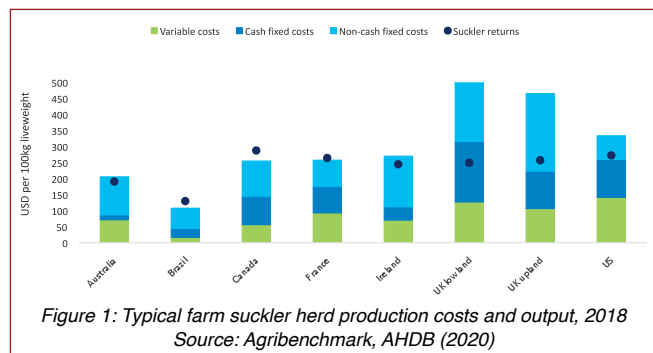
# BOOSTING PROFITS IN THE SUCKLER HERD BY CALVING AT TWO

By Sarah Pick, 2019 Nuffield Farming Scholar

Calving heifers for the first time at two years of age has been commonplace in many beef producing countries since the 1970's; however in the UK it is estimated that only 35% of suckler herds carry out the practice.

When we compare ourselves globally, the UK suckler herds cost of production is significantly higher than elsewhere, and even with a relatively high beef price, often our income does not cover cash costs (Figure 1).

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Heifer development costs equate to around 9% of total cost of production and therefore if more herds implemented a calving at two policy, profitability within the industry could be improved. It has been estimated that calving heifers at two years of age, rather than three, reduces development costs by £600 per heifer. In addition, heifers which calve for the first time at two years of age are more productive, wean more calves over their lifetime and remain in the herd longer.

However, calving at two years of age is not easy and does require additional management. There are also concerns over increased risk of calving difficulties, stunted cows and challenges getting first calved heifers to rebreed. With this in mind, in 2018 I applied to do a Nuffield Farming Scholarship with the aim of developing a blueprint which would provide farmers with the necessary information to calve heifers at two years of age successfully.

During my scholarship I was lucky enough to travel to the USA, Canada and Australia; as well as places closer to home including Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to uncover examples of best practice in more representative systems. No matter which country I visited, it was clear that the success of calving heifers at two was determined by genetics, selection and nutrition.

## Genetics

One of the things that struck me as I visited ranchers across the USA and Canada was that they had clear breeding goals which had enabled them to use genetics to produce a very functional suckler cow. One which had good fertility, low maintenance costs and increased longevity.

Jerry Holtman, a rancher from Canada explained how he had been using genetics to improve the reproductive efficiency of his 350 Beef Booster herd. By focusing on six traits of economic importance including fertility, milking ability, weight, conformation, hardiness and disposition, he is now achieving a 93% conception rate within a 55 day breeding period.

Jerry has a clear focus on improving maternal traits, he really questioned my thinking when he said "why do we raise cattle the feedlot wants when two thirds of the cost of a finished animal relates to the suckler cow". I think in the UK we have become guilty of focusing majorly on terminal traits when actually the fertility traits are five times more important than end-product traits to the suckler producer (Lardner, 2019).

It is true that many of the maternal traits are less heritable than terminal traits; however this does not mean that they should not be considered when making breeding choices. As I travelled the world, the Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) which were mentioned numerous times in reference to breeding heifers were: calving ease daughters, age at first calving, scrotal circumference, mature size and milk. EBVs for each pedigree bull can be found on the relevant breed Society website.

## Selection

"A good cow starts with a good heifer" was one of the comments I heard from a farmer in Scotland. Therefore we must ensure that our selection criteria is optimum so that only the most suitable heifers are retained in the herd.

Most herds did not retain heifers from cows which:

- Required assistance at calving
- Calved late in the breeding season (+42 days)
- Failed to wean a calf
- Large teats
- Weaned a light calf (less than 1kg/day)
- Bad temperament

Once the heifers reach weaning age, most selection decisions were based on their weight. Ideally heifers need to reach 65% of their mature weight before breeding, this is because age at puberty is strongly correlated with weight. However any abnormally



Figure 2 & 3: Sarah Pick with Jerry Holtman and Beef Booster cow with calf at foot



large heifers were culled, because of worries of increased mature weight and its association with high maintenance costs.

Most producers in the USA, Canada and Australia were operating a 60 day breeding period, so that calving was compact and management easier. One producer who was taking this to the extreme was Dan Kelly who farms 1200 Simmental X Angus cows in Nebraska. The only selection criteria he used for his heifers was that they conceive within the first three weeks of the breeding period. All of his 500 heifers were synchronised and inseminated to one service, with anything not in calf sent to the finishing pen. Dan achieves a conception rate of 60%, resulting in a replacement rate of 20%.



Figure 4: In calf heifers at Dan Kellys, Nebraska

## Nutrition

Getting nutrition right is crucial to ensuring that heifers reach 65% of their mature weight before breeding. To achieve this they need to be growing at around 1kg/day pre weaning and 0.7kg/day post weaning which should be achievable in most beef breeds.



Figure 5: Travis Lybbert with Sarah Pick

Often it is during the winter housing period when silage quality is insufficient that growth rates drop. To supplement a heifer with 2kg of concentrate each day during the winter, would cost around £85 which when considered against the value of an additional calf, really is worthwhile.

When I travelled to Florida, I met with Travis Lybbert the heifer development manager of Deseret Ranches. Deseret farm 42,000 Brahman cross cows. Brahman are much later maturing than any of the breeds used in the UK and therefore nutrition is key to ensuring the heifers reach puberty before 15 months. Travis has developed a high-nutrition based heifer development system and although this is expensive, Travis has calculated that the value of the additional calf far covers the cost of the additional feed.

Whilst travelling, one of the major barriers identified for calving heifers at two years of age, is difficulty getting them back in calf after their first calving. Heifers have a naturally longer post partum interval (the time between calving and resumption of estrus) compared to cows, which makes it more challenging to get them to rebreed within 365 days. Body condition is the single most important factor controlling the post-partum interval. Research has shown that heifers which are thin, have a 30 day longer post-partum interval compared to those which calved at body condition score 3.

In the past I have known producers who try to thin heifers down before they calve in an attempt to reduce calving difficulties. However extensive research has shown that this does not reduce calving risk but does reduce calf survivability and the quantity and quality of the colostrum produced by the heifer.

Furthermore, it takes approximately five months to develop a healthy egg to ovulation, which means the process starts during the last trimester of the previous pregnancy. Therefore by reducing nutrition pre calving, both the current and succeeding pregnancy are detrimentally impacted. The most successful way of reducing calving risk is by using genetics to select bulls with positive calving ease EBVs.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that calving at two years increases profitability but to be successful we need to ensure we get our breeding policy, selection criteria and management correct. This involves a greater focus on maternal traits to ensure a functional suckler cow is created. As I travelled through many non-European countries I did not see one suckler cow which consisted of dairy genetics. This is due to concerns over health and maintenance costs of these extremely milky cows. If as an industry, we can work to improve the maternal genetics available in the beef herd, there should be no need to rely on the dairy industry to produce suckler heifer replacements.

Thank you to the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, Yorkshire Agricultural Society and Worshipful Company of Butchers for making this opportunity possible.

## Overcoming the barriers

Barrier	Solution
Difficulty reaching breeding weight	Feed good quality silage during first winter. If forage poor, supplement with 2kg per day per head of concentrates. Ensure that there is sufficient feed space for every animal to feed at the same time.
Hard calvings	Use EBVs to select easy calving bulls. Look particularly at calving ease direct, gestation length and birth weight.
Stunted cows	The average mature weight of cows in USA, Canada and Australia was 550-600kg. Mature weight is strongly linked to maintenance costs, therefore if we can reduce weight, cost of production should fall.
Low rebreeding rates	Nutrition is key, keep heifers in body condition 3 from pre-breeding to second calving. If cows look to be losing weight whilst nursing their first calf, wean the calves early to prevent further body condition loss.

Further information on managing heifers can be found in the AHDB manual "Managing replacement heifers for Better Returns" which is available on the website <https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/managing-replacement-heifers-for-better-returns>





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# NEOGEN GENOMICS ARE PLEASED TO BE WORKING WITH THE SALERS CATTLE SOCIETY

**For two decades, our animal DNA tests have enhanced selection, breeding and marketing decisions. Today, NEOGEN is a world leader in genomic solutions and services.**

NEOGEN has six laboratories located around the world to place its facilities close to its customer base in the USA, Europe (Scotland), Brazil, China, Canada and Australia. These labs are fully integrated and work together every day. This footprint across the world means that the capacity is greater than any other DNA testing service provider and ensures rapid and consistent turnaround times in both processing and reporting.

Our customers can choose solutions from our extensive testing portfolio to make profitable choices about their animals. Our many services include:

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- Genotyping to determine genetic merit & genomic breeding values

All Salers samples requiring testing should be sent to the Salers Breed Secretary together with the DNA sample submission form. These will then be forwarded to the Neogen Genomics Laboratory for processing. Results are then returned and held on the Breedplan database.

## Parentage testing

As breeders a key requirement in today's markets is parentage verification not only for pedigree registrations but also for traceability. There are two types of DNA profile used for parentage testing:

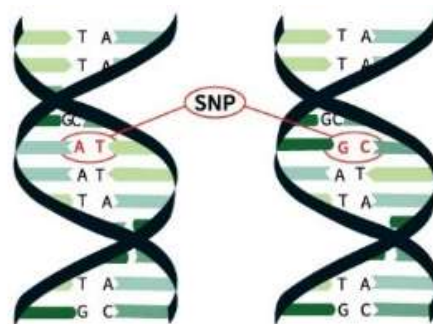
- microsatellites (sometimes known as STR)
- SNPs (Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms)

Microsatellites have been used for DNA parentage verification since the 1990s. They consist of a small panel of approximately 15-20 repetitive DNA markers sometimes known as Short Tandem Repeats. This small DNA profile is only useful for parentage verification.

This technology has recently been superseded by SNP technology. With the advent of SNP chips, it is now possible to test tens of thousands of SNP markers simultaneously on any individual animal. Using NEOGEN's range of GGP SNP chips, these much larger SNP profiles can simultaneously be used for both genomic evaluation and for SNP parentage verification.

The Salers Society database has many historical sires with microsatellite profiles and one of the issues with starting to use SNP profiles for parentage testing is that they are not "backwards compatible" with the old microsatellites. Therefore, it is necessary to transition the database from the old microsatellite technology to the new SNP technology.





This can be done using a few different approaches. If a sire or dam only has an historic STR profile available, then a combination of SNP and STR profiles can be utilised to carry out verification. NEOGEN can either create a SNP profile on a parent if a new sample can be provided or if a new sample cannot be provided then NEOGEN can provide an STR profile as well as a SNP profile on the offspring to enable accurate verification.









**Parent Verification** is a process which utilizes DNA markers to exclude incorrect parent(s). NEOGEN utilizes more than 200 SNP markers for parentage profiles.

The first instance where parentage is carried out is usually a simple sire/calf or dam/calf one-way comparison. At each location in the genome the calf has two copies of a gene. One from their sire and the other from their dam. So, with the example below, we can confirm that Sire B and C both “qualify” to the calf without consideration of the Dam, but sire A is excluded at SNP 3 and 5.

		SNP1	SNP2	SNP3	SNP4	SNP5
	Sire A	A/G	G/G	G/G	C/G	G/G
	Sire B	A/G	G/G	G/T	C/G	C/C
	Sire C	G/G	A/A	G/T	G/G	C/G
	Calf	A/G	A/G	T/T	G/G	C/C

Once we factor in the Dam, Sire C excludes at SNP 2 since the dam only has “A” allele to contribute to the progeny which means the sire would need to provide the G. When the calf is compared to sire and dam, it leaves Sire B as the only qualifying sire. Using the Sire and Dam to verify a calf’s parentage is known as trio test.

		SNP1	SNP2	SNP3	SNP4	SNP5
	Sire A	A/G	G/G	G/T	C/G	C/C
	Sire B	G/G	A/A	G/T	G/G	C/G
	Sire C	A/A	A/A	T/T	G/G	C/G
	Calf	A/G	A/G	T/T	G/G	C/C

We refer to this process as parent verification, as we verify that the parents provided are possible ancestors of the calf.

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# NOTHING TO BEAT THE SALERS FOR BEEF FARM OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Patsy Hunter, Business and Technical Editor, *The Scottish Farmer*

**Performance on a commercial basis is proving key to overall productivity and more importantly profitability at Firth Farm, Melrose – home of the AgriScot 'Beef Farm of the Year and to Iain Livesey, his wife Sarah and Iain's parents, Rob and Kath.**

No strangers to the show and sale ring, the family has always had an eye for Salers cattle, having secured top prices and championship tickets at numerous events with entries from their Cleughhead herd.

Over the years, the Liveseys have not only produced a former record priced Salers bull at 11,000gns – when Cleughhead Kingpin, sold at Castle Douglas in 2016 – but also some of the top priced bulling heifers at £1800. They've also secured many of the fancy tickets at both the Royal Highland and the Great Yorkshire Shows.

It is, though, the breed's ability to live and indeed thrive in tough conditions, combined with the family's management skills, that ensures this enterprise actually makes money.

*"We've always liked the Salers. as they are a breed of cattle we believe are sustainable," said Iain. "They're easy to look after, with good feet and legs and their unique selling points are, their ease of calving, prolificacy and longevity."*

Such is the productivity of the Salers herd on their 300ha unit based in the Borders, the barren percentage of the family's 100-cow pedigree unit is always less than 5% – and that's calving the heifers at two years of age in the spring within a six-week period, with cows having an extra three weeks.

More impressive is the fact that calf mortality is virtually non-existent. *"We start calving at the end of March and we rarely have any bother, with in excess of 70% calving within the first three weeks for the past three years in succession".*

*"We can count in one hand the number of yeld, too,"* said Iain, who added that heifers are bulled at 15 months of age at 420kg-plus.

Fertility has improved over the years by achieving a strict culling of empty or late calving cows, monitoring body condition and reducing the bulling period to six weeks amongst the heifers. Bulls are always semen tested to guarantee that half of the equation.

*"It would be rare for us to have any more than four empty females at scanning, which is mostly down to the breed – the Salers is renowned for it's strong maternal traits, producing lightweight, easy-calving calves which are therefore easier on individual cows, enabling them to recover quicker and return to the bull,"* said Iain.

*"We virtually never interfere with calving cows and most years we only assist two or three heifers with a bit of a pull."*

Calf weights are relatively low, with last year's heifers producing calves averaging 37kg, with second calvers calves' 40kg and cows at 41kg.

Commenting on calf survival, Iain added: *"We have not lost a calf at birth since the spring of 2017 and with one set of twins each year since, we have had more calves than cows on the ground by the end of our last two calving seasons. It would be very uncommon for us to lose more than two or three calves in total during calving."*

They did, nevertheless, have some near losses in 2018, having experienced a rotavirus outbreak in calves at around seven-days-old, with three badly affected, but no mortality. As a result, cows are now vaccinated against rotavirus.

The family also make a point of taking data of all newly-born calves, which are tagged and weighed at birth and put into an



individual pen with their mothers for at least 24 hours. They are also dehorned using electric dehorers in an IAE calf crate, which enables one person to easily work with the calf safely, before putting individual cow and calf units out to grass.

The Liveseys also score the mothers on temperament, feet and udders. *"Our aim is to produce natural breeding cattle that can look after themselves without too much interference,"* added Iain.

*"We look to breed cows with good feet, udders, fertility and temperament, and a high number of live calves born in a tight consecutive time period, which is the foundation of a profitable beef farming enterprise. This ensures more calves to sell, and, a larger selection of replacements for the herd."*

He added that selecting for milking ability, good udder attachment and strong hard feet are some of the key traits for breeding low maintenance, long lasting cows.

Iain also halter breaks all heifer calves after weaning in order to pin point any temperament issues early on and pick out any potential show or sale females, which he feels is highly beneficial.

Outwith the family's own recording, they also rely on an independent technician for back-fat scanning bulls, weight recording, eye muscle area, rib fat, and intramuscular fat – factors which can determine the value and eating quality of a finished carcass, recorded within Breedplan to create EBVs.

The theory being that more accurate data is recorded as the technician sends the data to Breedplan himself, and cannot be tampered with by breeders.

Calved heifers are kept separate for a year and on slightly better grazing before joining the main herd as second calvers thereby reducing the risk of bullying from older cows, allowing them to grow on, develop and still come to the bull.

Calves are weaned in the back-end and fed 1% of their bodyweight in urea treated wheat or Maxammon-treated wheat, which is being used for the first time. Therefore, weaned calves at 290-300kg are fed 3kg of the home-produced wheat plus silage, which in February goes up to 4kg when they reach 400kg.

Both heifer and bullock calves are sold the following year, either as bulling heifers at the breed sale Castle Douglas, or stots at Thainstone. Over the past six years, the heifers have averaged £1270, while last year the bullocks cashed in at £2 per kg at 575-580kg – down 20p per kg compared to previous highs, but still better than finishing them.



*"We consider ourselves more breeders than feeders, so have designed a system more tailored to our strengths. Currently, we are happy selling store and leaving the finishing part to the professionals," added Iain.*

The Liveseys have also been selling cow and calf outfits through Aberdeen and Northern Marts' Thainstone Centre, in May, which is proving popular, either with steer or heifer calves at foot, with sales of up to £2600.

Breeding cattle are also sold privately, either at shows or through social media, which has proved a phenomenal marketing tool for the business on the back of regular photographs and updates of the what is happening on farm, particularly when preparing stock for shows and sales.

One regular such sale has seen a joint arrangement with the McLean family, from Mull, who buy easy fleshing, quiet, home-bred Cleuchhead bulls at a set price and in return, the Liveseys purchase their resultant cross-bred progeny in October, which are housed in a rented neighbouring steading until spring turnout.

These steers are also sold through store ring at 18 months in Thainstone, with the heifers sold as bullers at the breed sale at Castle Douglas, in November, where they regularly attract a premium.

Iain added: *"I think it's important that more farmers can collaborate like this to create a supply chain that involves upland farms playing more of a part on the production of seed stock and achieving a hi health herd on a national level".*

*"Ultimately, we are looking for a high quality herd with every animal working to earn its keep. Consistency is very important to us, as we believe having a herd of almost identical cows is far more impressive than having one spectacular cow".*

*"Therefore, we are particular about the type of cows we are looking to breed from, and focus on easy fleshing females with balance throughout and no real extreme attributes,"* he said, adding that the family is constantly assessing cow performance to pinpoint the bottom 10% of breeders each year, before selling them on, mainly to cross with Charolais bulls.

It is a policy which is obviously bearing fruit as not only is the business constantly weeding out the bottom end of cattle to streamline the herd, it also provides a consistent level of performance.



## FARM FACTS

Family business – Iain and Sarah Livesey and Iain's parents, Rob and Kath, who have a 300ha tenancy at Firth Farm, Melrose, comprising in-bye grazing ground and 50ha of winter wheat grown for feed and bedding. A neighbouring steading is also rented during the winter to house and feed bought in store cattle.

Livestock – 100 pure-bred Salers cows all of which are hi-health, home-bred and calve at two years of age, producing heifers for home-bred replacements and to sell at Castle Douglas, and forward bullock stores sold at Thainstone.

Some 60 Salers cross suckled calves by home-bred bulls are bought from a farm on Mull, wintered in a rented shed and sold either as forward stores at 575-580kg, through Thainstone or breeding heifers at the Castle Douglas sale. Also 1000 bought in Scotch Mule ewes all of which are topped to a Texel and progeny sold finished off the farm.

Diversification – Selling Portayards – mobile sheep handling systems imported from New Zealand twice a year. USP: 10cm higher hurdles stopping sheep jumping with sheeted top panel to protect dogs' legs when jumping over. Also manual hydraulic lift pump is a popular feature. Grant aid south of the Border has resulted in a spike in sales recently.



## ON THE SPOT

Best investment: *"Our stock bull Drumlegagh Brandon, purchased from Irish breeder, John Elliot, as a twin-born bull calf at £1800. The late Willie Davidson bought the other twin-born bull calf. Brandon produced 10 crops of spring-born calves and never missed a beat, with the result £120,000 worth of breeding bulls have been sold from him and a large percentage of the Cleughhead herd carries his genetics. He was a long good carcass bull, breeding cows with exceptional udders and feet and his genetics have been consistent producing many of these key traits in his progeny."*

Where do you want to be in 2030: *"Hopefully, with double the number of Salers cows and the breed to be as popular as the Aberdeen-Angus is at present, thereby ensuring increased demand for Salers bulls and females."*

Most inspirational farmer: *"Jim Logan, Pirntaton, because I admire his enthusiastic attitude and I think he understands the importance of the link between pedigree breeding and commercial reality. I have also learnt a lot from Gordon Gray, Selkirk."*

Other interests: *"Sarah likes to drag me away on holiday to Mull! – but then, she does come from there. Also skiing, shooting and avoiding Coronavirus."*

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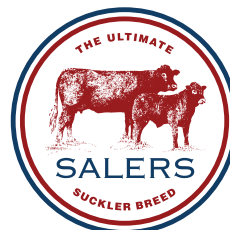
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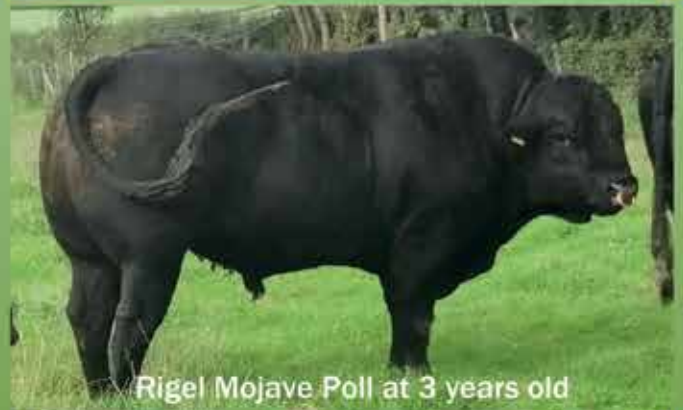
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# SALERS PROVE SUCCESSFUL FOR THE WALLING BROTHERS

*Patsy Hunter, Business and Technical Editor, The Scottish Farmer*

**Salers are renowned for their ease of calving, fertility and longevity – attributes that not only enticed the late Bryan Walling to import the first of these hardy red cattle into the UK but also ensure the profit margins remain well up to the mark for sons Ian and Tom, from Over Whitlaw, Selkirk.**

Strong patriots of the Salers since their father imported such females into the UK in 1984, they believe this easy-care female will always be the ultimate suckler cow.

*"After previously working with Herefords, our dad was looking for something different to introduce to the farm that was hardy and easily managed but could also produce a good calf for the commercial and pedigree farmer,"* said Tom, the current chairman of the Salers Cattle Society.

*"Our Dad was very forward thinking and whilst in France he came across Salers and thought they looked the part, so arranged to have several loads of them brought over to the UK, to establish the Cumbrian Salers herd."*

Brother Ian added: *"They are a true female breed with easy calving abilities, fertility, milkiness and great maternal instincts. They can also be crossed with any continental beef breed and produce a quality calf."*

*"Charolais cross Salers calves have always been impressive and are still known as the 'Golden Egg' for their golden appearance when born, whilst also being easy calved and retaining a good carcass. They also attract premium prices in the market place when sold,"* he added.

Having built up pedigree cow numbers to 70, the Walling brothers are focusing on breeding a good, deep female that can convert roughage into milk and beef, while also having a leg in each corner and a good top for showing purposes.

*"Depth and balance in an animal is important and if you look after your females, your bulls will naturally come along and perform,"* Tom stated.

Calving takes place outdoors in May and early June, with calves proving vigorous and quick to their feet. Low maintenance in terms of feed too, they come through the winter on silage and minerals only, while calves are introduced to a store mix after housing and young bulls are finished on a fattening blend from Tarff Valley.

Ian added: *"We lamb 900 Lleyn sheep in April and prefer to have them out of the way before calving begins. Our system works well, as calves up and suckling in no time so there are next to no problems. All we have to do is weigh and tag the calves,"* said Ian.

One of the biggest challenges at Over Whitlaw is the wet ground, therefore cattle are in-wintered from November, with calves being weaned in January. Cows are, nevertheless, back out at grass before calving gets underway in May.



*"We recently invested in a new slatted cattle shed that can hold 120 cows and calves, which was a big investment for us, but it's something that should see us through our farming careers,"* Tom commented.

*"We were previously renting sheds away from the farm and buying in straw, so it was all starting to add up and became harder to manage. This investment will save us time, money and allow us to utilise the slurry as fertiliser on the land, so it was a no brainer."*

This new investment has also allowed the brothers to increase herd numbers, with 20 heifers now retained every year as replacements. At present, all are bred pure, but the brothers have considered other breeds.

*"We currently don't cross our females to any other breed, but if we were, the Shorthorn would be a good fit due to the extra premium commanded, as well as producing a good female,"* Ian stated.

*"The Charolais would be another option to improve the shape and conformation of the resultant progeny, however, we are currently producing bull beef and our pure Salers are grading out well, with 80% achieving U grades with rest labelled R's."*

*"At the end of the day, you've got to look at live calf percentage and with the pure Salers there are always more calves than cows! We are calving well over 100%, with our herd this year producing six sets of twins,"* he added.

Young bulls are fattened at home and sold at 14 to 16-months-old at 400kg deadweight through ABP, to achieve around £1450 for U grade cattle. The remainder of bulls and heifers are sold for breeding purposes between 18 months and two years of age, either at United Auctions' Bull Sales at Stirling, or through the breed sale at Wallets Marts, Castle Douglas.

Selecting superior quality bulls to produce top end breeding stock is nevertheless far from easy, but the Wallings have invested in a few over the years that have certainly made their mark on the herd.

*"One of first bulls we imported from France was Bruno which has had a huge influence on the breed and is responsible for producing some of the best breeding lines in the UK to date,"* commented Tom.

*"Another favourite would be Lataster Hector that we bought from southern Ireland, in 2008. He was the All Ireland Salers bull calf champion, and now aged 13, he is breeding well for us."*

The Walling brothers have found success in the sale ring over the years too, having sold the former record priced bull, Cumbrian Capermello, at Castle Douglas, in 2015, for 10,000gns.

They have also focussed on breeding polled Salers, from their established Ladybird female line, which was responsible for the family's first Cumbrian polled bull, Thunderbird.

Cumbrian Lieutenant – a son of Capermello which was exported to France – bred the family's best polled bull to date in Cumbria



Olympia Poll, which privately sold for £16,000, see page 30, to Geff and Olwen Lawrenson of Parkfield Salers, last week.

The Cumbrian herd is one of few in the UK to export Salers back to their native homeland in France too, with the homozygous polled bull, Cumbrian Joker, proving to be one of the most successful and influential bulls to leave Over Whitlaw when selling to a syndicate of French breeders and Dick Bradley from Ireland.

*"It's a slow process as we keep having to purchase horn genetics to introduce new blood lines, but we will keep pushing down the polled route," said Tom. "We're now seeing a lot of good polled cattle coming through that are winning shows and are becoming more popular due to their ease of management and high welfare attributes with no de-horning required."*

Tom and Ian are also big fans of local and national shows, having enjoyed notable successes at the Royal Highland Show, where on top of a kist full of prize tickets, they have also won the breed title at Ingliston in 2011 with a heifer and again in 2014 with a three-year-old polled cow.

It's not just about winning either, as such events are a huge shop window for fellow breeders, with the brothers having sold their male and junior champion from last year's Royal Highland Show, Cumbrian Moonraker, to Colin McClymont, Cuil.

The boys regularly enjoy a few prize wins at Harrogate too at the Great Yorkshire Show.

But it is the breed's ease of calving and fertility that ensures this breed will always remain at Over Whitlaw for the two brothers, who remain adamant the Salers is the breed for the future being able to meet the needs of today's busy farmer.

*"Salers will always have a great future when you look at their ease of management characteristics and ability to match the expectations of other big beef breeds. They don't require the same feeding or time inputs other continental breeds demand and will always produce a quality calf at the end of the day. More importantly, they will always produce a live calf," said Tom,*

He added that the decision to keep myostatin genes out of the breed is also game changer as people can have confidence in Salers to use as a sire or as a female and not have calving issues.

*"Keeping myostatin out of the Salers will keep them one step ahead of other breeds," Ian concluded.*



## FARM FACTS:

Over Whitlaw is farmed by brothers, Ian and Tom Walling, and managed alongside uncle, Bob Hudson.

Family moved to Over Whitlaw in January, 1996, from Cumbria and now farm 500 acres of permanent and rough grazing, and rent 200 acres for young stock. The hill farm sits at 1000ft above sea-level.

Own a pedigree herd of 70 Salers, as well as 900 Lleyn sheep and a handful of Texels and Beef Shorthorns.

Calving is in May and June and lambing in April.

Retaining 20 females per year as replacements to increase numbers to utilise the full potential of the new shed.

Beef bulls sold as deadweight through ABP, with remainder of livestock sold for breeding purposes both privately and through breed sales.

## ON THE SPOT

**Best advice?:** Our dad used to say "Live like you'll die tomorrow, farm like you'll live forever".

**Best investment?:** Ian – I would say having Jacqueline as my partner, as she does all our paperwork!

**Kist party?:** The Great Yorkshire Show Salers line is fantastic. The difference at the Royal Highland is that you know everyone so you're constantly jumping back and forth to different lines but at the Yorkshire we all stick together.

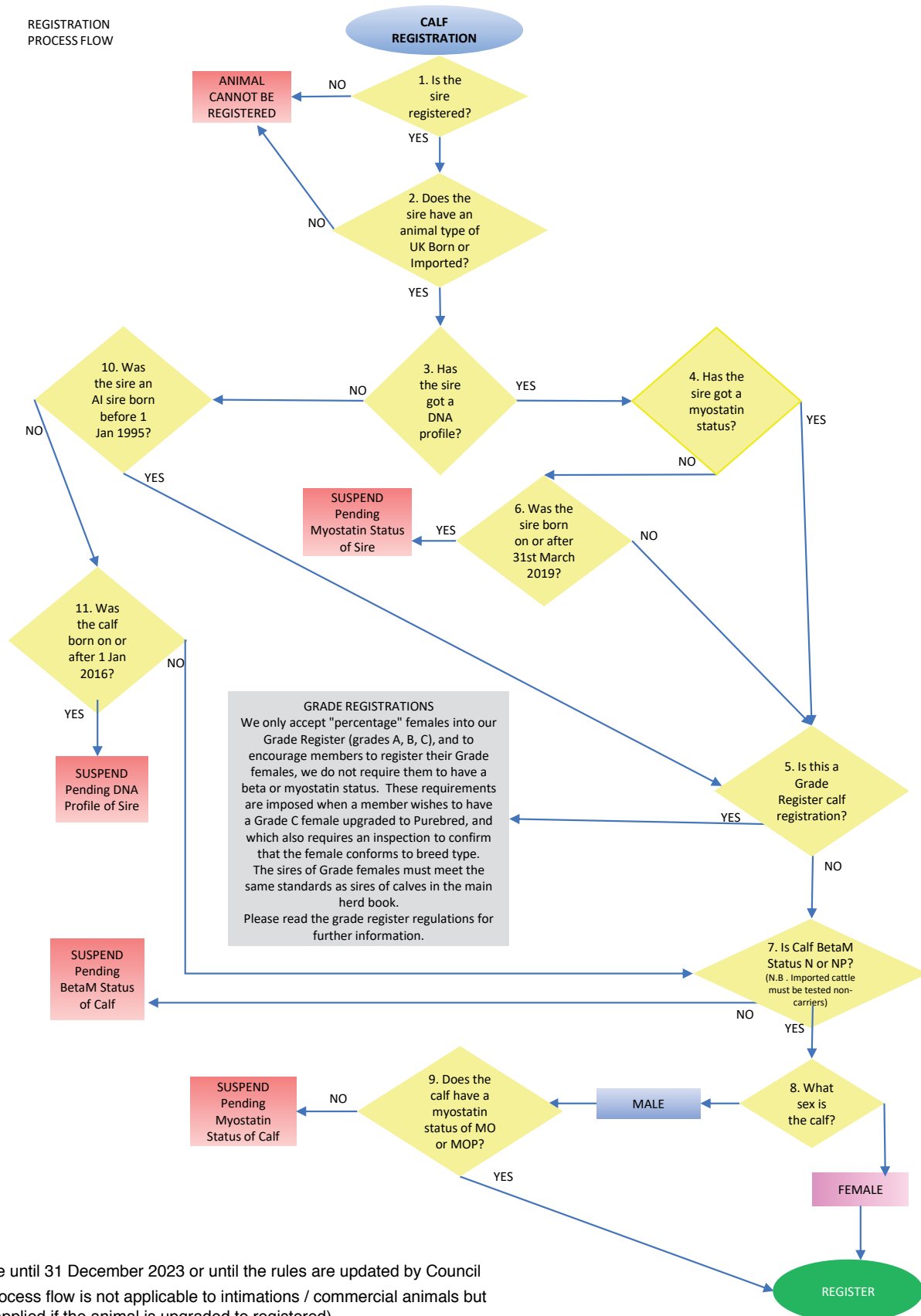
**Favourite restaurant?:** There's a restaurant in France, in the hills of Claire Mon Peronne. We couldn't speak a word of French and the waiters couldn't speak English but it was one of the best nights we've ever had out!

**Holiday?:** The family holiday to Zimbabwe, in 1995, was a memorable one. Dad had sold Salers embryos to Zimbabwe and we couldn't take payment from the country, so instead, they paid for a holiday – six weeks of safaris and a house boat.



# REGISTRATION FLOW CHART

REGISTRATION  
PROCESS FLOW





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# I WISH I'D FOUND THE SALERS BREED 20 YEARS SOONER

By Countrygirl Media

## If Bangor-based Alun Thomas had one wish it is that he'd found the Salers breed 20 years sooner than he did.

*"There's no doubt about it, running Salers cows has made suckler farming far more enjoyable than it could be and given me a renewed enthusiasm for cattle farming," says Alun who farms in partnership with his wife Anita who also runs a B&B in the farmhouse.*

Farming 280 acres on a tenanted unit means everything is carefully scrutinised and has to pay its way, with the previous suckler herd of cross cows struggling to pay its way and causing too many issues.

*"We were doing fairly well, putting Blue cross cows to a Limousin bull, but there were issues coming through with the udders and feet on the crossbred cows and we got unlucky with a Limousin bull which caused massive calving problems".*

*"We switched to a Charolais bull and got on better and used a Salers bull on the heifers. It was a step change in the herd and convinced me we had to change the herd to make life easier and simpler."*

It was a gradual process, with Salers heifers being bought in as replacements, largely from Dei Bryniog, when required. The couple now run 80 cows, with Alun saying it is the ease of management offered by the Salers which has allowed an increase in cow numbers.

*"They also thrive better than other Continental cross cows, needing less feed and I believe we can keep more Salers cows to the acre than we could other breeds and it is likely we'll increase cow numbers in future as a result."*

These days the herd is largely served by Charolais bulls producing the much sought after 'golden calf'. "These calves, both heifers and steers are well sought after when we sell them as suckled calves each autumn at Ruthin Farmers auction market. Repeat buyers tend to seek them out year after year for their quick growth and easy fleshing.

*"We sell them in the first week of October, always aiming for that first sale each year, with steer calves averaging £800 last year and heifers at £700. Selling them early allows us to winter the cows cheaply and means we don't have calves about for any longer than necessary. We sell them in large groups and the calves really stand out for their evenness and uniformity."*



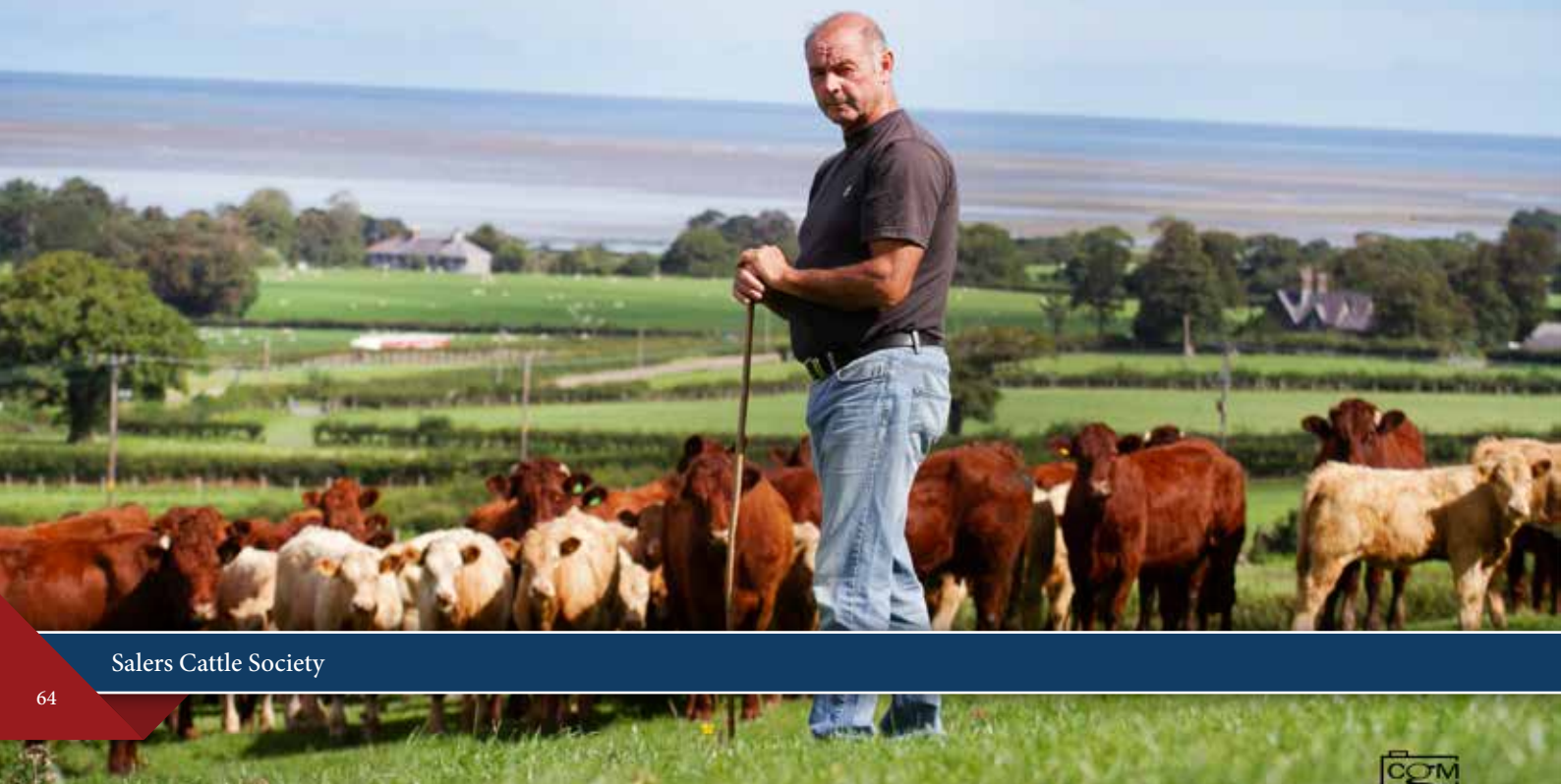
With calving starting in mid-February and lasting for 12 weeks, the aim is to have most of the herd calved in the first third of the calving period. "The Salers allows us to achieve this easily and their easy calving nature means I rarely have to assist a calving.

Cows are housed when the calves are sold, with a small amount of creep offered to calves pre-sale to help them adapt when they move on to a finisher, he explains.

*"Aside from that we don't require any feed for the herd, with cows wintered on grass silage and free access rock salt. They all get a mineral drench ahead of calving which helps boost the quality of their colostrum".*

*"All the calf growth comes from their mother's milk and grass, helping keep costs under control and maximise profits," adds Alun".*

*"In the last two years heifers have been bulled to calve at two years old, with both heifers and first calved cows put to Salers bulls and older cows all served by Charolais bulls. "We have been buying in Salers heifers to top up our homebred replacements but aim to reduce the need for bought in replacement as Salers cows last well and don't wear out as quickly as crossbred cows," he says.*





When it comes to sourcing Charolais bulls Alun pays close attention to both physical appearance and performance figures and genomic information, aiming to buy bulls with the ability to produce premium priced calves.

*"The last two bulls we have bought have both come from the same herd, with a keen eye paid to the latest genetic testing available. It certainly isn't the only selection criteria, but there is no doubt it gives a good indication of the bull's ability and the type of calf he will produce."*

Adding to this interest in genetic testing, as part of a Salers Society project all females in Alun's herd are currently the focus of a Society UK funded project. The aim of this project is to capture vital statistics that will verify the impact of using myostatin carrier terminal sires, in this case two Charolais bulls over Salers cows.

Cows have recently been genotyped to ascertain their myostatin status, with all calving data, including calving ease and calf weights collected this calving. *"Currently the maternal traits of the breed are well known and readily promoted, however, the Society Council is focussed and committed to substantiating the maternal claims with evidence and data".*

*"I'm excited to see what comes out of the project as we know from experience how versatile the Salers cow is and what an excellent dam breed she is for all manner of terminal sires,"* adds Alun.

*"Salers bulls have in the past been borrowed or hired, but the present one is a homebred bull which was bought in the belly of his mother from Harry Pritchard. "I liked him from early on, so kept him and he has grown into a good bull, particularly as he has been grown very naturally. Hopefully he'll produce heifers of the same type which we can retain for our own use in future years."*

*"Herd health is managed in close cooperation with the farm's vet with Alun in regular contact to stay up to date on the latest issues and routine blood tests taken to ensure any health issues can be spotted at the earliest opportunity. "Cows are fluke dosed annually, with the likelihood being that rumen fluke will be an increasing issue in the coming years. It is something our vet has mentioned in recent years and while we haven't seen a problem yet, we are keeping an eye out for it and will continue to monitor the herd."*



And, while Alun is quick to praise the easy calving nature of the Salers cow, he says that doesn't mean cattle can be run on a 'no care' basis. *"You've still got to be on top of herd management, but the great thing with these cows is they take away much of the stress of suckler farming".*

*"Cows calve easily and calves are up and sucking in no time all. Importantly, because the Salers cow produces a good amount of milk, but not too much, all four teats are sucked, helping reduce the chances of mastitis. They maintain a good udder in later years too, which helps improve longevity."*

Alun says cows can be calf proud, but not to the extent of being dangerous. *"I'd far rather have a cow that protects its calf than one which wants nothing to do with it!"*

Running alongside the sucklers is a flock of 800 ewes, with 450 mountain ewes and 350 lowland ewes, but sheep numbers have been reduced in recent years to allow for an increase in cow numbers. *"I'm far more of a cow person than I am a sheep person, but the sheep provide cash flow during the months when cattle sales aren't there, so it is about balancing out the enterprises to best fit the resources available".*

*"I've adapted the sheep flock over the years, aiming to finish all the lambs at home, with cover crops sown in late summer to provide finishing forage for lambs and fodder for the ewes after Christmas ahead of lambing,"* says Alun.





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# GETTING MORE FROM THEIR GRASS AT POLDEAN

A QMS article edited, with permission, by Emma Davidson

## Alisdair and Emma Davidson farm 850 hectares (Ha), at Poldean Farm near Moffat.



Alisdair's parents, the late Willie Davidson and wife Jennifer, established the Salers herd back in 1990. The introduction of Salers allowed the herd to expand quickly with minimal family labour and today they run a herd of 350 Salers cows, calved mainly to Charolais bulls. They also have 500 Lleyen cross cheviot ewes and have adapted their enterprise from a high input system to one that better utilises grass all year round.

*"My interest in a grass-based system started 4 years ago when I began to learn more about the science behind grass growth. Emma would class me as a bit of a grass geek now but it really is phenomenal what you can do on grass alone if managed correctly,"* explains Alisdair

*"We started dabbling with paddock grazing through Quality Meat Scotland's (QMS) Better Grazing Group and that's when we started seeing great benefits, particularly with cows and calves."*

*"I knew I could improve the grassland, but didn't know how well, so the opportunity to be a pilot farm for the GrassCheck GB Programme helped me with the discipline to regularly measure and utilise the farm's grass."*

*"I am now managing to quantify how much grass there is and it's quality, so I can predict how much I have to feed stock. We grew a lot of grass last year; one paddock grew close to 18 tonne DM/Ha (dry matter available per hectare) which I never thought would be possible here in Moffat,"* he added. *"This year we have easily achieved 100 kilos of dry matter per day and this has been with less fertiliser than ever before so it is really benefiting our business."*

GrassCheck GB monitors the growth and quality of pasture, making predictions of future growth utilisation on beef and sheep farms. Each unit is equipped with weather stations and other monitoring devices to report on the factors that influence pasture growth and quality, combined with measures of animal performance.

The couple apply the rotational paddock grazing principles to both their cattle and sheep enterprises. The idea behind this system is that animals are in paddocks for a short period of time to eat the grass down fully and then moved on to allow the plant to recover and regrow. Animals then follow a rotation of paddocks throughout the Spring/Summer months. The Davidsons quantify the amount of grass they have available with the use of a plate meter.



*"Ideally we aim to have our grass cover at roughly 2800 – 3000kg DM/Ha when cattle enter a new paddock. However, the key to success is getting the amount of grass left behind right. We aim for residuals around 1500kg DM/Ha when grass will be at the best stage to recover and have time to grow before being grazed again. If the grass is not grazed hard enough you lose grass quality and it is getting into this new mindset that will bring you the performance that we have experienced,"* says Alisdair.

Cows calve outside at Poldean and are paddock grazed in as few groups as possible to balance the benefits of paddock grazing with time management. Depending on the paddock size cows are moved every two to four days in paddocks of around 3-4ha.

Sheep are loosely rotated on a weekly basis after lambing, grazing 20ha blocks of rough ground. Once weaned, at approximately 30kg, the lambs are then put onto the paddock grazing system to utilise the best of the grass for finishing. Lambs are finished on grass and forage crops alone.

*"Historically we lambed from 1st April and continued to feed with the snacker until May. We now lamb at the beginning of May to allow grass to establish, so the ewes can milk better with no supplementation. The same theory has been applied with the cattle, and we calve earlier in April, to make best use of grass when the cows need it most,"* said Alisdair.



A bespoke electric fencing system has been set up at Poldean, which allows them to rotate cattle in the paddocks without spending a large amount of time putting up and taking down fences.

Alisdair added: *"I did a lot of research and tried various off the shelf electric fencing systems, but nothing allowed for a simple system that would save time. Our local smiddy helped us manufacture posts, spring gates and cattle grids to give us enough infrastructure to rotate stock without the need to take down and put fences back up in new paddocks. We are continually reviewing and adapting the system, but our efforts so far have made the job much quicker and more efficient."*

*“Livestock flow has been a big consideration in fencing layout to ensure gateways and passageways are where cattle naturally want to go. This makes the regular moving of livestock with only 1 person easily manageable. Cows and calves also need a lot of water, so we have spent a lot of time and investment installing water systems throughout the paddocks.”*

Last year, April born calves were weaned and sold straight off their mothers in October, fed no concentrates and averaged 1.5kg daily liveweight gain (DLWG). These calves were less than 6 months old and averaged 276p/kg on grass alone. This year, these April/May born Charolais x Salers calves recently topped the market with a price of 372p/kg and averaged 344p/kg. The remainder of the youngstock were wintered and sold in the spring through Wallets Marts at Castle Douglas. Alisdair and Emma are also currently experimenting with 100% grass fed beef which was never possible on their previous system.

To enable the couple to breed their own heifer replacements that suit the system at Poldean, they have recently introduced a Red Angus bull. The aim is to bring some hybrid vigour into the cows while still maintaining a uniform looking herd which, when crossed with the Charolais produces a ginger calf - something Alisdair loves to sell through the market.

*"Our cows have to be able to calve unassisted – something which the Salers takes in it's stride. The Salers cow has enabled us to calve a large number of cows successfully outside with low labour input. They have a tremendous milking ability on grass and suit our outside system but we're hoping that the Red Angus cross will help flesh out progeny a little easier on the grass system we have."*

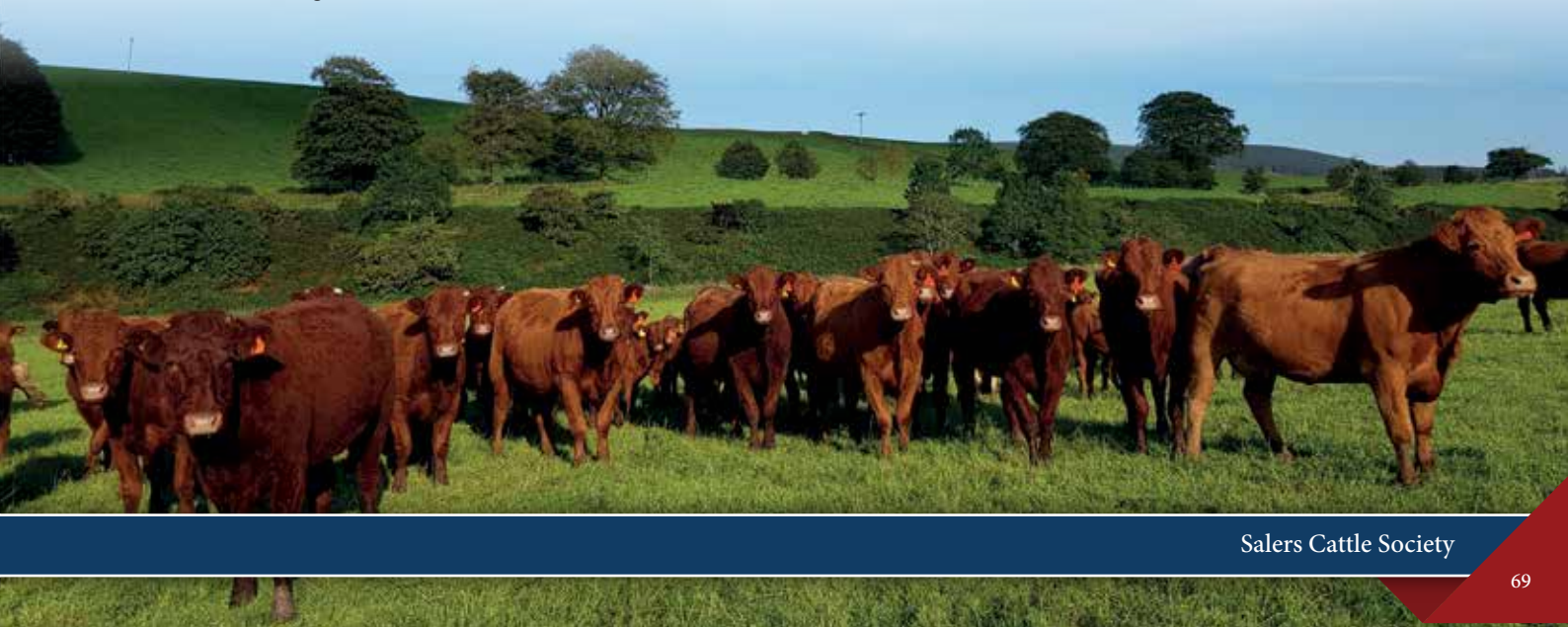
*"Rotational paddock grazing gives you huge flexibility," says Alisdair. "If you can build grass stocks into the back end, it can help cheapen your winter. It has enabled us to make savings by not needing to buffer feed cows in the Autumn before housing."*

*"This year we are also trying to improve the quality of our winter forage and have taken 3 cuts of silage for the first time. This will enable us to use less concentrate to grow young stock through the winter."*

After seeing the benefit of improved grassland on their best ground, they then realised the potential they have at Poldean to maximise their less productive acres. This has led the Davidsons to start reclaiming some of their lower hill ground. Through simply weed wiping to rid the ground of rashes, liming and grazing hard, Alisdair says that the grassland is really beginning to improve and will enable them to push their stock numbers further within their existing acreage.

*“I'd encourage anyone who is interested in understanding more on what grass can do for your business to do some research on it. There are lots of great resources, research and podcasts out there on grass. I promise that once you try it, you will never go back to set stocking.”* Alisdair says.

Emma concludes: *"Our ultimate goal is to produce a product that the market wants in as efficient way as possible by making the best use of the key natural resource we have available to us. You really can't put a price on what you can grow in your fields."*



# AREA REPORTS 2020

## AREA 1 - NORTHERN SCOTLAND

There was a folk rock song from the late sixties called Strangely Strange but Oddly Normal and when I was thinking about what to say about 2020 this title sprang to mind as in a way summing up life for us as farmers and cattle breeders in the 'pandemic year' – whilst all around us slipped into a strange mire of public health, ethical and economic challenges and the world went a bit crazy as a result, for us everything remained 'oddly normal' – we carried on pretty much as before.

So 2020 hasn't actually been such a bad year for us as livestock farmers - people need to eat after all. Beef and lamb prices have, once the initial shock of lockdown food distribution was sorted out, been good - long may that last. For us in the North of Scotland Area working with the remarkable Salers breed it has been a pretty good year as the breed continues its growth in our region where its special qualities as the suckler farmer's ideal female are really needed – there are a lot of suckler cows in this part of the world and many highly professional suckled beef producers who understand what the Salers can do. The bull sales have reflected this steadily growing recognition of the Salers, both numbers of bulls sold and prices have been up as buyers have managed to work well enough with the new online and indirect selling systems being developed to purchase the animals they need – and congratulations to our Area 1 member Patrick Boyd on Tyree for topping the male prices and setting a new record female price of 7000gns with Drumaglea Nymph at Castle Douglas Premier sale this year.

Members are also reporting good sales off farm with demand growing for commercial bulls and the market remaining

really strong for both pedigree and crossbred females – lots of buyers are taking home their first Salers this way and we are getting good feedback from these new entrants, which is very encouraging for the long term future.

So all in all we can't complain, we are in many ways the lucky ones with most people so much more affected by Covid-19 restrictions on their lives and on their businesses than we have been. Of course we have all missed the shows and events, our opportunities to get together with other breeders to socialise and compare notes and like everyone we all very much hope that the Covid-19 vaccines will come soon so we can get back to something like normal before 2021 is out. We are very much looking forward to seeing new faces at these events when they do restart.

2020 has been a difficult and perplexing time for everyone, and the weather hasn't been helping! However our breed has quietly been doing an excellent job for us through all this and we can really look to the future with great confidence as a result of that. Best wishes and good luck for the coming year to all in the breed, I feel sure that 2021 will be a better for lots of reasons not least of which is we have in the Salers a tremendous opportunity to work with.

**Malcolm Pye – Area Representative**



**MALCOLM PYE**

## AREA 2 - SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND



Well what a year 2020 has been, hopefully this journal finds you all safe and well in these challenging times. You couldn't write a regional report of 2020 without mentioning Covid-19. Hopefully 2021 brings some closure to the pandemic and everyone can look forward to the summer shows and social occasions. Locally Salers cattle numbers are on the increase, with new breeders coming into the breed. Salers cross calves are doing well in local markets. At the October sale of suckled calves in Castle Douglas

Poldean's Charolais cross Salers spring calves averaged £3.40/kg securing the highest average for any exhibitor; while along the road at Newton Stewart spring born Salers heifers from the Howatson's of the Risk topped at £1200, with pens regularly making £4/kg.

Castle Douglas sale looked a bit different this year with Covid-19 regulations meaning no pedigree show could be held. The commercial heifers were ably judged in the pens by Johnnie Wright of Pinmore mains. The McClymonts of Cuil farm Newton Stewart were awarded both champion and reserve pens. The judge purchased the top price bull and pedigree heifer both bred by Pat Boyd from Drumaglea, making his long trip down from Tiree worthwhile.

Alan Howatson from the Risk farm was awarded the Cuil silver salver at the premier sale at Castle Douglas. The platter is awarded to someone who has worked tirelessly to promote the Salers breed both in the society and on the show circuit. Alan is a very respected judge of cattle having judged all the major shows and has sat on council in various capacities for many years. With Covid-19 regulations preventing the annual dinner we unfortunately couldn't raise a dram to Alan. However, here's hoping we can in the year to come!

**Neil Austin - Area Representative**



**NEIL AUSTIN**





ALAN HOWATSON RECEIVING THE CUI SALVER FROM COLIN MCCLYMONT FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SALERS BREED AND THE SOCIETY

## AREA 2A - SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND

With a dry start to the summer and a wet end as usual the weather seems to have made our year challenging. To add to that Covid-19 it certainly has been a tough year.

On the positive side the Salers as a breed are still on the up and their popularity growing every year.

We had a tremendous sale in Stirling with plenty of new buyers. Then we had lockdown so the rest of the year has been pretty quiet but the popularity of the Salers has meant there have still been bulls and some females selling privately.

Let's hope in 2021 we get back to normality!

**Tom Walling - Area Representative**



TOM WALLING

## AREA 3 - WALES

Wales, like all areas, has suffered from the Covid-19 restrictions but as difficult a year as it has been this has not hampered the demand for Salers cattle across the region. In the initial lockdown we lost the popular Welshpool spring sale in May and there were concerns there would be no outlet for pedigree cattle with breeding sales being cancelled for a number of months however breeders continued to trade privately. Our autumn sale did go ahead but in a different format to normal.



The sale was topped at 4000gns by a bull Rigel Optimus Prime from Rigel Pedigree and the commercial section averaged £1184.38 for 16 animals sold and had a healthy clearance rate of 84% which was £105.38 a head up on 2019. The pedigree female average was also up £383.27 per head on 2019 with 11 out of 18 females selling to a top of £2415 (2300gns)

Prices remained strong across all sectors in the commercial markets with 50 head Salers x Charolais suckled calves 6/7 month old from Alun Thomas Tyn Hendre Bangor, males averaging £800 and females £720 at Ruthin Market in early October and eleven five month old Charolais x Salers steers from David Lewis & family, Llandrindod

Wells at 335kg selling for £960 in Knighton Brecon & Radnor Suckled Calf Sale. Finishing bulls were taken to the maximum weight at 12-14 months of age, weighing on average 360Kg, grading out U3 or R3. We are also monitoring a Salers herd in Wales that are crossing with a Charolais bull and selling the crossbred calves at weaning. Data will be out in the new year.

We were delighted to welcome two new members to Area 3 and despite all the doom gloom of 2020 and the continuing challenges Covid-19 and BREXIT will present, we look forward to a prosperous year in 2021.

**Harri Pritchard - Area Representative**



HARRI PRITCHARD

## AREA 4 - NORTHERN IRELAND

2020 is almost over and we will all be thinking ahead to see what 2021 will bring. This year our lives have had to adapt due to Covid-19, a dry spring and probably for me the biggest change was the cancellation of the livestock shows. The fodder season caught back up in the second half of the year with reports of a great grazing backend for a lot of farmers here in Area 4. We have had some new members join up to the society this year, which is very encouraging.



Livestock marts have had to diversify into online viewing and bidding. For private sales, interest for the Salers breed has increased with a lot of Area 4 Salers breeders happy to get all stock they had for sale, sold, with some buyers still available.

An increased number of Salers bulls sold this year to farmers wanting an 'easy calving bull' to put onto heifers, with some happy to come back to buy heifers. Hopefully in two or three years we see these farmers as new members to the society.

Moving forward, we are hoping for things to go back to normal, for continued growth in the breed, and for me, to get back out in the ring with the Salers. Should any members want to start to get involved in showing their cattle at any of our local N.I shows, please get in contact.

Keep safe.

**Seamus Connell - Area Representative**



**SEAMUS CONNELL**

## AREA 6 - LANCS, YORKS, HUMBERSIDE, CUMBRIA, NORTHUMBERLAND, TEESIDE, NEWCASTLE

Well 2020 will certainly go down in the history books as a year best forgotten whether you be in the farming industry or not. Empty shelves in the supermarkets, no lloo roll, on line spring sales, no show season and restricted autumn sales, all due to the Covid-19 which came from China! On the plus side the demand for beef increased and the price with it.

The weather was in similar mood to the Covid-19 with spring being exceptionally hot and dry after the exceptionally wet autumn and winter of 2019. This led to low yielding arable crops which consequently resulted in record low straw yields and grass growth in spring was steady in the dry east.

Bull and heifer sales from farm have been good with new customers coming to the breed for easy calving and a more

stress-free life for themselves. It must be remembered that if we were ever to lose this attribute, our USP, Salers would sink as a breed.

Fingers crossed that 2021 is better in so many ways than 2020, hopefully there will be a return to some normality and the sales and the show season can occur more or less as normal, and that the weather plays ball!

**Angus Gowthorpe - Area Representative**



**ANGUS GOWTHORPE**

## AREA 7 - CHESHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE, SHROPSHIRE, WORCESTER, GLOUCESTER, WARWICKSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE

They say things happen in threes, well Brexit and the possible effects was bad enough, Covid-19 was and still is unbelievable.... what on earth can still be to come?

Having said that, it is also unbelievable how beef and lamb prices have held and been so good, and sheep breeding sales through the roof, even though they look so much more uncertain after Brexit. Could it be that Covid-19 in fact may do us some favours with the public and government more appreciative of home-produced British food, and more importantly standards through its production.

So enough of all that, back to Salers, and I have to say during a year with all its difficulties there has been a very encouraging reassuring growing interest in the breed at home and indeed over my area generally, with solid steady sales throughout.

On behalf of my area I would just like to say how difficult it must be for our new secretary Sian taking over her new role amidst Covid-19 restrictions but I have to say with new ideas and modern social media she is doing really well, keep up the good work!

Unfortunately, it's looking unlikely that there will be any major shows next year, but who knows as Covid-19 vaccines seem to be getting nearer. Have it in mind with your cattle if any opportunities arise, and if any new breeders or younger members, want to become involved they would be very welcome, please let us know.

With no shows it is important for us as breeders to get together, so it could be a good time for farm open days run with society

support either in attendance or even possibly a financial incentive as part of a national promotion campaign.

It is wonderful to see the best cattle at shows but it's almost more important to see the consistency of the breed through a whole heard, a true Salers strong point.

As breeders we must make sure we have the type of Salers that are not just ideal sucklers, that can wean more than 60% of their weight mainly off a FORAGE diet with a natural FLESHING ability, FATTENING and FINISHING easily, with a natural FAT marbling creating a real flavour, produced alongside and part of the environment all around us. Maybe there could be ways the society could get behind the above (F) features as part of a promotion package. I ask everybody to think of how you or we can get our message across to sell the breed, I'm here, let's have some constructive, positive suggestions.

So let's be optimistic, yes there are going to be changes and let's be honest we are all going to have to change. But with that will come opportunities, a time for Salers to flourish and deliver on all fronts. Time for confidence in beef, confidence in our breed, confidence in our future. I'm up for it are you?

**Bryn Robinson - Area Representative**



**BRYN ROBINSON**



## AREA 8 - BERKSHIRE, HANTS, ISLE OF WIGHT, WILTSHIRE, AVON, DOREST, SOMERSET, DEVON, CORNWALL

Another year has passed pandemics, no shows no judging, lockdown one and two for the humans. Gaps in my hedge rows and woods where ash trees once stood, in both instances a deadly virus having wide ranging consequences for all.

You may think there is not much to talk about here in the south west with markets only just operating under Covid-19 rules with no camaraderie just strictly business you understand. I think the author Henry Brewis's illustration is perfectly apt today when in his tale of the Annual Clartyhole and District Christmas Fat Stock Show Fred the farmer by chance had found "a good un" the steer named George was said to "stand out aloof and quite different from the rest and went on to win the second prize in the Fat Stock Show." Got any more like that at home young man said the dealer from Yorkshire not many replied farmer Fred."

Behind the scenes much is happening here a golden opportunity for members to reflect on where their farming is going. Attending zoom meetings, discussion groups and a chance to relearn the basics only to a modern agroecological theme all from the safety of your own desktop. Some members have replaced mainstream sucklers with high liveweight gain Salers heifers destined for a purely grass-fed diet. Some are moving farms to make life easier, Others are measuring data "If it moves we measure it" That means not just the Salers bulls backside but grass growth and grazing days in the paddocks soil temperature and analysis, Salers cattle growth rates, the benefits of using polycultures of traditional grasses and herbal leys



what we used to call in the seventies weeds, against the chemical nitrogen dependant ryegrasses developed somewhere in Holland totally unsuitable for our varied climate and altitude.

We cannot dictate price when we are dealing with the monopolistic nature of the abattoirs, but we can analyse and cut all our cattle keeping costs. Provide our Salers cattle with the best natural growing conditions they deserve, as well as sequestering carbon into the soil to help the environment and solve climate change. In return the hardiness and durability of the Salers will deliver every time with minimal input, leaving nothing to chance so if we are asked "Got any more Salers like that at home?" The reply is how many do you want?

At home as I write, a small mob of in calf Salers heifers frolicked in the mild evening and the setting rays of the November sun. The golden hue giving their red coats a dark tint. Their paddock rotations getting shorter now just like the daylight. Not long before housing. In the hedgerow a new healthy copse of disease resistant Elm trees stand looking magnificent just starting to turn golden from green before the fall, both in plant and animal strong young life with the promise of a better year and new life to come.

**Malcolm Light - Area Representative**



**MALCOLM LIGHT**

## AREA 9 - NOTTS, Lincs, LEICS, NOTHANTS, CAMBS, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, ESSEX, HERTS, BEDS, BUCKS, SURREY, KENT, SUSSEX, LONDON

Well here's hoping 2021 is an improvement on last year! I guess our next challenge is to negotiate our way through Brexit, it's a good job farmers are resilient!

Having lost our shop window of shows to Covid-19, we have had to rely on sales to promote the breed. This has been easy as the Salers have become regulars for all the right reasons in the market reports in this area. Confidence in the breed is resulting in a strong following for quality stores and replacement females and proving their commercial worth in an increasingly competitive market. Our breed vendors have turned out quality stock resulting in prices comparable with the big breeds.

Like the rest of the country this area has seen an increase in the breed with many new cattle breeders trying them and realising their excellent traits and benefits. It is great to see many being converted to the Salers, often following a difficult calving season with another breed. Without a live calf there is no profit, many have had to learn the hard way but are now seeing the financial benefits from changing breed. Due to this bull sales have held up well despite the other difficulties of the year. Experiencing the less stressful life of easier calving's, lower costs, less labour, cow

back in calf, etc. has also encouraged neighbours 'looking over the hedge' to give them a go – it's amazing how many times you hear 'I wish I'd done it long ago'

Unfortunately Newark livestock market has ceased trading so we will be looking for a new market to hold the society spring sale from next year. This year's sale was cancelled due to Covid-19.

Welcome to the new members in our area and thank you for the continuing support from existing members. The past year has been very dull socially but hopefully things will return to some sort of 'normal' and we can enjoy meeting up and mixing again. The shows are a great place for members to catch up with each other but also an opportunity to promote the breed and your herd so after a year off why not give it a go?

The Salers are in the perfect place for the future, are you waking up to the right breed?!

**Carolyn Fox - Area Representative**



**CAROLYN FOX**

# YOUNG FARMER FOCUS: NATHAN ROGERS

Article Credit: *Farmers Guardian*

## "Ten years ago I bought my first bulling heifer"

Nathan Rogers, 26, from Hayscastle, Pembrokeshire, is club chairman of Fishguard YFC and manages a herd of 140 British Friesian and Shorthorn cross cows.

### Growing up

Being brought up in a farming family and having spent the school holidays helping out on my grandparent's farm, and in the show ring with them and the work of preparing and leading pedigree cattle, I knew I would enter the farming industry.

When I left school I went on to do my national diploma in agriculture then on to achieving my HND in agriculture through one day a week at Gelli Aur College in Carmarthenshire. Only being in college one day a week allowed me to work the rest of the week and, therefore, gain the valuable 'hands on' skills, which you could not learn in a classroom.

### YFC

I was a late entry into YFC, and one of the few things I regret not doing sooner as I only joined 3 years ago and I have loved every minute of it. This year I am currently the club chairman for Fishguard YFC, which will definitely be a year to remember, as the club won the local county winter fair for the first time.

### Covid-19

This saw the club raise over £5000 for 7 local charities to help them through the Covid-19 Pandemic. This involved me milking in just an apron and a pair of wellies for a week at the end of May.

Ten years ago I bought my first bulling heifer from my grandparents herd of pedigree Salers and I also bought a few heifers out of pedigree sales the same year.

They made up the foundation cows of my pedigree Salers, from which I went on to grow my own suckler herd, and I now farm a business tenancy agreement on 35 hectares of my grandparent's farm.

With the weather drier than normal for the time of year back in autumn, the calves which were born were weaned a month earlier than normal. They were, therefore, moved on to silage aftermath grazing on young perennial and white clover leys.

This helped to maintain growth rates and the cows could have an extra month dry to save them losing too much body condition.

### Dairy

Ten years ago, I also started helping on a neighbouring farm relief milking and doing general fieldwork throughout the years. I love this kind of work to this very day.

I am now the farm's current herd manager for an all year round calving dairy herd, managing 140 cows, which are made up of British Friesians and Shorthorn crosses.

This utilises a low input system maximising milk from forage with an annual milk yield of 4,900 litres with 700 kg cake per cow fed, through the parlour on a 365 day calving index.





# PREENBANK SALERS

*A breeder of champions, with many more to come!*



Preenbank Ocky, sired by Invader out of Preenbank Flo-Jo



Preenbank Orsino  
pictured at 10  
months old, sired  
by the imported  
French bull  
Jalibert, out of  
Preenbank Ismina.  
Orsino has been  
used at home.

**Fred & Bryn Robinson & Family**

Highfields Farm, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 7LQ

Tel: (01694) 771 357 Mob: 07847 887 062 (Bryn)

Email: [highfieldspreenbank@gmail.com](mailto:highfieldspreenbank@gmail.com)  Facebook: Preenbank Pedigrees

High Heard Health BYD Ace Johnes Level 1

# SALERS MARKET SHARE GAINS IN ANOTHER DIFFICULT YEAR *by Terence Pye*

This review had been prepared with an abiding sense of déjà vu, as 2020 has proved to be another very challenging year for UK agriculture, with some major issues carrying on from 2019 (uncertainty over Brexit, the weather) but with Covid-19 in addition, which is continuing to have far reaching consequences. First and foremost a human tragedy in terms of illness and premature deaths on a terrible scale, but also a recession in the economy, the virtual shutdown of the hospitality sector, lockdowns, and other ongoing restrictions on personal freedom. Consequences included major changes in consumer shopping habits and demand, the cancellation of the summer shows, and livestock markets closed or operating under restrictions to limit the transmission of the virus. Through all of this, farmers have kept on farming.

## Market Overview

The BCMS data indicates that the GB suckler cow numbers for 2020 are about 1.2 million (counting only cows that had a calf notified to BCMS), and that this has remained broadly stable for the last three years.

By comparison, the number of beef sired calves increased from 1.8 million in 2018 to 1.9 million in 2020, with all this increase in beef sired calves driven by the greater use of beef sires in the dairy herd.

2020 data ex-BCMS	Calves by Salers Breeding Bulls	Salers/SalersX Suckler Cows
Number	30400	38400
Market Share	1.6%	3.2%
Growth Rate (4 yr avg)	4.6%	7.9%

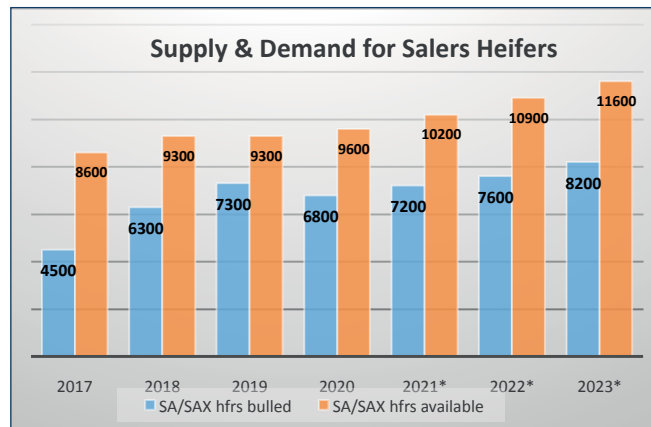
The Salers share of the suckler cow market increased to a new high, with numbers of Salers/SalersX cows up a fantastic 10% vs. 2019. The number of calves sired by a Salers bull also reached a new record, up almost 6% on 2019.

## Suckler Herd

The trends seen over recent years have very encouragingly continued this year. With stability in the overall cow numbers, the growth in the number of Salers sucklers is being achieved at the expense of cows bred by terminal sire breeds, reflecting the well-established move towards the selection of replacement heifers bred by easy calving, low maintenance, high output maternal breeds, where the Salers is preminent. Though our increased market share is closing the gap on the next largest breed, for now the Salers remains 8th in the suckler cow league table.

Is this rate of increase sustainable? Can the Salers breed grow even faster?

The answers to these questions come from considering the factors impacting the supply of heifers vs. the demand for replacements. The demand for Salers/SalersX heifers required to be put to the bull as future replacements can be reliably estimated from the actual numbers of Salers/SalersX cows ex-BCMS, by assuming that the annual increase in Salers/SalersX cows continues at current rates and by allowing for 9% pa disposals. This is shown by the blue bars in the chart below.



Estimating the annual availability of Salers/SalersX bulling heifers is more complex. BCMS tell us how many Salers sired calves are born each year, we know that about half of these are female and that these must be born 2 or 3 years ahead of when they need to calve. Taking account these factors, and of mortality, and that some are of a cross destined for fattening or just born at the wrong time of year, or are not of the right quality leads to an indicative number of potential breeding heifers available shown by the orange bars.

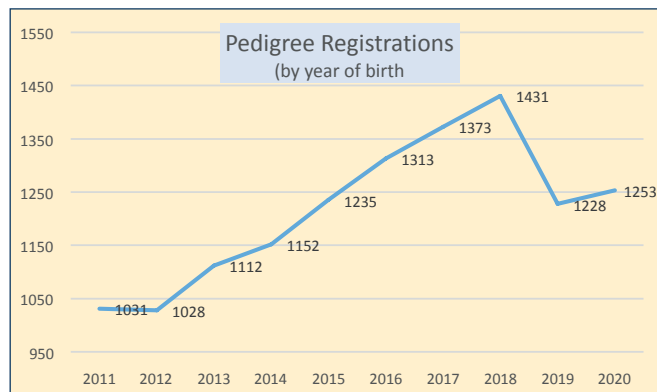


Though it looks like there is some headroom on the supply side, in reality the gap is far too small, and ideally the supply should exceed demand by 2x or 3x or even more to ensure that Salers breeding heifers are readily available all over the UK. In effect this chart just supports our everyday experience that Salers heifers are in short supply, and that this shortage is holding back the growth of the breed.

The key message is that our members need to produce more good quality Salers/SalersX heifers and then maximize the proportion of these sold for breeding.

## Pedigree Herd

Pedigree registrations suffered a significant drop in 2019, following many years of strong growth. This reduction is partly due to one longstanding major breeder changing their registration policy, and the rest is attributable to the tough conditions in 2019 causing members to be more selective and cut back on registrations. Of course, the number of births did not decline, so there is a fair chance that some of these will still be registered in due course. 2020 is already doing better, especially as these year to date totals have been reported three months earlier than in previous years.



## Prospects for 2021

Despite two years of extraordinary challenges, the Salers breed is in a strong position and we can confidently reaffirm the predictions made last year:

The number of Salers sucklers will increase, due to the Salers cow's easy calving and ability to rear a high value calf.

The number of Salers sired calves will increase, due to the Salers bull's easy calving and the demand for Salers heifers as suckler replacements.

The number of Salers breeders will increase, as will the number of pedigree registrations, due to the demand from suckler and dairy farmers for Salers genetics.

Salers breeders and our commercial customers can look forward to 2021 (and beyond), knowing that we have the breed most ideally suited to the market requirements.



# MYOSTATIN – A BUYER’S GUIDE

## 1. Introduction

Following consultation with members, in March 2019 Council took the decision to protect the Salers’ leading maternal traits, especially its unrivalled calving ease, by implementing a five-year program to eliminate from the breed the various mutations of the myostatin gene otherwise known as the Culard or double muscling gene.

The aim of the Society is to explain and communicate the potential impact that myostatin would have on the maternal traits so sought after in the Salers. Some of the worst effects of the myostatin mutation on calving ease etc. occur when an animal inherits two copies, one from each parent. Suckler farmers can avoid this risk by keeping cows that are M0, whilst still being able to use a strongly muscled terminal sire to gain improved conformation.

The sooner the myostatin mutations are eliminated, the sooner the Society will be able to capitalise on a unique status and an unprecedented marketing tool. There are opportunities to adopt a system, whereby herds are classified or accredited as Myostatin free. This would make the Salers stand out from any other breed and allow us to effectively market our maternal breed to maximum effect.

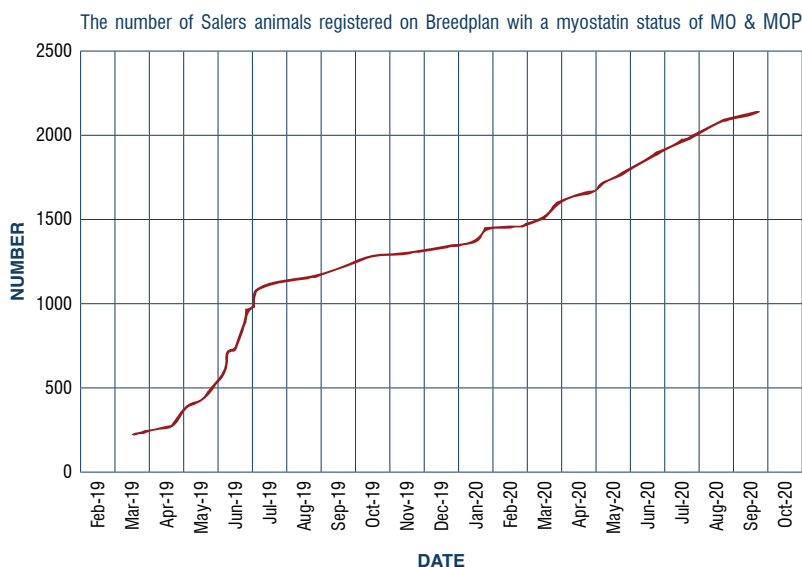
From 1st January 2024, registrations will no longer be accepted into the main herd book of UK Salers of animals of unknown myostatin status or that are known to have any of the mutations of the myostatin gene. Please see myostatin definitions in section 2.1 Certificate of Pedigree.

So far, since March 2019 all bulls submitted for registration have had their myostatin status established either by DNA testing or by parentage and this information has been publicised on the certificate of pedigree and on Breedplan. If a registration from a male animal was received with an unknown myostatin status, the registration was suspended, pending the myostatin result via DNA testing.

In addition, from 1 November 2019 all pedigree males and females entered to Society sales have been DNA tested to establish their myostatin status and the result published in the catalogue and announced at the sale.

Tremendous progress has been made and we are fortunate that we have found so few Salers with these myostatin genes, just four imported lines that were discovered at the outset. In March 2019, 261 cattle on the Breedplan database had a known myostatin result. Of that 261 cattle 237 (90.8%) were M0 or M0P however 9.2% had a known or inferred status of M1 or M2.

On 20 September 2020, the myostatin status of 2228 cattle were known or inferred and recorded on Breedplan. 96.2% of registered cattle had the desired myostatin status of M0 / M0P, with only 3.8% having the myostatin status of M1 / M2.



## 2. Next Steps – Buyers

Pedigree breeders need to be especially vigilant on the myostatin status of animals they buy, as the costs and difficulties of getting their herd myostatin free by 2024 will be greatly increased if they inadvertently introduce these myostatin variants via bought in animals.

The purchase of stock represents an investment in genetic material that will have a major impact on the financial performance of the herd, so it is important to invest wisely.

As well as the normal purchasing criteria of maternal traits, appearance, registration status, structural soundness, health, cost, performance data and fertility it is also important to consider the myostatin status of females and the myostatin / DNA status for bulls.

At Society sales, the myostatin / DNA status will be advertised in the catalogue and announced at sale.

In the case of private sales, you could:


- ask the owner / breeder to see a copy of the Certificate of Pedigree
- contact the Salers Cattle Society
- use the ear tag number to look up the animal’s details on Breedplan



## 2.1 Certificate of Pedigree


The myostatin status is clearly visible on the certificate of pedigree for both males and females. In the case of bulls, you should also establish whether he holds a DNA profile. Progeny can only be registered from a sire that has a DNA profile held at the Society's chosen external laboratory. If a DNA profile is held the DNA case number will be visible on the certificate.

- MU – Myostatin status unknown
- M0 – Tested free from myostatin
- M0P – Myostatin free by parentage
- M1 – Known via a DNA test to hold a single copy
- M2 – Known via a DNA test to hold two copies



**H.B. Number:** UK521402602532  
**ID Number:** UK521402602532  
**Birth Date:** 18 Feb 2018  
**DNA Case No.:** 11918013804  
**Sex:** Male  
**Horn:** Horned  
**Colour:** Red  
**Status:** Full Blood  
**BetaM Status:** NP  
**Myostatin Status:** M0

Figure 1 – Certificate of pedigree of a bull with a DNA profile case number and M0 myostatin status



**H.B. Number:** UK521402302627  
**ID Number:** UK521402302627  
**Birth Date:** 31 Jul 2018  
**DNA Case No.:**  
**Sex:** Male  
**Horn:** Horned  
**Colour:** Red  
**Status:** Full Blood  
**BetaM Status:** NP  
**Myostatin Status:** MU

Figure 2 - Certificate of pedigree of a bull that does not have a DNA profile and his myostatin status is unknown

## 2.2 Breedplan

To access data from Breedplan:

- Go to the Salers Cattle Society website [www.salers.uk](http://www.salers.uk)
- Click **ONLINE DATABASE**
- Enter the full ear tag number with no spaces, into the **Animal Identifier (s):** box
- Click **Search**
- Select the animal



**UK Salers Animal Enquiry**

[Home](#) [Animal Enquiry](#) [EBV Enquiry](#) [Mating Predictor](#) [Member Enquiry](#) [Sale Catalogues](#) [Semen Catalogues](#)

Enter Selection Criteria Then Click Search

**Name:**   
Enter the start of an animals name  
Use wildcard (%) if required.

**Animal Identifier(s):**  UK560129100200  
Enter one or more animal identifiers separated by commas.  
Idents. using Herd Marks enter as UK123456999999.  
or enter Society HB No. or part thereof  
or enter Foreign ID. or part thereof  
Use wildcard (%) if required.(eg. XXX2012%)

**H.B. Number:** UK521402302627  
**Official Tag:** UK521402302627  
**Sex:** Male  
**Birth Date:** 31/07/2018  
**Registration Status:** Registered  
**Grade:** Full Blood  
**Breeder:** [Jack Sleigh & Sons Ltd](#)  
**Current Owner:** [Jack Sleigh & Sons Ltd](#)  
**Colour:** Red  
**Horn:** Horned  
**BetaM Status:** NP  
**Myostatin Status:** MU  
**Progeny:** None  
**EBV Graph:** [View](#)

Figure 3 – Shows an animal with no DNA profile and an unknown myostatin status

**H.B. Number:** UK521402602532  
**Official Tag:** UK521402602532  
**Sex:** Male  
**Birth Date:** 18/02/2018  
**Registration Status:** Registered  
**Animal Status:** Active  
**Grade:** Full Blood  
**Breeder:** [Jack Sleigh & Sons Ltd](#)  
**Current Owner:** [Jack Sleigh & Sons Ltd](#)  
**Colour:** Red  
**Horn:** Horned  
**DNA Case No.:** 11918013804  
**BetaM Status:** NP  
**Myostatin Status:** M0  
**Progeny:** None  
**EBV Graph:** [View](#)

Figure 4 – Shows an animal that has a DNA profile, its DNA case number and the myostatin status, M0



## 3. Next Steps – Members

We call on all members to make rapid progress in eradicating myostatin from the Salers breed, so enabling the Society to more quickly embark on marketing this, as a key strength of the Salers breed.

As breeders and members, one of the most effective methods you can adopt to ensure the animals you wish to register, are free from the myostatin gene by 1 January 2024 is to:

1. only use bulls that have a myostatin status of M0 or M0P; and,
2. to establish the myostatin status of the females in your herd, with a view to breeding and registering pedigree animals from those that have a myostatin status of M0 or M0P.

The combination of the above will ensure that all offspring from these animals will have a myostatin status of M0P. The added benefit of this course of action is the ongoing cost saving from not having to test all offspring prior to registration. At that stage, the only requirements for DNA testing, would be to establish a DNA profile for a sire or ad-hoc DNA testing initiated by yourselves or to satisfy a member or Society query.

# STOCKMAN'S CHOICE FOR PEDIGREE SECTOR

Patsy Hunter, Business and Technical Editor, *The Scottish Farmer*

## A new range of pedigree cattle feeds, formulated using key additives to promote feed efficiency, health and performance under the brand name, Stockman's Choice, has been launched by Harbro.

It includes Rumitech, a Carbon Trust assured additive that reduces feed intake whilst increasing lean tissue growth and reducing fat deposition, including less scrotal fat. A recent trial on young bulls showed an increase in their eye muscle area, while fat depth was reduced by 12% when Rumitech was introduced.

With a keen focus on health and immunity, the range includes Rumi Defence which has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. This additive enhances immunity and improves the function of vital organs, which are undoubtedly under pressure with the levels of performance expected of these animals. Maxammon has been included to increase protein and pH, safely allowing for higher cereal levels to be included.

The range features products to suit animals at every stage, with pellets and coarse mix options as well as concentrates, a blend, a crunch and mash.

Gill and Malcom Pye use the feed for their Salers bulls from Rednock Estate, Port of Menteith, while their females are split, either crossed with the Charolais to produce stores for Stirling market or put to Salers bulls to produce high quality pedigree stock for sale.

*"There are only two stages in our pedigree system when we add additional feed to our home grown forage: bulls pre-sale and weaned heifers," says Malcom Pye.*

*"We think it's important prior to sale that bull buyers can see the growth capability of the Salers and the performance potential of each sire alongside their outstanding maternal traits for which they are well known."*



Gill added: *"We are also expanding the herd and wish to retain as many females as possible, calving down strong, early-maturing replacements at around two years of age, which is a vital element of long-term productivity."*

Rednock aims for 2kg daily liveweight gain in bulls post-weaning with optimum use of supplementary feed. *"We've been working closely with Ian Anderson from Harbro for about three years and have invested in a handling and management facility to assess pen-by-pen performance. If you don't weigh, you don't know and we assess feed conversion costs regularly to help ensure the profitability of the business."*

*"Over the past five months, we have used Stockman's Choice Growing and Stockman's Choice Conditioning Pellets on different pens alongside big bale hay or haylage. When the bulls moved to the Growing pellet, we were able to control feeding to keep animals performing within our desired targets. Using electronic weigh systems, we set our diet feeding for an average 2.5kg DLWG for the growth period between 550-1000kg liveweight during the five months of the new feeding system. All the bulls sold well, either online or through private sales."*

Rednock's show team is selected out of the herd's best performing lines using Breedplan EBVs, maternal traits, conformation traits, growth and temperament. Harbro's Stockman's Choice Conditioning pellets were used on the show team to meet a different market spec where the animals realised that extra bit of potential.

*"We noticed an immediate response to the conditioning pellets, with animals gaining an extra 1kg DLWG when compared to Stockman's Choice Growing pellets at the same feed rate" says Kenny McKeague, livestock manager.*



# REDNOCK

## SALERS



Rednock Napoleon Reserve Champion AOBB Continental RHS Online 2020

## VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

GILL & MALCOLM PYE  
PORT OF MENTEITH, STIRLING, FK8 3LD.

Gill 07816488195 Malcolm 07866597525

0 1 8 7 7 3 8 5 7 6 2



# EVENTS 2021

The following dates are provisional and may change at any time due to Covid-19 regulations and restrictions. Please check our website [www.salers.uk](http://www.salers.uk) for details of any changes or cancellations.

**STIRLING BULL SALES**

14 - 15 February 2021

**COUNCIL MEETING**

7 March 2021

**STIRLING BULL SALES**

2 - 3 May 2021

**BALMORAL SHOW**

12 - 15 May 2021

**WELSHPOOL SPRING SALE**

20 May 2021

**BEEF EXPO**

22 May 2021

**COUNCIL MEETING**

6 June 2021

**ROYAL CORNWALL SHOW**

10 - 12 June 2021

**ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW**

17 - 20 June 2021

**GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW**

13 - 15 July 2021

**ROYAL WELSH AGRICULTURAL SHOW**

19 - 22 July 2021

**COUNCIL MEETING**

5 September 2021

**SOMMET DE L'ÉLEVAGE**

5 - 8 October 2021

**WELSHPOOL AUTUMN SALE**

9 October 2021

**TOUR SALERS INTERNATIONAL MEXICO**

Provisional Dates 11 - 15 October 2021

**STIRLING BULL SALES**

17 - 19 October 2021

**AGM, DINNER & PREMIER SHOW,  
CASTLE DOUGLAS**

5 November 2021

**PARADE & PREMIER SALE,  
CASTLE DOUGLAS**

6 November 2021

**ROYAL WELSH WINTER FAIR**

29 & 30 November 2021

**COUNCIL MEETING**

5 December 2021





# SEAWELL SALERS HERD



07884 186612 (SOPHIE)  
07817 851254 (PETER)

***seawell.charolais@btinternet.com***

**HIGH HEALTH  
STATUS HERD**

**VISITORS  
WELCOME**

**AVAILABLE  
FOREXPORT**

**PM & SM DONGER, SEAWELL GROUNDS, FOXLEY, TOWCESTER, NORTHANTS, NN12 8HW**



# PRE-SALE CHECKLIST

**Closing Dates:** The closing date will be stipulated in the sale schedule. The schedule will be advertised on [www.salers.uk](http://www.salers.uk) and via the designated auctioneers. Entries must be accompanied by a herd health declaration, copies of health scheme certificates and any necessary test results and documentation requested in the schedule. Late entries or entries with incomplete documentation may be rejected.

**Tagging:** All animals must be double tagged in accordance with current legislation.

**Herd Health:** Animals must meet the requirements of the Salers Society Herd Health regulations. Vendors must complete and submit a Salers Society Herd Health Declaration for each sale. This should be accompanied by your health scheme providers Owners Declaration of Health Status listing the ear tags of your entries. Be aware that entries of animals not born in your herd may need a separate health certificate depending on the health status of their herd of origin. You will be required to display your CHeCS Herd Health Certificate, or a Health Declaration Pen Card for each animal, supplied by the CHeCs Approved Health Scheme of which you are required to be a member.

**Herd Health Requirements:** All cattle pedigree and commercial entered for official Society sales must satisfy the following.

**BVD Accredited Herd:** Entries must be vaccinated with an approved vaccine no more than 12 months prior to the date of sale.

**BVD not Accredited Herd:** The individual animals which have entered must be tested free of BVD virus and vaccinated at least two weeks prior to the sale date. Females that are sold in-calf or running with the bull must be individually tested and vaccinated before service, with the BVD status of the bull being determined before he serves any females that are to be sold.

**Johnes:** Members wishing to enter animals for sale must be a member of a CHeCs Approved or comparable Health Scheme and have a risk classification of 1-4 for the disease. ([www.cheecs.co.uk](http://www.cheecs.co.uk)).

**Beta-mannosidosis:** All Fullblood and Purebred animals must have a non-carrier DNA status for beta-mannosidosis.

**TB:** All entries must comply with current TB pre-movement testing requirements. Cattle coming to Scotland from 1 or 2 year TB testing areas must have passed a TB test within the previous 60 days of the movement. This applies to all cattle over 6 weeks of age. Animals staying in Scotland must pass a post movement TB test carried out between 60 and 120 days following the movement. The current TB test cannot be carried out twice with 42 days or false results may occur. Proof of testing will have to be provided by yourself and dates of testing announced.

**DNA:** All pedigree animals, males and females including production females must be DNA tested. Males and females must establish their myostatin status and males must hold a DNA SNP profile.

**Eyes:** The veterinary surgeon may examine the animal's eyes to ensure that the retinas and lenses are sound. The vet retains the right to reject an animal for eye defects.

**Dentition:** The veterinary surgeon will check the dentition is correct and the incisor teeth are biting on the upper pad. Animals will be rejected from the sale if the vet determines that their bite is severely overshot or undershot.

**Scrotal Size:** All bulls will have their testicles examined by a vet. Testicles should be firm and even sized. Bulls deemed by the vet to have defective testicles will be rejected from the sale. The circumference at the widest part of the scrotum will be measured and should be 32cms at 12 months of age, 34cms at 18-24 months of age and 36cms over 24 months of age. The measured scrotal circumference will be displayed on the pen, and the Society may require the Auctioneer to announce in the ring that a bull does not meet our standards.

**Teats:** All female animals will be put through the crush and have their udders / teats examined for defects by the vet. They may be rejected from the sale if significant defects are found.

**Diseases etc:** Check the animals are free from warts (pay particular attention to the sheath and scrotal areas), Ringworm, Mange, Lice or other contagious diseases.

**Treatments:** If your entries are showing signs of any of the above conditions and have been treated then a signed veterinary certificate to that effect must accompany your entry.

**Locomotion:** Check the animal's feet and legs are sound and the general locomotion is satisfactory. The animal may be rejected from the sale if the Society Inspector determines that it is defective in its legs, feet or locomotion. Where possible, allowance will be made for animals that have had a long journey time to the mart.

**Docility:** All pedigree entries (excluding production females) are to be halter trained and led using bull ring, or nose clip/bulldog for females. The animal may be rejected from the sale if the Society Inspector determines that it is displaying unruly behaviour.

**Conformation and Condition:** Check the animals are of good conformation and in good condition and meet the minimum weight for age standard as per the Society rulings. The measured weight for bulls will be displayed on the pen, and the Society may require the Auctioneer to announce in the ring that a bull does not meet our standards.

**Declarations:** If semen has been taken from a bull, this must be declared for inclusion in the catalogue, along with the number of straws retained. If females have been flushed, this must be declared for inclusion in the catalogue, along with the number of embryos retained. If females are in-calf by AI, this must be declared in the catalogue and AI certificates must be provided.

*Following arrival at the sale premises all pedigree cattle are subject to an official inspection conducted by a veterinary surgeon and a Society Inspector.*

*The aim of the inspection is to ensure that all animals sold at sales are of a consistently high quality and are free from any health and/or structural defects.*

*To avoid the disappointment of having cattle rejected, members should carry out checks before consigning Salers cattle to Society sales.*

*Further information regarding Society rulings re health, testicle size, and weight for age can be found on the Society website or from the Secretary*



# BREED HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

## BREED ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Salers (pronounced Sa'lairs) originate in the Southern half of the Massif Central in the Auvergne region of France. It has a rough and variable climate, and though higher, 2000-6000 ft, is very similar to our Lake District and the Highlands of Scotland and Wales. The Salers is one of the oldest breeds in the world, with prehistoric cave paintings suggesting that a similar type of animal has been bred in the area for 7-10,000 years.

They appear to be closely related to the old Celtic breeds and the African breeds, and were probably located in the Massif Central when red cattle migrated from Africa through the Iberian Peninsula and on into northern Europe and the British Isles.

## BREED IMPROVEMENT

What is certain is that Devons, Durhams, (Shorthorns) and West Highland cattle were imported into the Salers area in the mid 19th Century with the intention of improving the breed. At the same time a M. Tyssandier D'Escous challenged the introduction of outside blood and set about improving the Salers by selecting from within the breed.

His method was considered most successful, and he became known as the Father of the Breed. A statue honouring his work stands in the middle of the small mediaeval town of Salers from which the breed takes its name.

From that time until well into the 20th century the breed was improved and developed as a triple purpose animal, Milk-Meat-Draught.

Traditionally, this involved the simultaneous production of milk for cheese and a calf for beef production. In 1925 milk recording became compulsory and weight recording started in 1962.

Resulting from all this improvement and recording has emerged the ideal suckler cow with bred-in foraging ability, able to utilise and thrive on native grasses and forage both summer and winter.

## BREED CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES

The difficult environmental conditions where the Salers breed developed makes it ideal for the poorer areas of the British Isles and today's beef industry. Salers are usually horned with a dark red coat, though there have always been some with black coats. Polled Salers were once very rare. Since the mid '90s, the availability of polled and/or black fullblood Salers has increased due to the efforts of UK breeders. The skin and pigmented membranes are brown and consequently few eye or udder problems occur. A good hair coat which becomes thick and curly in winter gives hardiness and adaptability to cold and heat.

Having roamed the mountains for centuries, and been draught animals they have developed strong legs and good feet with black hooves. Consequently the cattle can travel long distance over rough ground without developing foot problems. They are equally able to tolerate long periods inside on slats etc. Being one of the oldest and genetically most pure of the European breeds, the Salers produces a positive

effect on the predictability in crossbreeding programmes in a consistent increase in hybrid vigour.

The French National Institute of Agricultural Research has run trials that show that Salers cows and heifers are able to draw on their body reserves when food is scarce to produce sufficient milk for their calf, building them up again quickly when grazing is plentiful. The same trials show that Salers are only fully mature at 5 to 6 years of age.

### Measured on farm

Average weight of mature cows	650-850kg
Average weight of mature bulls	1000-1200kg
Average height of withers of cows	144cm
Average height of wither of bulls	154cm

### Measured at the Paris Show

Average weight of cows 5 years+	844kg
Average weight of bulls 4 years+	1209kg
Heaviest weight of cow	963kg
Heaviest weight of bull	1401kg

(Heavier weights have now been recorded in the U.K.)

## MATERNAL INFLUENCE

Fixed through its heritage the Salers female displays exceptional maternal qualities of fertility, milking ability, calving ease, hardiness and longevity. High percentage calf crops resulting from the inherent fertility of Salers are realised through early puberty, quick rebreeding and high conception rates coupled with the breeds predictable calving ease and large pelvic structure. Further maternal advantage is realised through the Salers ability to wean a heavy calf and take care of herself. More kilograms at weaning result from the combination of good lactation and lean growth factors.

Suckler cow herd costs are minimised though the breeds foraging ability, winter hardiness and minimal feet, eye and udder problems. Salers are known for their longevity and "wearability" no doubt due to many of the factors stated, stress free calving, good feet and legs etc.

In a survey carried out in France, of over 100,000 Salers cows, 25.1% were 10 years old or over and the calving interval was 374 days.

Bulls are known for their ability to cover large numbers of females and in the ranching countries bull numbers have been halved and calving percentages have risen, another valuable saving on herd costs.

Salers are a unique breed that combine high carcass quality and fast growth rate yet calve easily.

More live calves per cow put to the bull means more £££'s and it all begins with a trouble free birth. Vigorous calves born with moderate birth weights and slender long foetal conformation have gained Salers a proven reputation for easy calving. Salers sired calves offer the cowman the unique combination of increased weaning weights with less management at calving.

The dam and the sire both influence the weight and shape of the calf at birth. Salers calves are relatively light at birth, about 36 Kg for heifers and 38 Kg for bulls, they are

also long and rather flat in shape, it is this feature which makes the Salers bull very popular for crossing with commercial and dairy heifers.

The Salers influence contributes a large pelvic area to cross bred replacement females and will allow commercial suckler cowmen to utilise heavily muscled terminal sires in a cross breeding programme with less concern about calving difficulties.

## FEEDING AND CARCASS

The final measurement of a breeds capabilities is the economic production of a lean, nutritious and palatable protein product. That is what beef production is all about, Salers consistently produce the product that the industry and consumer demand. Salers and their crosses are being proven both by the feeder and the butcher.

Competitive live weight gains and efficient feed conversion have been documented by the feeder, whilst the butcher appreciates carcasses that are of industry acceptable weight from approximately 10-16 months and producing top grades. Salers cattle are extremely flexible in the finishing yard enabling feeders to make the best of the markets highs and lows.

The Salers is a carcass breed that calves easily and consistently produces carcasses that are high in quality and lean in composition. Salers are producing an industry preferred product that is making the breeder, the feeder, the butcher, and the retailer take notice.

## THE BEGINNINGS OF SALERS IN THE U.K.

In the spring of 1984, a herd of Salers was founded in Cumbria - 60 females and 4 bulls with as wide a genetic base as possible. Consequently, heifers by 45 different sires and 4 bulls completely unrelated to each other were imported into the U.K. from France.

All the cattle were first choices. Growth rate, docility, femininity, straight top lines and correct legs were the main criteria for selection. All dams, and granddams where possible, were inspected and had to come up to the same standard. In that importation were two females carrying the poll factor. All lived up to expectations, bred and gave no calving problems whatsoever.

From the original importation Salers cattle quickly spread all over the British Isles from the Shetlands to Cornwall and Ireland. The Salers Cattle Society of the U.K. was formed by Bryan Walling, Robert Hudson, Fiona Walling, Thomas Dobson and Bruce Worsley of Crosthwaite, Kendal.

The first AGM was held in November 1986, at that point there were a mere 10 members. Bryan Walling was elected as first Chairman.

Since then the breed has continued to expand throughout 1000 Salers are being registered annually by 175 members.

The Society is divided into Areas and is governed by a Council made up from the Area Representatives.

# USEFUL SOCIETY INFORMATION

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:

Subscriptions are due and payable on 1<sup>st</sup> January each year. No invoice will be sent so it would be helpful if all members would please pay promptly. V.A.T. receipts will be sent on payment. Payment can be made by Standing Order.

## REGISTRATIONS:

No calves can be registered unless the sire has been DNA tested and the result lodged with the society.

The poll/horn status is to be recorded as part of the registration. The poll/horn status can be amended if required and a new warranty issued. Up to the age of 12 months of age this is free of charge, and thereafter the normal fee for a replacement warranty applies. Polled animals must include either Poll or Polled in the name.

In accordance with the EU Zootechnical Regulations 2016/1012, the Society will maintain an accurate record of Salers animals and genetic material (semen, embryos, oocytes) born in or imported (without discrimination on account of their country of origin).

The UK Herdbook comprises a Main Herd Register containing two Classes, Full Blood and Purebred, and a Supplementary (Grade) Register.

Imported animals/genetics will be registered in the UK Class equivalent to the Class of the exporting country Herdbook as specified on the Export Zootechnical Pedigree Certificate

From 31/3/2019, members must establish, prior to registration and acceptance into the main register, the Myostatin status of all male animals via a DNA test, unless they are known to be myostatin free by parentage (MOP).

From 1/1/2024 all males and females must have a myostatin free status (M0) confirmed by a DNA test or by parentage (MOP) to be accepted into the Main Register.

## A.I. CERTIFICATES MUST ACCOMPANY REGISTRATIONS IF APPROPRIATE:

Registrations of calves conceived by AI must be accompanied by supporting documentary evidence e.g. AI certificate or other. The sire of the calf got by AI must be registered as an AI sire with the Society. From 1 Jan 2021 the registration of an AI sire must be accompanied with documentation showing where the semen was collected and that the collection was done in accordance with the prevailing legislation to ensure eligibility for that semen to be used in the UK or for export to or from the UK as appropriate.

Some semen owners use the Sire Certificate system. Do check when buying semen and remember to forward the Sire Certificate with the A.I. Certificate and Registration Form.

## THE GRADE REGISTER:

The Supplementary Grade Register is for female animals in a Grading Up program that do not meet the requirements to be entered in the Purebred Class of the Main Register. Females registered in the Supplementary (Grade) Register can be registered in the Purebred Class if they have a valid three generation pedigree, are confirmed non-carrier for beta-mannosidosis and myostatin free (M0) by DNA test, and have been inspected for conformance to the Breed Standard.

Grade A, B and C females will be registered in the Grade Register. Only Full Blood bulls can be used in a grading up program. Though not recommended, a Purebred bull (31/32 or greater) may be used on a Grade C female and her heifer calf be registered as a Grade C.

Following its first calving, a Grade C cow may be designated as Purebred and transferred to the Herd Book, subject to passing an inspection for conformity to Breed Standard and being tested non-carrier for beta-mannosidosis. Application for inspection must be made in writing to the Secretary. On passing the inspection, to effect the transfer the original warranty and transfer fee must be forwarded to the Secretary. This cow's calves can then be registered as Purebred according to the table. Grade C cows are transferred as 7/8 PB no matter what % Salers blood they actually are.

## UK HERD BOOK NUMBER:

The herd book number is now the UK tag number as the unique identification of each animal.

## IMPORTATION OF CATTLE:

It is recommended that all cattle are tested free from bluetongue prior to importation and the negative test paperwork should be sent to the Society office along with all the other relevant documentation. Failure to produce this documentation will delay the importation process and the Society will instead require a copy of the DEFRA Revocation of Notice Prohibiting the Movement of Specific Animals (MR04).

Imported females must have a three-generation pedigree export certificate issued by the Society of the country of origin and confirmation of their non-carrier status for betamannosidosis, and myostatin M0 status for all nine mutations via a DNA test.

Imported males must have a three-generation pedigree export certificate issued by the Society of the country of origin. They must have a DNA profile sent to the Society in excel format (.xls) to be uploaded to the UK lab database and confirmation of their non-carrier status for betamannosidosis, and myostatin M0 status for all nine mutations via a DNA test.

Pregnant imported cattle must have a three-generation pedigree certificate issued by the Society of the country of origin for the sire of the in-vitro calf. They must also be accompanied by the sire's DNA profile in excel format (.xls) to be uploaded to the UK lab and confirmation of their noncarrier status for beta-mannosidosis and myostatin M0 status for all nine mutations.

Status by parentage for betamannosidosis and myostatin is specifically not accepted.

**The same principles apply to imported semen, embryos and oocytes.** As requirements of importation can change, check with the Secretary's office to confirm what is required before you start the importation procedure.



### EMBRYO TRANSPLANT PROGRAMME:

Before embarking on an embryo transplant programme, please contact the secretary who will forward the relevant Salers Society forms. Minimum of £11 per animal flushed (up to 10 embryos) thereafter £1 per embryo. After 3 months minimum of £20 per animal flushed (up to 10 embryos) thereafter £2 per embryo. Remember to insert the ET Form No. and Embryo No. on the Calf Registration Form). £28 per Export Certificate plus embryo registration. One zootechnical export certificate covers all embryos from one flush to the same purchaser. The sire and dam of embryos must be registered in the UK Herdbook. Each flush must be registered to obtain embryo number eg. 186/3, which is then used to identify the resulting calf when registered.

Calves names will be followed by the letters ET on the certificate.

In the case of all calves got by embryo transplant, the DNA profile of the dam, confirmation of the dam's noncarrier status for beta-mannosidosis and myostatin M0 status of all nine mutations must be registered with the Society. If the DNA profile relates to an animal out with the UK then the DNA profile should be sent to the Society in excel format (.xls) in order for the profile to be uploaded to the UK lab database.

Imported embryos must be accompanied by a three-generation zootechnical export certificate issued by the Society of the country of origin.

Imported embryos must also be accompanied by the DNA profile of the sire in excel format (.xls) and confirmation of the sire's noncarrier status for beta-mannosidosis and myostatin M0 status of all nine mutations.

### TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP:

A fee of £6 + VAT is charged for transfer of ownership. The fee is payable by the purchaser who should obtain the warranty from the seller and forward it to the secretary for transfer. The transfer of ownership of females must take place from one herd to another before you may register a calf from her.

**ALL TRANSACTIONS ARE PLUS VAT. NO TRANSACTIONS ARE COMPLETE UNTIL ALL MONIES ARE PAID AND PAPERWORK IS CORRECTLY SUPPLIED.**

**IF PAYING BY BACS PLEASE USE YOUR THREE ALPHABETICAL DIGITS FROM YOUR HERD REFERENCE AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE.**

**IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEMBER TO GET ALL RELEVANT PAPERWORK TO THE SOCIETY ON TIME OR LATE PENALTIES WILL BE INCURRED.**

### PEDIGREE REGISTRATION ROYALTY SCHEME FOR AI SIRE

**AIM:** If a member has collected semen from a registered bull in his/her ownership, or has acquired the sole rights to semen in the UK, for imported or purchased semen and wishes to sell semen at commercial production prices to encourage commercial use, yet retain a higher return for pedigree use by charging a separate levy free on registration of pedigree calves, he/she can apply to the Society to register the bull as a Pedigree Registration Royalty Sire.

### Involvement of The Society:

The Salers Society of the UK and its secretary will merely be the tools by which those calves gain their registration, in a Pedigree Registration Royalty Scheme, which is an arrangement between the vendor of the semen and the breeder who wishes to register a calf, which is the result of using this semen.

- Before any calves can be registered from the table above a Sire Certificate must be obtained from the owner and enclosed with the Birth Registration Form.
- The late registration penalty will apply if time is taken to obtain the Sire Certificate.
- Registration fees will apply on the date all paperwork is correctly supplied.
- No advance payments will be accepted.

### SIRE CERTIFICATES:

A system has been set up for registering calves got by a non-owned sire. Service may either be by A.I. or natural. In these cases a Sire Certificate must be obtained from the owner of the bull/semen and forwarded with the registration form (and A.I. form if appropriate). The cost of the Sire Certificate is negotiable privately between the owners of the dam and the owners of the bull or semen. Sire certificates can be obtained from the secretary at the cost of £30 per 10 certificates. The secretary must be informed if the owner of a bull or semen wishes to use the sire certificate system (otherwise registrations may be accepted without a sire certificate and the owner would lose the service fee).

## THE FOLLOWING BULLS/SEMEN ARE ON THE ABOVE SCHEME

Name of Bull	Herd Book No.	Ear No.	Royalty Charge	Owner	Owner's Tel. No.	Beta-m Status
Bruno	172	6386051716	£50 + VAT	Rigel Pedigree	01624 590125	Non-Carrier
Crocodile Dundee	279	6387062264	£40 + VAT	Rigel Pedigree	01642 590125	Non-Carrier
Vainqueur	1	1584052218	£30 + VAT	Rigel Pedigree	01624 590125	Non-Carrier
Vauban	3	1584054531	£25 + VAT	Rigel Pedigree	01624 590125	Non-Carrier
Tolquhon Bonaparte	AAS2009003	UK521402201198	£50 + VAT	Aidansfield Salers	01289 388523	Non-Carrier
Gulliver	IMP2012010	1531258814	£50 + VAT	Roy Crockett	07929 306160	Non-Carrier
Lord Bisto	303672501071	303672501071	£30 + VAT	AJ Powell	07787 556345	Non-Carrier
Murphy	IMP2016057	6362056945	£50 + VAT	Bertrand Facon	07785 221961	Non-Carrier
Horace	IMP2012017	1532157716	£40 + VAT	Robert Millar	02828 276633	Non-Carrier

# SOCIETY FEES & CHARGES

	Charge	VAT 20%	TOTAL
<b>Intimations are free</b>	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Registering Commercial SalersX (Grade A, B &amp; C)</b>			
All cattle	£5.00	£1.00	£6.00
<b>Upgrading Grade C to Purebred</b> (This is in addition to the £5 plus vat already paid to register the animal as a Grade C plus society inspection, BetaM non-carrier report and M0 result)	£28.00	£5.60	£33.60
<b>Registrations All other calves (except ET)</b>			
up to 3 months	£28.00	£5.60	<b>£33.60</b>
3-6 months	£49.00	£9.80	<b>£58.80</b>
over 6 months	£91.00	£18.20	<b>£109.20</b>
<b>Registrations Embryo transplant calves</b>			
up to 3 months	£33.00	£6.60	<b>£39.60</b>
3-6 months	£59.00	£11.80	<b>£70.80</b>
over 6 months	£112.00	£22.40	<b>£134.40</b>
<b>Transfer of ownership</b>	£6.00	£1.20	<b>£7.20</b>
<b>Replacement Warranty</b>	£10.00	£2.00	<b>£12.00</b>
<b>Registration of Embryos (including imported)</b>			
Minimum per animal flushed (up to 10 embryos)	£11.00	£2.20	<b>£13.20</b>
Thereafter per embryo	£1.00	£0.20	<b>£1.20</b>
After 3 months-minimum per animal flushes (up to 10 embryos)	£21.00	£4.20	<b>£25.20</b>
Thereafter per embryo	£2.00	£0.40	<b>£2.40</b>
<b>Subscription payable 1st – 4th January</b>	£50.00	£10.00	<b>£60.00</b>
<b>Subscription payable 5th January onwards</b>	£55.00	£11.00	<b>£66.00</b>
<b>Joining Fee and Registration of Herd Letter and Prefix</b>	£37.00	£7.40	<b>£44.40</b>
<b>Export Certificates</b>	£28.00	£5.60	<b>£33.60</b>
<b>Registration of Imported Cattle not in calf</b>			
up to 3 months from date of entry	£42.00	£8.40	<b>£50.40</b>
3-6 months	£81.00	£16.20	<b>£97.20</b>
over 6 months	£159.00	£31.80	<b>£190.80</b>
<b>Registration of Imported Cattle with in vitro calves</b>			
up to 3 months from date of entry	£64.50	£12.90	<b>£77.40</b>
3-6 months	£103.50	£20.70	<b>£124.40</b>
over 6 months	£183.00	£36.60	<b>£219.60</b>
<b>Annual Sire Royalty Scheme fee per animal</b>	£10.00	£2.00	<b>£12.00</b>
<b>Sire Scheme Certificates (10 certificates)</b>	£25.00	£5.00	<b>£30.00</b>
<b>DNA 50K SNP, Myostatin &amp; SNP Parentage verification</b>	£25.00	£5.00	<b>£30.00</b>
Myostatin only	£25.00	£5.00	<b>£30.00</b>
Parentage verification only or STR	£25.00	£5.00	<b>£30.00</b>
BetaM	£25.00	£5.00	<b>£30.00</b>
Horn / Poll only	£35.00	£7.00	<b>£42.00</b>
<b>Discounted DNA 50K SNP, Myostatin, SNP PV &amp; Horn / Poll</b>	£50.00	£10.00	<b>£60.00</b>

All transactions are plus vat. No transactions complete until payment is received and paperwork correctly supplied.  
It is the responsibility of the member to get all relevant information to the Society office on time or late penalties will be incurred.



# PARKFIELD SALERS

SPECIALISING IN POLLED & HOMOZYGOUS POLLED SALERS.



**Parkfield  
Homozygous  
Polled Georgie  
46mths old**

ALL OF THE ADVANTAGES OF SALERS WITHOUT DEHORNING

COME AND HAVE A  
LOOK AT OUR POLLED SALERS.  
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**PARKFIELD LODGE, MOSS HOUSE LANE, PILLING, LANCS, PR3 6BX**

**E-MAIL : [olwenparkfield@btinternet.com](mailto:olwenparkfield@btinternet.com)**



**PARKFIELD SALERS**

# Membership Application Form

## I wish to become an Annual member of the Salers Cattle Society of the UK Ltd.

And hereby agree to abide by the Rules of the Society until the termination of the year in which I withdraw my membership by notice in writing.

I also agree for my personal information (name, address, contact and relevant membership details as is currently published) to be published online through the Salers website and be available freely to visitors to the website. I also agree that my contact details can be shared over the phone with members and other people wishing to get in touch with me. I also agree that any pictures taken at shows/sales or any other Salers events can be published by both printed and digital means.

**YES / NO** please delete as necessary

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Terms of Membership

Initial Joining Fee & Registration of Herd Prefix  
**£37.00 plus VAT @ 20%                      Total = £44.40**

Annual Subscription  
**£55.00 plus VAT @ 20%                      Total = £66.00**

**Total Initial Fee = £110.40**

**Please complete the following in block capital  
(except for email & website address)**

Membership Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

UK Number \_\_\_\_\_

\* Salers Herd Prefix Name \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Salers Letters \_\_\_\_\_

\* Salers Herd Prefix Name – this can be any name you choose provided it is not already registered with the society.

\*\* Salers Letters – Select three letters of your choice which will be the society computer reference for your herd.

Return this form to the secretary:

**Siân Sharp**  
**Jasmine Cottage**  
**2 Maitland Row**  
**Gavinton**  
**Berwickshire**  
**TD11 3QP**

### Payment Details

**A** Payment can be made by cheque made payable to Salers Cattle Society of the UK Ltd.

**B** Payment can be made direct into the society account, please pay RBS for the credit of the Salers Cattle Society of the UK Ltd.

**Account Number 11861110 Sort Code 16-26-14**

### Gift Aid

Gift Aid provides a great opportunity for you to increase the value of your donations and/or subscriptions to the Salers Cattle Society at no cost to yourselves. Provided you are a taxpayer we can claim from the Inland Revenue the basic rate tax paid on your donations/subscriptions, boosting them by 25%. So for every £10 we receive it is worth £12.50. All the society needs from you is a simple declaration saying that you want to use Gift Aid. A declaration can cover one or more donations/subscriptions and can be made by filling in the form below.

**Name of Charity:    The Salers Cattle Society  
                                 of the UK Ltd**

**Charity Number:    1115115**

### Donor Details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Herd  
Prefix \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like all donations/membership  
subscriptions I have made since 6th April 2006  
and all donations in the future to be treated as  
Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To qualify for Gift Aid you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains in the tax year equal to the tax we reclaim from your donation.





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### Salers Cattle Society of the UK

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