

Breeds of Beef Cattle



Aberdeen Angus



Belgian Blue



Blonde d'Aquitaine



Charolais



Dexter



Galloway



Gelbvieh



Hays Converter



Hereford



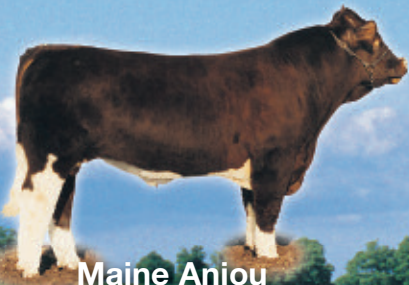
Highland



Limousin



Lincoln Red



Maine Anjou



Murray Grey



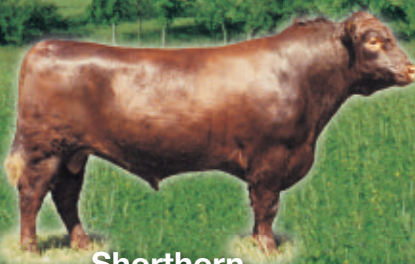
Parthenais



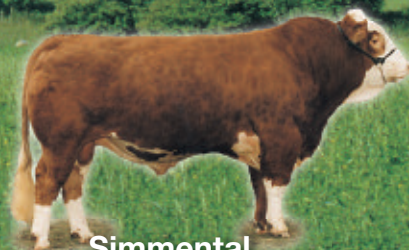
Pinzgauer



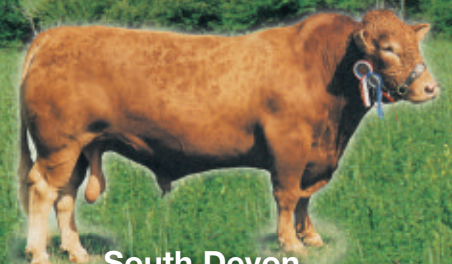
Salers



Shorthorn



Simmental



South Devon

Aberdeen Angus

Origins: Originated in the Highlands of Scotland when early breeders selected primarily for quality of the carcass and meat. The breed first came to North America in 1876 and the first purebred calf was born in Ontario at the Guelph Experimental Farm in 1877.

Quality traits: Recognized for quality carcasses and maternal strengths of the cows.

Weight of bulls: 2400 to 2600 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1400 lbs.

Appearance: May be either red or black and are always one solid colour. Naturally polled (born without horns).

Belgian Blue

Origins: Third largest breed in Great Britain. First introduced to Canada in 1976.

Quality traits: Noted for its quiet temperament.

Weight of bulls: 2700 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1650 lbs.

Appearance: Colour varies from white, blue roan or black. Some also have a red factor. Animals have double-muscled carcasses and are all born with horns.

Blonde d’Aquitaine

Origins: Originated in southwest France and date back to the sixth century. Today’s breed is a combination of the Garonnais of the plains, Garonnais of the hills and the Blonde des Pyrenees.

Quality traits: Crosses well with other breeds, is heavily muscled, and yield a high percentage of lean meat. Cows are known for ease in calving.

Weight of bulls: 1900 to 2300 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1100 to 1500 lbs.

Appearance: Range in colour from a solid wheat shade to darker shades with lighter rings around the eyes and muzzle, on the inner sides of the legs and under the belly and shins.

Charolais

Origins: Came from France and was the earliest European beef cattle import to Canada.

Quality traits: Proven adaptable to a wide range of environments. Grow rapidly and have good muscling. Widely used in crossbreeding with other breeds.

Weight of bulls: 2500 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1600 to 2000 lbs.

Appearance: White to cream coloured, either horned or polled (born without horns). Have medium to large frames.

Dexter

Origins: Originally natives of the south and southwest districts of Ireland. The breed was in Canada prior to 1900 but has become more popular since 1977.

Quality traits: Well used to roaming shelterless hillsides with sparse forage. Their small size makes them easy to handle and their smaller cuts of meat have also proved popular. In Canada, they are classified as a dual-purpose breed – for both meat and milk.

Weight of bulls: 1000 lbs.

Weight of cows: 800 lbs.

Appearance: Smallest purebred dual-purpose breed of cattle in the world. Can be black, red or dun. All purebreds are horned.

Galloway

Origins: One of the older breeds of cattle, originating in Scotland. They were imported from Britain to Canada in 1853 and are believed to be one of the oldest registered breeds in Canada.

Quality traits: Noted for their hardiness, maternal traits, ease in calving and feed foraging abilities.

Weight of bulls: 1500 to 2100 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1050 to 1600 lbs.

Appearance: Basic colours are black, dun, red. Belted Galloways come in the same colours but have a wide white belt around their stomachs. All are polled (born without horns).

Gelbvieh

Origins: Evolved in the early 19th century through the crossing of various breeds in Bavaria. In Germany, the breed was developed for both milk and meat production although emphasis in recent years has been on meat production. The breed has been in Canada since 1972.

Quality traits: Reputation for having a good size and heavy muscling. Known to have desirable carcasses.

Weight of bulls: 2300 to 2800 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1400 to 1800 lbs.

Appearance: Solid in colour ranging from reddish gold to russet. Breed has fine, dense hair.

Hays Converter

Origins: First breed developed by a Canadian livestock producer – Senator Harry W. Hays of Calgary Alberta. Registered in December, 1975.

Quality traits: Fast-growing cattle adapted to range conditions of Western Canada.

Weight of bulls: 2300 to 2800 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1250 to 1500 lbs.

Colour: Usually black with some white markings. Occasionally can be red and white.

Hereford

Origins: Originated in England and is one of the oldest and most numerous of breeds.

Quality traits: Extremely hardy, has good growth potential and calves easily. Bulls are docile and easy to handle. Crosses well with other breeds.

Weight of bulls: 2200 to 2300 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1300 to 1500 lbs.

Appearance: Reddish-brown in colour with white on the head and chest. A white face is a dominant characteristic. Animals can be horned or polled (born without horns).

Highland

Origins: Originated in Scotland and was first imported to Canada in the 1880s.

Quality traits: Will survive and reproduce under extreme climates and poor grazing conditions. A double coat is well oiled to shed rain and snow.

Weight of bulls: 1300 to 2000 lbs.

Weight of cows: 900 to 1400 lbs.

Appearance: Most common colour is brindle red but can also be black, yellow, white or dun in colour. Animals are horned.

Limousin

Origins: Originated from the Limoges Valley in France and was first imported to Canada in 1969.

Quality traits: Referred to as the “carcass breed” and is selected for meat qualities. Known for calving ease and maternal instincts.

Weight of bulls: 2200 to 2400 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1400 to 1600 lbs.

Appearance: Most commonly, colour ranges from a golden wheat colour in the females to a deep red-gold in the males. Black animals are also growing in popularity. Full blood animals can be either horned or polled (born without horns).

Lincoln Red

Origins: Originated in Lincolnshire, England.

Quality traits: Well muscled, noted for easy fertility and calving, has excellent milk production and docile temperament.

Weight of bulls: 1800 to 2450 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1300 to 1500 lbs.

Appearance: Animals are a solid, deep cherry red colour and are often polled (born without horns).

Maine Anjou

Origins: Originated in France. First imported to Canada in 1968.

Quality traits: Traditionally recognized for high growth rates, good milking abilities and good dispositions.

Weight of bulls: 2200 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1500 lbs.

Appearance: Cattle generally have dark red and white colour patterns and can also be black or solid red. Traditionally, horned but polled (born without horns) and scurred (born with small horns) animals have also developed.

Murray Grey

Origins: Originated in Australia resulting from a chance mating of a Shorthorn cow to a purebred black Angus bull producing a calf that was silver grey in colour. Introduced to Canada in 1969.

Quality traits: Reputation for calving ease, maternal instincts, hardiness and a docile temperament.

Weight of bulls: 2200 to 2500 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1200 to 1600 lbs.

Appearance: Silver grey in colour.



Parthenais

Origins: The French Parthenais Herdbook, established in 1893, is one of the oldest in France. Parthenais were originally a three-fold use breed, used for “oxen”, meat and milk. The first embryos were imported to Canada in 1991.

Quality traits: Calving difficulties are minimal. Animals have an excellent rate of gain and have high cutability carcass qualities. They are very docile and cross well with other breeds.

Weight of bulls: 1800 to 2200 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1300 to 1600 lbs.

Appearance: Tan/buckskin colour and must have black pigmentation around the eyes, ears, nose, tail, hooves and genitals for full-blood status. They are also a heavily muscled breed.

Pinzgauer

Origins: The breed belongs to a group of cattle indigenous to Austria and first arrived in Canada in the early 1970s. In Austria, they are used for both milk and meat. In Canada, they are used strictly as beef cattle.

Quality traits: Medium size with a reputation for a gentle temperament.

Weight of bulls: 2000 to 2400 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1300 to 1600 lbs.

Colour: Generally chestnut-brown in colour but can range from light to dark brown. A clearly defined white stripe of varying width can be found along the back and loins. Animals also have a white rump and tail and are generally horned but, on rare occasions, can also be polled (born without horns).

Salers

Origins: Breed developed in south central France and first appeared in Canada in 1972.

Quality traits: Known for maternal qualities of easy calving and milk production. Have good dispositions and are recognized for their ability to forage for feed and to tolerate extreme climates.

Weight of bulls: 2000 to 2500 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1300 to 1500 lbs.

Colour: Purebreds are generally a solid, deep cherry red in colour and are horned. A small number of animals are black.

Shorthorn

Origins: Originated in England and first appeared in Canada in 1825.

Quality traits: Called the “Foundation breed” because it has been used in the development of a number of other breeds throughout the world. Has a reputation for hardiness, strong maternal instincts and a good temperament.

Weight of bulls: 2300 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1200 to 1400 lbs.

Colour: May be red, white, roan or any combination of red and white. Can be either horned or polled (born without horns).

Simmental

Origins: Originated in Switzerland during the Middle Ages where it was used for both milk and meat production. In the rest of the world, the breed is primarily raised for meat.

Quality traits: Heavy muscling combined with the length and weight of the breed gives a high percentage of prime cuts without an excess of fat.

Weight of bulls: 2200 to 2800 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1400 to 1650 lbs.

Appearance: Range in colour from a light tan to dark red with white markings.

South Devon

Origins: Developed in Devonshire, England and is recognized as being the oldest of the English breeds.

Quality traits: Noted for its hardiness and excellent marbling (marbling refers to the fat particles contained within the muscle fibres that affect the meat’s juiciness).

Weight of bulls: 2200 to 2600 lbs.

Weight of cows: 1400 lbs.

Colour: Bright yellowish-red in colour and can vary in shade. Can be either horned or polled (born without horns).

Note: Weights are mature weights.

Poster produced by the Beef Farmers of Ontario
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Background Photo: David Barr
Bull photos and facts courtesy of individual associations.