



SOUTH DEVON WORLD ASSOCIATION

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Dear South Devon Enthusiasts,

Another six months have passed since my last newsletter keeping us all connected, and Christmas is upon us again. Some advances have been made, but there is still a mountain of opportunity for us if we wish to tackle it!

It has been a very rocky time in the UK since the Summer, with FMD and Bluetongue movement restrictions, severe flooding, and the enormous hike in feed prices.

However, there have been positives, and things are looking brighter in other areas of the world. It seems like we all have to take a turn of the “bad times” – only fair, I guess!

We look forward to next year’s Congress in Canada, and if you have not already made your booking there is still a little time.

May I wish you all a very happy Christmas. and a peaceful and successful 2008, from all of us here in the UK!

A message from Dar Giess, World President

I would like to extend greetings to everyone and best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The Canadian tour and conference details are being finalized and there is already a nice contingent from each association confirmed to attend. The final

deadline for reservations is Jan. 1, 2008. If you have not made your reservations and are planning on attending all or a portion of the event, please contact Rebecca Penner at Agritours, 306-646-4484, rpenner@tpi.ca or Teresa Walker, president of the Canadian South Devon Association, 306-646-4460, teresa.walker@sasktel.net. A complete itinerary can be accessed at www.agritourscanada.com. The event promises to be a real treat to all who attend. My sincere thanks to all the key people involved in the coordination of the event. Thank you for the donation of your time and effort to make this world tour and conference an opportunity for all of us to enjoy. I truly believe the spill over of enthusiasm from this event can help further establish the South Devon breed in Canada and bring the recognition these breeders deserve.

The border between the U.S. and Canada is open and trade is being re-established with the markets adjusting on both sides and hopefully bringing value to our beef market. We all recognize that each individual country and breeders have different market requirements to fulfill in order to be successful in our own nations. During the conference in Canada, I feel it would be beneficial to establish a planning committee that would develop a South Devon educational and promotional program to target cattlemen around the world.

With the cooperation of the UK, US and Australia, Caroline Poultney attended the Expointer Agricultural Show in Brazil with the focus on re-establishing the breed. This was step one and with continued cooperation between the societies, this effort can be continued in Brazil and in other countries.

The Canadian Tour and Congress has every promise of being a wonderful opportunity to see our breed in a beautiful setting with plenty of time to catch up with other breeders world wide. Once again we are asking each association to prepare a presentation detailing the activities of their membership and an overview of the breed in their individual country.

In closing I would like to once again encourage everyone to attend the 7th World South Devon Congress and Tour in Canada. I would also welcome all who would like to visit Minnesota prior to, or after the Canadian events. Best wishes to everyone. I look forward to seeing you next year. Remember, the South Devon breed's future will be what we create today.

Best Regards,

Dar Giess, World South Devon Society President

WORLD ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

If, like us here in the UK, you receive enquiries from countries where there is no official South Devon “base”, you might agree that a global reference website would be useful to capture some of those internet surfers (and potential breeders!)

In the last newsletter, and as was discussed at the 2005 Congress, we would like to set up a very simple one page website which will link to all our associations, and will be in several languages.

Would you therefore appoint someone within your association who can e-mail me one photograph typifying South Devons in your country, and confirm the contact details you would like to feature on this new website, as soon as possible.

I have not yet heard from any of the Associations – perhaps you would be kind enough to let me have information if you would like to proceed.

EXPOINTER, BRAZIL

25th August – 2nd September 2007

The Show

Expointer is a huge agricultural show held every year on a 300-hectare site just outside Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil. It attracts visitors from across South America and is therefore perhaps the most important agricultural exhibition on that continent.

Cattle were housed close to the British pavilion, behind the breed society pavilions (Hereford, Angus, Texel, Devon, Limousin, Simmental, Charolais, and the Herd Book), and included Bos Indicus breeds (Nelore, Tabapua, Brangus, Braford, Santa Gertrudis, Brahman, etc), Fleckvieh, Simmental, Charolais (smaller than in UK), Angus (strong red and black), Hereford (strong traditional British shape), Devon (larger in general than in UK), Red Poll, Lincoln Red, Limousin (few), and buffalo. Native British cattle are bred pure in the southern regions of the country, and are used as composite breeds (Brangus, Braford, etc), in the tropics alongside the Bos Indicus breeds.

World Association representation

Caroline Poultney attended the show between Sunday 26th August and Thursday 30th August, using the British pavilion as a base from which to have meetings with breeders, breed societies, the Herd Book (amalgamating most

breeds), and semen companies. An interpreter was shared with the Blonde d'Aquitaine representative, who had done the translation work for the Society beforehand, and who also had several useful breeder contacts at the show.

A leaflet used to promote the breed was adapted for the show, and translated into Portuguese. It contained contact details for all associations/societies. This was handed out to interested contacts. A file of qualifying sires (three from Australia, four from the UK) was put together, with pedigree and performance information, EBV percentile charts, and many photographs showing purebred and crossbred South Devons. (NASDA sent material separately, but unfortunately this did not arrive until the Wednesday evening of the show so was not used to its full potential).

Objectives

The principal objective was to determine the level of interest in a possible reintroduction of the breed to Brazil. Genetics had been sporadically introduced between the 1940's and the 1990's without a firm establishment of the breed. The most recent genetics came from Leachman Cattle Co in the USA.

The initial objective was to suggest that a small quantity of straws suitable to fit the market (200) might be distributed via a semen company amongst 4 or 5 breeders, and the progeny then recorded. However, although there was interest it would take some concentrated work to identify those herds from this end. Achievement would more easily be reached with the close cooperation of a semen company with the vision of importing significantly higher volumes of genetics.

Contacts made

Breeders
Breed societies – presidents/secretaries
Herd Book – president/secretary
Semen companies – Ag-Link, Noxon, AxelGen

Conclusion

South Devons are barely known in Brazil, but the fact that British native breeds are so widely used should encourage us to see opportunities. There are residues of the breed in some herds, and we have a full list of breeders who have registered South Devons with the Herd Book who can be contacted initially – in their own language!

The Secretary at the Herd Book was very welcoming, and is a useful contact – it is a focal point for dissemination of information, perhaps. At least we have the opportunity to give them more information to update their website.

The semen companies varied in their reception – one was quite dismissive of most breeds apart from Angus which they said accounted for 80% of their sales; a second was quite positive about finding a number of breeders to share 200 straws; and a third was interested in 5000 straws of AI Haughton SAS Joe Louis 1, but at the very low price of \$2/straw.

Any detailed offers will need to include frame measurements, EBVs, full pedigree. The tendency is away from double muscling (need to DNA for myostatin), and for easy calving and natural fleshing. Size could be an issue here, and therefore Australian genetics (for example) might be better suited to the market. However, there are also possible opportunities for using the South Devon to increase size (with Hereford for example) without losing other characteristics.

GLOBAL EVALUATIONS

ABRI have been kind enough to provide me with a list of internationally used sires, so I now have the task of working my way through it and identifying bulls which maybe have different identities in different countries.

The next step will be to see if we could increase the use of the same international sires to increase linkage, improve accuracy and give comparable figures.

If you have not already done so, please discuss this with your Boards: possibly identifying 2 or 3 herds in each country which performance record with Breedplan, and which would be willing to use particular AI bulls and retain daughters and grand-daughters – an incentive might need to be put in place for encouragement!

It is slow going, but hopefully there will be some progress to report on by the time of the World Congress in July.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF GENETICS

Please let me know of any newly available South Devon genetics available for export – I am very happy to advertise through this newsletter.

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA (20/10)

The South Devon Cattle Breeders in WA are spread throughout the South West corner of the state. Our season up until July was looking pretty grim and after last year being the worst season in 106 years, we were more than a bit depressed. Most of the South West usually has such a reliable rainfall.

Good news!! Since July we have received good regular rains which at this point are continuing into our spring and turning the season into quite a good one. Our cattle are putting on condition, our oats for hay crops are bulking up, and we are smiling!

Western Australia's membership is static but active. No trials at the moment but Ungava and Barooga have been active at the shows.

Right now we are putting a bit of 'spit and polish' on our cattle yards in preparation for the forthcoming state tour and AGM. The dinner 'Helmsman Auction' of about a dozen young bulls and 3 or 4 heifers should be interesting.

Cheers for now, will report on the tour later.

David Corker

FROM VICTORIA (03/09)

The season here has gone from floods to very dry and we are all now very nervous about hay and silage season. Our hay sheds are all empty and so are our bank accounts, the price of grain is increasing by the day, so we desperately need a top harvest.

Melbourne Show is in September, and Chris and Leonie Daley will have cattle there. They also have 3 steers being prepared for the carcass competition held during the show. We wish them luck.

We are upgrading our website. Leonie, with the help of a friend, is looking for more information and photos to go on the site.

In Victoria we have 2 bulls being prepared for semen collection for international use. Lois Dupleix (Tesbury) has decided to collect from Gadara Zion, a poll bull purchased from Shirley and Garth Huppatz. And Leonie and Chris are collecting from one of their bulls. Hopefully both bulls will pass all the tests.

South Devons will be on display at the Gippsland Field Days but sadly the feed trial has been cancelled due to lack of feed on the site.

Lois Dupleix

FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA (30/08)

The South Australian Branch held a farm walk in the northern area of the State in July. Over a 2-day weekend a good turnout of members visited South Devon breeders' properties in the region.

Given the conditions the cattle were all in good condition and impressed the touring party.

The season has not been kind to South Australia's primary producers, with a dry autumn followed by a very wet and cold winter with the prospects of a dry spring.

In most parts of the State crops that were planted have stopped growing and some producers are already cutting these for silage.

With the poor season, sales of bulls and females have been slow and orders from outback areas have been cancelled.

The Adelaide Royal Show will be held in early September and unfortunately for the first time in many years our breed will only be represented by 8 steers in the "led steer" competition.

We are concerned, as is most of Australia, what consequences another failed season will have on agriculture in our country.

However we look forward with optimism to some reliable spring rain and an opportunity to grow out our cattle. To be able to supply replacement breeding stock to farmers who are trying to rebuild their herds that were decimated by last year's drought.

Richard Arnold

NEWS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

If only we could have sent over some of the rain we had here in July, it might have helped out Australia! It didn't just rain, it was torrential, and it continued for weeks. Many shows were affected, some were cancelled, and the Royal Show at Stoneleigh was cut short by a day because the carparks were just mud baths. The effect on pasture land was considerable, with many crops devastated – and in some areas families are spending Christmas in caravans rather than in their still ruined homes. There was an immediate knock-on effect on grain and other feed prices – another cause for hardship.

At the beginning of August we were all shocked by an outbreak of FMD in the south-east, caused by a leak from a laboratory on government premises. Although successfully contained within a fairly small area, all livestock farmers were affected by the universal livestock movement ban, and there were many reported cases of hardship at a time when sheep, in particular, should have been moving to sales. Finally, we should regain our FMD free status by 31st December. Ironic that we should have the government to thank for a disaster that has cost the industry over £100 million.

A possible 'conspiracy theory' grew when, in September, an outbreak of Bluetongue virus was confirmed in East Anglia which was then declared to be "circulating". Restriction zones were set up which have effectively carved the country in two, and which are severely disrupting trade. A vaccination programme is being worked out at the moment, alongside other EU countries, which is likely to start next summer. In the meantime, there are plenty of cases of hardship which are having to "grin and bear it" with little or no sympathy from a government which is dead scared of having to bear the financial implications of a country-wide outbreak.

Then there was a case of bird 'flu, which fortunately has been contained

Our autumn sale was rescheduled because of FMD restrictions, and was held in mid-November, with 1/3 of the catalogue not forward because of Bluetongue restrictions. However, it was a good sale, with lots of buyers (from all over the country), and some very good cattle forward. Top price for bulls went to a poll bull bred by C J & R J Edwards, from Tavistock, Devon – 3600 guineas – and an average of 2325 guineas. Prices for females were a fair reflection of quality, with a particularly good bunch of heifers from Patrick Coaker, from Widecombe in the Moor, Devon. An in-calf heifer from Richard Harvey's Sexton herd was Female Champion, and topped the sale at 2000 guineas.

Another event to be juggled around FMD restrictions was the national herd competition, won this year by Douglas Scott's Grove herd in Gloucestershire. The Open Day was held on a lovely autumn afternoon, and the cattle shone against the copper colours of the trees, and the rich pasture.

The first bull to be sold to continental Europe for very many years, to Poland, is now in the BT restriction zone, so he stays English for the moment. But a replacement has been found in the north of the country, and we look forward to him starting some promotional work in Poland in the New Year.

The Society had a stand at events in Ireland, Poland and Romania in the autumn, and, although it will be a long time before we see any big number of South Devons in those countries, we believe that the breed has a strong long-term future there.

A 12-week trial with Tesco is now complete, and we hope that other opportunities will arise from it – good to see quality beef available in the biggest retailer's stores.

AND FINALLY ...

Thank you to all those who have sent information for inclusion in this newsletter. Please send in contributions for the next newsletter by the end of April – anything you like! Thank you.

CAROLINE POULTNEY, Secretary, World Association