



Traditional Hereford Cattle

Background to the breed

The Traditional Hereford is currently categorised as Vulnerable by the RBST and in the 1997 census there were 400 breeding females.

Developed in the Welsh Borders and in Herefordshire by farmers who expected a beast to work the fields for 5 or 6 years before being sold to graziers for fattening, the Hereford is well suited to store cattle production being early maturing and is perhaps one of the best breeds at converting pasture to prime beef. The Hereford is one of the most important breeds in British livestock history and has been exported widely throughout the world. Most of the exported herds, and indeed many of the British lines were often crossed with continental breeds as production adapted to meet market demands. The RBST has been a forerunner in identifying true Traditional Hereford lines which have been unaffected by cross breeding. The first herdbook was published in 1846 and the Breed Society established in 1878.

The Traditional Hereford is a compact, beefy, short-legged animal. Cows have a high conception and calving rate which, when coupled with its hardiness and docile nature make it an ideal suckler cow. It is a middle-horned breed; the bulls' horns grow thick and horizontal while the cows are finer and gently curved. The coat is a deep or light red in colour with white on the belly, brisket, legs, shoulder stripe and tail switch. The Hereford is instantly recognisable by a white face, which has become its trademark and its beef is of the highest quality.