

THE LUIING CATTLE SOCIETY LTD.

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PRESS RELEASE

Luing EBVs Launched at Perthshire Workshop

40 Luing breeders attended a workshop to see the first Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) to be calculated for this native breed which is growing rapidly in popularity. Six years of data have been gathered on the herd at Incheoch, and visitors were able to view some of the yearling heifers with their corresponding figures on the day before these heifers went with the bull. Variations in the genetic strengths for milking ability, calving interval and longevity were of particular interest, and it is hoped that this information will help with breeding decisions in the future among more of the 150 Luing herds.

Host farmer and Breed Development Officer Neil McGowan said “the time is right for Luing breeders to get involved with recording, as the range of maternal trait EBVs now available means that resulting figures were a good fit with the breed objectives of a hardworking, thrifty suckler cow.” A recent Nuffield Farming Scholar, Mr McGowan shared his experiences of visits to herds of many breeds across the world with similar breeding goals to the Luing, claiming “these herds were focused on breeding hardy, fertile, efficient cattle - and they all used EBVs to help maintain a balanced breeding programme.”

Ailish Ross from Signet talked about the genetic importance of things you can't see. The breeding of superior maternal cattle is much more complicated than terminal sires, as many of the economically important traits within the suckler herd – milk, longevity and ease of calving are impossible to assess visually.

Ailish explained that with an accurate pedigree and information on performance, Estimated Breeding Values can be created for a range of different trait and combined into breeding indexes to meet a range of needs. This is extremely valuable information within a modern breeding programme, although a degree of caution and common sense is required when interpreting EBVs for maternal traits as accuracy values will always tend to be lower for those traits that are only expressed by a bull's female relatives.

Sam Boon congratulated the breed for its rapid expansion, doubling its importance within the national cow herd in the last 8 years according to BCMS records – an expansion very much evident by the number of new faces attending the event.

Looking to the future he talked about the important role of medium framed cows in the uplands and the need for cattle that are able to maintain body condition and fertility in a harsh environment. Sam suggested that further work is done to monitor cow mature size to ensure these attributes are retained and through improvements in calf growth rate the overall efficiency of the Luing breed can be further enhanced.

THE END

Note:

The Luing Cattle Society workshop was held at Incheoch Farms, Alyth, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, courtesy of the McGowan family who run the 'Dirnanean' Luing herd, on Tuesday 11th July 2017.

Further information can be obtained from:

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