



AUTUMN 2015



BELTIE NEWS

ALL SET FOR CASTLE DOUGLAS

Arrangements are well in hand for the biggest event in the Beltie calendar – the two day bonanza which sees the Society's A.G.M. and Annual Dinner take place at Threave Gardens visitor centre on **Thursday 22nd October**, followed the next day by the Society's biggest show and sale at **Wallets Marts** in the town. Details of the A.G.M. and dinner are enclosed with this letter, and catalogues for the show and sale can be obtained from Wallets Marts (01556 502381) or the Secretary. Catalogues can also be downloaded from the Society's website. As this letter is being written entries for the sale have closed and the catalogue is in preparation. The final numbers look like being between 50 and 60 pedigree cattle, with an increased entry of commercial stock. **Remember – don't assume you'll get a catalogue in the post, as the mailing list is limited.** Please contact the Mart to be sure.

This year's sale sees a new development initiated by Council to try to do our bit to eradicate the scourge of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea. All pedigree animals entered for this year's sale will have undergone a full course of BVD vaccination, and those from unaccredited herds must have been tested antigen negative. Evidence of vaccination is required at the time of entry and checks are being made to verify the antigen status of all entries.

We look forward to seeing you on 22nd/23rd October.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

At every Council meeting one of the most important items is to review the Society's finances, a function not only desirable from a management point of view, but also a legal duty, given our status as a registered charity and limited company. For a long time now Council has been concerned at the level of outstanding debtors on the Society's books. At just over £10,000 this represents around a fifth of the Society's turnover. If everyone paid promptly it would mean we would be able to do more to promote the breed as a whole, and to keep our fees down. Not only is it unfair on members who pay on time, but the high level of debtors has also attracted the attention of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, so urgent action needs to be taken to get this figure down. Council has therefore decided the following, **with effect from the start of the new financial year on 1st January 2016:-**

Subscriptions – For those members who do not pay by standing order/direct debit an invoice will be issued on 1st January, the time at which subscriptions become due according to the Society's rules. Those who do not pay promptly will receive a reminder at monthly intervals for three months. **After that period any members who have not paid will have their membership placed on hold.** This means that you will not be able to access the Society's online services and the Secretary will not carry out any work on your behalf until the subscription is paid. There are a few members who pay their subscription by standing order or direct debit at times of the year other than 1st January. **If you are one of them please alter your date of payment to 1st January, otherwise you may fall foul of the new procedure.** If a subscription remains unpaid for 12 months the membership will be terminated. This is considerably more lenient than clause 1.7.1 of the Society's constitution, which allows membership to be terminated if a subscription is only one month overdue and the member fails to pay within a further month after being given notice!

Joining fee – At the moment new members must pay a small fee for registering their herd prefix in addition to the usual subscription. Council has decided to replace this prefix fee with a joining fee which will be the same as the annual subscription. Therefore, if an existing member has allowed their membership to lapse by not paying their subscription they will have to re-join and pay the current subscription together with the new joining fee (i.e. twice as much as the normal subscription).

Invoices – From 1st January 2016 invoices will be issued as they are now, and as many as possible will be sent by email to keep postage costs down. As with the current system registration certificates will not be sent out until the invoice has been settled. If the invoice is not paid promptly a statement will be issued monthly. As soon as an invoice is 90 days overdue the membership will be placed on hold and no further work will be undertaken until the member's account has been completely cleared. **Statements have been enclosed with this letter, and everyone now has the next three months to get their accounts in order. Members with invoices which are 90 days overdue as at 1st January 2016 will be put on hold immediately.**

DNA TESTING

Members will be aware that the current practice when registering a bull is to take a sample of hair for DNA analysis. The DNA profile is kept on file in the event of any future mix-ups with offspring. It can also be used to confirm the identity of the new bull's sire by matching the two DNA profiles together. The Society has been carrying out sire matching since last year, and already we have had five mis-matches. Usually the situation is due to a simple error of record keeping and is easy to remedy, but in one case the identity of the sire could not be established and the young bull could not be registered.

Notwithstanding this, five mis-matches represent around 5% of the bulls being registered. If this were extrapolated to female registrations it could mean that a very large number of cattle have inaccurate, and therefore worthless, pedigrees. At its last meeting Council gave this serious issue careful consideration. Random DNA testing of females was discussed, and it was felt that this may encourage breeders to tighten up their record keeping, however it was considered to be too onerous and was rejected. Another suggestion was to DNA test every entry for all the Society's sales, but this, too, was not taken up.

The discussion came back to the bulls, which are, after all, half the herd. It was proposed that, in the event of a bull being mis-matched with his sire, one female from the herd on each side (by age) to the young bull will be compulsorily DNA tested at the expense of the breeder and these will be matched with their sire's DNA. In the event of either of these females being a mis-match the entire year group will be tested and sire matched, again, at the expense of the breeder. All these samples would have to be independently collected and verified by the breeder's vet, also at the breeder's expense, and the test would have to be carried out within six months of the initial bull mis-match. The new rules would take effect from 1st January 2016. A vote was taken on this proposal, and it was carried unanimously.

With regard to female DNA testing a second proposal was made that the Society should **reserve the right** to randomly DNA test and sire match a proportion of female registrations born after 1st January 2017. This was carried with no objections and one abstention.

SALES SUB-COMMITTEE

A meeting of the sales sub-committee was held recently in Castle Douglas. High on the agenda was the conduct of official Society shows and sales. It was felt that, at the Society's show and sale at Carlisle last May, some breeders let the side down with poorly presented cattle and not being dressed properly themselves. The sub-committee decided that breeders who go to a lot of effort and expense to turn their cattle out well ought to have preference in the sale ring. It was therefore agreed to recommend to the full Council that, beginning with the spring 2016 sales, unaltered females would be sold after all the halter-led pedigree animals had been through the ring. Bulls, of course, already have to be halter trained to qualify for a Society sale. With regard to exhibitors themselves, everyone will have to be smartly dressed and wearing a white coat in the show ring.

CAN YOU HELP?

Ellie Pendleton is an American student who has worked at the famous Aldemere Farm in Maine, U.S.A. for the past six years. Aldemere is one of the world's premier breeders of Belties and Ellie has gained wide experience in everything from general farm work to show preparation, including clipping and dressing. In addition she has worked with commercial beef, sheep and horses, but her main interest is in beef breeding cattle and in particular Belties. She is looking to broaden her experience and to learn about the beef industry in Britain and eventually wants to become involved in after school teaching specialising in agriculture. So, if you are looking for a keen assistant experienced in pedigree breeding and beef farming please contact Ellie direct on elliot.pendleton@gmail.com.

HERD DISPERSAL

The end of an era is looming up with the dispersal of one of the best known herds in Scotland. The **Ballindean herd** was founded in Perthshire in 1982 by Diana Rettie and her late husband Philip. The founding animals were two in calf heifers, Sanny and Faith, bought from the late George Sproat. The addition of a tremendous bull, Mochrum Ralph, from the late Miss Flora Stuart saw the herd go from strength to strength. Carefully selected bloodlines ensured the stock were of the best character and conformation, and in time the Ballindean herd was selling stock bulls all over the country. Around 1985 Diana fell for the dun coloured Belties after buying her first one from Bill Storrie's famous Netherwood herd, and the Ballindean herd now boasts an excellent selection of duns alongside the traditional black belted cows. In 1990 Philip successfully diversified into crossing Belties with Salers to produce top quality carcasses, while Diana concentrated on breeding her stock pure and her work as a long-standing member of the Society's Council.

It is with great sadness that the decision to disperse has been made after 33 years, and Diana hopes that other herds will now benefit from the meticulous care which has been taken in building up this top quality herd. The herd comprises 1 stock bull, 15 autumn calvers, 5 spring calvers, 4 bulling heifers and 7 junior heifers. For more information please contact Diana on 01828 686337

BELTED GALLOWAY CATTLE SOCIETY

4, Rock Midstead, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 2TH
www.beltedgalloways.co.uk
info@beltedgalloways.co.uk
07891 245870