

BEEF CATTLE BREEDS

The following is a brief history of purebred beef cattle breeds. Not all of these breeds will be on exhibit at Aggie Days.

There are many different breeds of cattle found worldwide. A grouping of cattle is called a herd. A herd can be a group of 3 or 3000.

Angus



Angus breed has had a deep and lasting influence on the type and quality of beef cattle raised in Canada. Angus were originally imported in 1860 from Aberdeen, Scotland and is now the third ranked purebred beef population in Canada.

Angus can be either red or black and are naturally polled (polled means no horns).

They are traditionally noted for their moderate size with an average bull weighing 1045.5 kilograms (2300 pounds) and an average female weighs 568 kilograms (1250 pounds).

Charolais



Charolais breed can be traced back in history from ancient Rome, and from a secluded area of central France. Charolais was the first European beef breed to be introduced into Canada.

They are known for adapting well to their environment for the fact that they grow rapidly. Their colour ranges from white to a straw colour. They can be either polled or horned.

A mature bull weights 1136 kilograms (2500 pounds) and an average female weighs 727 kilograms (1600 pounds).

Hereford



The Hereford was imported from the British Isles in the 1860's, which makes this breed one of the oldest in Canada. They have a consistent colour pattern of red with a white face, brisket (skin that hangs underneath the neck) and underside. There are both polled and horned Herefords. The Hereford is often termed the "basic breed" and the Hereford cow is considered "the mother of the beef industry". Bulls will weigh 1000-1046 kilograms (2200-2300 pounds) and females weigh 591 to 682 kilograms (1300-1500 pounds).

Limousin



Limousin cattle originated in the high, rocky French Aquitaine Region and were first introduced into Canada in 1969. Limousin have heavy muscling and have awesome lean high yielding body mass (also known as carcass in the cattle world). Limousins traditionally are golden red to brown in colour or black. They are deeper in colour around their neck, this is very noticeable in the bulls. The bulls weigh around 1091 kilograms (2400 pounds) and the females weigh around 636 to 727 kilograms (1400 to 1600 pounds).

Maine Anjou



Maine Anjou cattle were imported from France in the late 1960's. They have gained popularity as they feed efficiently, are quiet, and calve easily on their own. Typically they are red and white but from cross breeding (breeding with other types of breeds of cattle) they can be solid red or black, or black and white. They are usually cross bred with Angus. A bull weighs around 1227 kilograms (2700 pounds) and a female weighs 773 kilograms (1700 pounds).

Shorthorn



The Shorthorn breed originated in Scotland over 250 years ago. They were often used as working cattle as well as for milk and beef. In 1825, the first shorthorns were imported into Canada. Shorthorns are easily adaptable, are used for milk and make great mothers.

Shorthorns can be red, white or roan (roan means the hide has an even mixture of white with the other colour on the hide) and polled or horned.

Bulls weigh an average of 1046 kilograms (2300 pounds) and the females weigh in around 636 kilograms (1400 pounds).

Simmental



The Canadian Simmental blends the unique characteristics of five European Simmental strains: the Simmental from Switzerland, the Pie Rouge, Abondance, and Montbelliard of France and the German Fleckvieh.

The Simmental is large framed with lots of muscle and excellent maternal instincts. They range in colour from light tan to dark red and have white markings. They can be polled or horned.

Mature Simmental bulls range from 1091 to 1273 kilograms (2400 to 2800 pounds), while females average around 727 kilograms (1600 pounds).

There are more breeds available in Alberta than described here. Those not included are;

Blonde D'Quitaine
Dexter
Galloway
Gelbvieh
Murray Grey

Piedmontese
Pinzgauer
Red Poll
Salers
Tarentaise