

Whitebred Shorthorns feature at Highland Cattle Open Days

September 2012

Whitebred Shorthorns have featured at two Highland Cattle Open days held on Friday 9th September 2011 at Glenturret Estate and Saturday 10th September at Loch Katrine.



On Friday 9th September some of our members attended the Highland Cattle Society Open Day to see the Highland Cow in her traditional surrounding at the 6000 acre Glenturret Estate just outside of Crieff in Perthshire. This mainly south facing estate is free draining and has approximately 4000 acres of heather moor and has been owned by Mr & Mrs Alex Seldon for over 14 years.



The day started at the main farm buildings with a welcome from the host Mrs Seldon and farm manager Douglas McCartney. The Highland Cow plays an important part out on the moors grazing the heather without any supplementary forage and also helping with tick control and habitat management which in turn benefits both the farming and sporting enterprises.



Despite the rain, we were treated to a show of big, quality, highland cows, in itself was just what the Highland Cattle Society would have hoped for. But the day quickly turned into a Whitebred Shorthorn day, when the 100 or so crowd saw the calves by a Whitebred Shorthorn bull. Currently all pedigree Highland Cows are put to a Whitebred Shorthorn Bull (Burnedge Todo) with the cross calves being sold through Oban market at the end of October.



These February born calves were not only testimony to the ability of the Highland cow, but showed the many attributes of calves produced by a Whitebred Shorthorn bull. They were the main topic of conversation as the visitors moved to the afternoon seminar at a nearby distillery conference hall, the speakers being; Willie Thomson, Technical Director from Harbro, Dr Basil Lowman, SAC Senior Beef Specialist and Donald Hendry of Forestry Commission Scotland which manages the land around Loch Katrine.



On Saturday 10th September, the weekend was turned into a complete Whitebred Shorthorn occasion, when members of the North of Scotland Highland Cattle Club along with Whitebred Shorthorn Council members and breeders visited the Loch Katrine project. Where the forestry commission have taken on the management of 11,000 hectares and are using Highland cows with a number of Whitebred Shorthorn bulls.



Our first stop was to see a grazing trial, with pure highland bullocks and Whitebred Shorthorn X Highland bullocks. This was to test the performance on the vegetation growing at the time. The result was impressive.



All the cattle were the same age and had run together on the same diet over the winter until now.



The Whitebred Shorthorn X bullocks had attained an impressive 50kilo advantage over the pure highland bullocks and looked like achieving a finished condition long before their second birthday.

Despite the nearly continuous rain it was easy to see the tremendous potential in the production of future breeding stock from what is a spectacular scenic area.

