

NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT: NOTES TO THE 50TH BSCS AGM

As previously notified, the Society's 50th AGM, on Monday 26th October, commencing at 11am, will be held electronically by "Zoom" due to the on-going Covid 19 restrictions. Members wishing to join/attend the meeting should request login details by emailing information@britishsimmental.co.uk. A meeting ID and Password will be emailed to you nearer the date of the meeting.

Members who wish to join/attend the meeting are advised to download the "Zoom" app prior to the meeting taking place. This can be to either a laptop, PC, tablet or mobile phone. Members are also asked to enter their name when signing up to "Zoom". This will greatly help to see who is in attendance at the meeting for the usual attendance listing.

On the day it is hoped that the President, Michael Barlow, will Chair the meeting from a room at Stoneleigh with Iain Kerr and a member of staff also in attendance. This is all dependant on Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time of the scheduled meeting date. All members of the Society who have registered to attend the meeting will automatically have their microphones muted to assist with the quality of sound

of the meeting. Any member wishing to talk at the meeting can select on their device to "raise hand". This will show the staff in attendance that a member wishes to comment in the meeting and their microphone can be unmuted to allow them to speak.

Forward your AGM questions in advance

To facilitate the smooth running of the AGM by this electronic means it would be beneficial for any questions to the formal agenda items, the report of the Trustees and the financial statements, to be sent to the office prior to the meeting. As is usual there will be the opportunity for an informal discussion following the AGM. Again due to the method in which the meeting is being held it would be very helpful if questions could be submitted to the office beforehand. All questions should be forwarded to information@britishsimmental.co.uk

It is of course a unique year and circumstance within which to hold a meeting of the members. However, we hope that this electronic meeting fulfils the requirements of the Society on behalf of members and works in a smooth and open manner.

REMINDER: CLOSING DATE FOR BSCS ELECTION BALLOT

Further to the September Newsletter, members in England and Scotland are reminded that the closing date to return completed election ballot papers, for the respective elections, is Friday October 16th. Completed forms should be returned in the addressed envelope, sent out in September, to the ballot officer. Results of the elections will be duly declared at the Society's 50th AGM.



STIRLING SIMMENTAL SALE OCTOBER 19TH

Please note that the Stirling Simmental Sale is due to take place on Monday, October 19th. There are 121 Simmental bulls entered in the catalogue along with 13 females. The females will be sold first at 1.00pm followed by the bulls at 1.30pm. As well as the usual press advertising, the Society has been encouraging vendors to promote their sale animals with pictures and videos on www.simmentalmarket.co.uk As well as viewing the bulls and females, you can click through to the Society's online catalogue to look at pedigrees, performance details, and vendors footnotes. Again the sale is subject to the ongoing Covid 19 restrictions and please note the following sale points that have been put forward by United Auctions:

Buyers must register at <https://www.uagroup.co.uk/>
Only attend sales if you are genuinely interested in purchasing. There will be no spectator element to the sales

- Respect the 2m Social Distancing
- One customer per farming enterprise
- Facemask to be worn at all times
- No under 16's

Please also note that the NI Simmental Club will be holding a Club Sale at Dungannon Mart on Friday 23rd October. Again you can view the online catalogue on the Society's website and see entries supplied on www.simmentalmarket.co.uk

THE SOCIETY OFFICE & COVID RESTRICTIONS

The staff had returned to the office in July and were working safely in adherence to the social distancing requirements. However, following the most recent Government advice around Covid 19, the Simmental office has again been closed with staff duly working from home. This has been the correct thing to do and we hope that disruption to members is kept to a minimum and that the level of member service remains high. Every effort will be made to reply as quickly as possible to deal with post received and to reply to messages, but there may be slight delays on occasion due to the circumstance. Please continue to contact the office on 02476696513 and on email: information@britishsimmental.co.uk

STAFF UPDATE: SIMMENTAL TEAM NOW FULLY IN PLACE!

Note from BSCS President Michael Barlow

As you are aware, a priority for Council this year has been the forward staffing of the Society. Having taken on Iain Kerr in an interim role earlier this year, I am now delighted to confirm that Iain has been offered and accepted a full-time position as General Manager with the Society and which he commenced on 1st October. Iain brings a wealth of experience of working for breed societies and, with Council, will be looking to drive on breed promotional and marketing work, technical development and use of new technologies, and progress the general business of the Society on behalf of all members. With the Covid restrictions there has of course been few events but Iain will be in attendance at the upcoming Stirling Sale and is very much looking forward to meeting breeders and members there. Through this year both Julie Holmes and Karen Vince left the Society's employment and moved on to new positions in April and August respectively. Having worked for the Society for some twelve years between them I'd like on behalf of members to thank both Julie and Karen for their work over this time and wish them well in their future careers. In April this year the Society appointed Kate Stephens who as well as having a farming background, has a BSc Hons Degree in Agri-Food Marketing and Business studies, and comes from several years of work experience in the commercial sector. Last month the Society also employed Nicky Moreton on a full-time basis. Completing the team, Polly Goldie, who has been helping the Society through the year, has accepted a contracted part time position. Both Nicky and Polly have previously worked for the Limousin Society and as such again bring a huge amount of breed society experience with them and have both hit the ground running. With the staff transition and changes, staff having to work remotely for long periods, and of course the Covid situation, it has not been a straightforward year! However, the ongoing work has been carried out seamlessly with little disruption to member services. We are extremely pleased to now have a full and experienced staff team in place and who will be working very hard to maintain and develop membership services to the level that you would expect. I'm sure all members will extend a warm welcome to the new staff team members in due course.

TELEPHONE REGISTRATIONS

Please note that the hours in which you can telephone register animals has now been extended to 9am – 5pm, Monday to Thursday, and 9am – 3pm on Friday. We hope that this small extension of hours is helpful to members.

IMPORTANT: UPDATED DNA RULE FOR FEMALES

Please note for clarity the following amendment to the Society rule regarding DNA requirements for females:

"Before a female can have her first pedigree calf registered or notified in the BSCS herdbook, she must be sire verified by DNA. The DNA processing cost (for these females only) is £20+VAT."

This amendment, which is immediately applicable, replaces the previous wording introduced in January 2020 and circulated to members in the August 2019 Newsletter.

IMPORTANT: CHANGE TO IBR POLICY AT SALES FOR FEMALES

As you are aware, the Society continues to be a strong advocate of animal health in breeding cattle. The move for all sale vendors to be members of CHecs-approved health schemes, and to be testing for Johnes and BVD, has proven to be very beneficial to breeders and to the promotion of the breed as a whole. From the end of 2016 onwards a further step was introduced that saw a compulsory requirement that all heifers going forward to Society sales must be isolated for at least seven days prior to testing clear and vaccinated with an IBR marker vaccine. This requirement was fully discussed at the Council's most recent meeting in August. Whilst the isolation, testing and vaccination is endorsed as good practise and a choice for breeders, Council have removed the requirement for this to be compulsory when entering heifers into Society sales. Members are encouraged to continue with the testing of their herds via the CHecs health schemes, and the IBR status of a herd will continue to be requested within the sale herd health declarations and included in the vendor index in sale catalogues as at present. This sale rule change will come into effect as of 1st January 2021 and will be in place for the 2021 Spring sales and going forward thereafter.

REDUCTION IN ENTRY FEES TO THE BULL LEVY SEMEN (ROYALTY) SCHEME

Please note that the entry fee to place a bull on the Society's Levy (Royalty) Scheme has been reduced from £273 + VAT, to £100+VAT. This fee reduction is applicable from 1st January 2021.

This levy scheme enables semen from a bull to be sold for both pedigree and commercial use at a standard price. The owner of the bull can set a levy price over and above the cost of the semen. This means that if the semen is used for a pedigree registration, then the levy fee is charged to the breeder of the calf. The Society's ILR2 system automatically collects this fee and credits it back the owner of the levy bull on a quarterly basis. The annual fee of £54.96+VAT and 10% administration fee for each registration will remain the same.

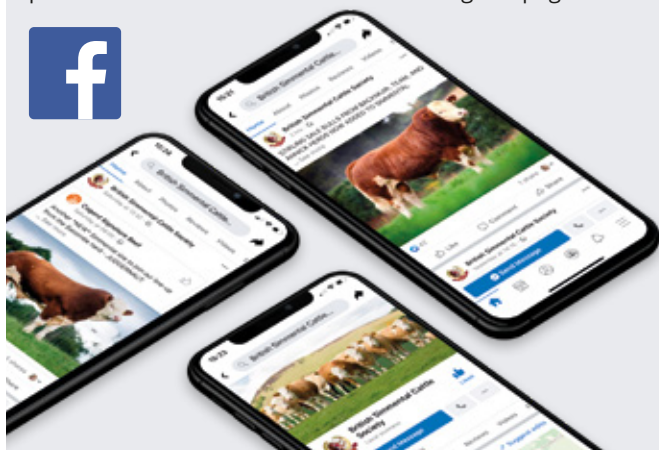
The scheme gives the opportunity for sensible and realistic pricing to both the pedigree breeder and commercial producer, and also the opportunity for extended choice and increased use of the given bulls. If you have a bull that you would like to enter onto the scheme then please email information@britishsimmental.co.uk for an application form and further information. Only bulls that have not had semen distributed from them for either pedigree or commercial use are eligible for entry to the scheme. A levy fee is charged for calf registrations from both AI and natural service.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH MEMBERS & EMAIL ADDRESSES

The Society's Council, as highlighted in the President's annual report, is very keen to develop the means of connectivity and regular, good communications with the membership. This will ensure that members are kept up to date with the general news around the Simmental breed, the ongoing work and performance of the Society, upcoming diary dates, and any changes to herd book rules and practises. The quickest and most cost effective means of doing this is by email and the aim from here is to send email circulars as often as are required but at a minimum on a monthly basis to members. Could we therefore ask that you check your email address that is presently on the Society database, and let us know if there are any amendments required. If you have not previously submitted an email address and would like to do so, then please let the office team know and we will happily add it accordingly. I trust that this is a positive step forward in building good Simmental communications across the Society.

SIMMENTAL PROMOTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We have been working hard to build the breed and Society's profile on social media over the recent months. Posts on Facebook have been frequent and wide ranging in content covering such as the 'Virtual' Show; Simmental Market; upcoming sales; market briefs; herd events & news; trait leaders; flashbacks; and just general Simmental news. The linkage of posts and medias just builds traffic and Simmental visibility overall and is a terrific, cost effective means of breed promotion through a shared platform for members, the breed and the Society. In recent months we have seen followers on Facebook increase by near on 1,000 to over 8,500 and with significant breed interest from home and abroad. Where you are able to it would be great if you could like the Simmental page, and like, share, or comment on any of the given posts. This is what extends the reach and visibility of the Simmental page and will help to further promote the breed. Facebook certainly seems to be the preferred media but we are also posting on Twitter and please look out for the launch of an Instagram page.



MARKET BRIEFS & GENERAL CONTENT

As you may have seen, we have been posting a regular round up of Market Briefs on Facebook highlighting where the Simmental breed is topping commercial markets around the UK. If you have any market snippets of the breed doing well then please do forward them on to us and we'll be happy to post it. It's a great way of evidencing and affirming the breed's performance and profitability for commercial beef producers. More generally we'd be pleased to get any Simmental related content of interest to promote the breed and that we could share on social media. Please forward any Simmental news to information@britishsimmental.co.uk

BOOKINGS NOW OPEN: ADVERTISE IN THE SOCIETY'S 50TH ANNUAL REVIEW!

Members are again invited and encouraged to advertise in the BSCS's 50th Annual Review. It would be great if you could support the Society's 50th Review! Bookings are now being taken and an order form was circulated to all members with the recent September Newsletter. Costs have again been maintained at previous rates. The closing date for bookings is Friday 27th November. The flagship publication of the Society, The Review is typically 200+ colour pages packed full of news, information, reports, and reflections around the British Simmental breed. Covid-19 has of course had a massive impact on the year and we won't be able to have the usual coverage of shows, sales and events in the year. However we are working hard to ensure that the 50th Review will be of the high standard expected and with special reflections of fifty years of the breed and the Society in the UK.

Publication of the 50th Review will be aimed at late February/ early March in 2021. Copies will be posted to members as per usual and also to the media, international associations, colleges and universities, and to a list of industry influencers. The Review will also be available at shows, sales, and events through the 2021 year.

It's an anniversary issue and one not to be missed to advertise your herds, stock sires, semen available, or upcoming sales. We very much hope that you will support and advertise in the British Simmental 50th Annual Review and are happy to discuss your requirements. If you have any Review queries then please do contact the office on 02476 696513 or email: information@britishsimmental.co.uk

50TH ANNIVERSARY TIES

Please see a picture here of a 50th anniversary Simmental tie that we will be posting out to all members beyond the AGM. We had planned to send it with this newsletter only for an unforeseen problem at the factory having delayed delivery! For very obvious reasons, it's not been the year that we had anticipated to mark this golden anniversary but we very much hope that the 50th tie is something practical for members and a means of saying thank you for your continued support.



PLEASE NOTE: EXTENDED ADVERTISING OF YOUR HERD WHEN YOU TAKE AN ADVERT IN THE 2020 REVIEW

This year we are offering members an enhanced advertising package which includes digital promotion of your herd in addition to the printed advert in The Review. As well as being in The Review, your advert will also appear on the British Simmental and Simmental Market websites. Button badges of advertising herds will also be displayed quarterly on the Society's Facebook page through the year. We hope to give you more for your money when you advertise with British Simmental.

50TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW RESCHEDULED FOR 9TH JULY 2021

Further to the September Newsletter, The British Simmental Cattle Society's 50th anniversary show and sale will now take place on Friday 9th July 2021 in the Exhibition Hall, Borderway Mart, Carlisle. The rescheduled show and sale, postponed this year due to the Covid-19 situation, will follow a very similar format to what had been planned for 2020. Commenting, BSCS President Michael Barlow said: "The anniversary show and sale will be a fantastic platform to showcase and promote the very best of British Simmental cattle and genetics. As importantly it will give breeders the opportunity to get together to celebrate the breed and society's 50th anniversary which we have missed out on this year. There is a lot of momentum and interest in the breed both domestically and internationally, and I very much hope breeders will support and attend the 2021 anniversary show." The Covid 19 situation of course remains an unknown in the context of what will be possible in terms of gatherings next year. In planning this rescheduled show, Council are very mindful of that. Preparatory work will be continued but ensuring that no major expenditures are incurred or



committed to and as the situation is continually monitored. Plans are also in place to hold a 50th anniversary dinner following the show and sale. Look out for more information on this announcement in further newsletters and on the Society's website.

ANTHONY DAVIES OFFERING STERLING EMBRYOS FOR CHARITY AUCTION

Please look out for the online auction of four embryos bought from the herd dispersal sale of Sterling Simmentals. The embryos have been kindly put forward for auction by BSCS Council member, Anthony Davies, Milton Manor, Pembs, who wishes to put all the proceeds to the worthy cause of NHS charities. There are three grade one, and one grade two embryos available, from the mating of Sterling

Rebecca's Adel and Blackford Harvester. Sterling Rebecca's Abel is the great grand dam of the record-breaking top price Sterling Bacardi's Hawaii. The auction will take place online with bids encouraged over a set period of weeks. There will be more information to follow on the BSCS website and Facebook page in due course and we very much hope you may be able to support this charity auction.

Simmentals producing **QUALITY HERD REPLACEMENTS AND 'TOP END STORES'** At Followsters Farm

Feature on John and Lorraine Cousar of Followsters Farm, Keith
and their closed herd of 75 cross Simmental cows.

When it comes to running easy handled, functional suckler cows which produce quality herd replacements, the Simmental will always be the ultimate breed of choice for John and Lorraine Cousar of Followsters Farm, Keith.

The husband and wife duo moved north to the 300-acre unit in 2003 with sons Mark and Scott, after John split from his family's business near Dunfermline, where they ran a dairy unit and a small beef suckler herd.

John and Lorraine started out at Followsters with dairy cross Simmental bulling heifers after the success of using the Simmental on Holstein cows in the dairy herd to produce milky cross-bred females.

They have since built up a closed herd of 75 Simmental cross cows which are all bulled to the Simmental to produce big framed, milky females and top-end yearling store cattle. The farm is also home to a flock of 400 breeding ewes consisting of Mules, Texel crosses and Blackfaces, to produce prime lambs for selling through United Auctions' Huntly Mart.



"The Simmental is a good, dual-purpose breed and the cows have great temperaments which is really important when I'm working with the cows myself most of the time," said John. "We have been using the Simmental as a terminal sire for the past 15 years and find calves are always quick to their feet and suckling, and produce good growth rates."





The majority of the cows at Followsters are almost pure and go back to a Popes Laird son which John purchased privately from the Green family's Corskie herd. Well-bred stock bulls are purchased either at Stirling Bull Sales or privately off farm from local breeders, with the two most recent being Omorga Jules, purchased at Stirling in October, 2019 and another purchased privately from Alistair Watt, Coldholm, Keith.

Admittedly, John doesn't focus too seriously on figures but he does take calving ease and locomotion into consideration when putting the Simmental over heifers and running a closed herd. "The bulls we buy in must be good on their feet and legs so that they last long," said John. "One of our previous Simmental stock bulls was with us until he was nine-years-old and he only had to go because he was coming back onto his own stock. Paying close to attention to a bull's locomotion certainly pays off on the female side as I haven't had to lift a cow's foot in five years and our cows generally last a long time with us."

Over the years, the Cousar family has built up a good customer base selling store cattle through Huntly Mart and bulling heifers through Aberdeen and Northern Marts' Thainstone Centre. They have been longstanding consignors at the sale of BVD virus free and vaccinated bulling heifers at Thainstone in September, where the Followsters consignment has peaked at £1450 and regularly produces some of the top herd averages on the day of more than £1200 per head. The heifers have also done well in the pre-sale show at Thainstone, with the family's top pen taking the reserve champion award in 2017.

"We were selling a lot of heifers through the store ring for breeding so we knew there was a market for what we were producing," said John, who has 17 bulling heifers entered for the upcoming sale.

"A Simmental heifer takes a bit of beating at a breeding sale at Thainstone and there is great demand for those types of herd replacements in this area. More and more producers are looking for easy managed herd replacements which are fertile and easy calving so the Simmental ticks all the boxes."

The family's yearling cattle also sell well through the store ring at the local Huntly Mart, with 80% of the cattle selling to the



same buyer each year. "The farm is situated at 700ft above sea level and I reckon that's part of the reason why the store cattle go on and do so well for the buyers when they reach lowland ground," explained John. "Our spring herd calves in March and cows with calves are turned out to grass at six weeks old when there's a good flush of grass. The steers regularly sell around £950 to £1000 per head the following spring, at an average weight of 420kg and we keep back heifers with breeding potential for selling slightly later in May."

Aside from the bulling heifers sold the following autumn at Thainstone, around five replacements are kept on each year to calve at 2.5 years of age, although John does have plans to trial calving some of the strongest heifers at two-years-old. Calves are tissue tagged at birth for BVD and are weaned in December after settling inside for a month with their mothers. They are introduced to creep feed from the end of August onwards and are then onto silage, barley and a Banff blend mix. The farm is quite often exposed to poor weather although John did point out that the wind can be of advantage when keeping the sheds well ventilated throughout the winter. All cows are housed from November onwards, with spring calving cows fed silage, straw and minerals and the autumn herd receiving the same diet as well as 1 kilo of barley after calving from September onwards.

The autumn-born calves are also introduced to creep feed at around five-months-old and are weaned from their mothers in mid-July to minimise the risk of mastitis. They are then fed a similar diet to the spring calves and all steer calves are sold at Huntly in October, with heifers either kept on for breeding or sold the following May as bulling heifers at Thainstone. In the next few years, John is hoping to introduce a second terminal sire to the farm for bulling to heifers so that cows don't become entirely pure-bred. John concluded: "We've been fortunate that we have been able to continuously use the Simmental across the board for the past 15 years but I think it's important to introduce hybrid vigour and fresh genetics into the herd."

"I'm leaning towards the Limousin so that I can keep the shape in my females and offspring but ultimately have a strong, milky female to put back over the Simmental to breed my herd replacements. The Simmental is certainly a breed which is hard to beat."



SIMMENTAL

THE BREED YOU CAN BANK ON



Fast growth & weight for age
Feed efficient
Easy fleshing progeny

Complements all breeds
Milky mothers
Excellent fertility

Stirling October Bull Sales

Monday 19th October 2020

1:00pm – Sale of 13 females (8 in-calf) | **1:30pm** – Sale of 121 bulls catalogued

View pictures and videos of the bulls at www.simmentalmarket.co.uk

View the online catalogue at www.britishsimmental.co.uk

Sale catalogues also available from **United Auctions: 01786 473055**

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