

Introduction into the German way of breeding beef cattle and especially the galloway cattle

by Ole Grubbe

Germany has only a very young tradition of breeding beef cattle or sucker cows. This started worth mentioning around the mid-sixties this century with Charolais and Angus parallel to the beginning of extensivisation in agriculture and the recultivation of grassland.

Different to farming in other countries German farmers who started with beef cattle breeding in many cases also started to sell the produced beef direct from farm to the customers. This became tradition especially with part-time farming and breeding small herds, whilst farms with larger herds still sell their cattle the traditional way via the Chandler to the beef industry.

After a longer period with only very slow growing the time between 1985 and 1990 the beef cattle breeding in Germany has made its greatest advance and despite the BSE-disease and the very critical discussion about, despite the very hard and as we now know false reactions of the German government, the beef cattle breeding shows further advance. The facts and numbers may demonstrate this.

- beef cattle breeders in Germany

December 1988: 16424

December 1996: 50700

- beef cattle, breeding cows only

December 1988: 104041

December 1996: 574900

Today seventeen races of beef cattle will be bred in Germany, the main races are in order of participation Simmental with 20,8%, Charolais with 16,2% and Galloway with 16.1% of the herdbook-population. Some of the registered races belong to the world wide rare breeds and are only kept in very small numbers.

Now to the Galloway breeding in Germany!

As we know the first Galloway cattle was imported to Germany by Mr. Helmut Schornstein in June 1973, eight animals that time and all pure bred Scottish. Also in 1973 the German breed society for Galloway cattle was

founded. Up to the beginning of the eighties only a small amount of further Galloway cattle was imported but afterwards the imports exploded up to the sudden end in February 1990 forced by the BSE-ban.

The following facts may demonstrate the tremendous triumphal procession the Galloway cattle has made in Germany despite the horrible BSE-discussion and despite the Galloway cattle being used by written press, radio and television as symbol for typical British BE-cattle. In 1985 the number of registered breeding cows only has been 339!

Galloway cattle breeders in Germany -

December 1988: 453

December 1996: 1840

At the moment 730 breeders are member of the German galloway breed society, the Bundesverband Deutscher Galloway-Zochtere.V. (BDG).

Breeding Galloway cattle in Germany -

December 1988: 2055,
328 pedigreed bulls, 1727 pedigreed cows.

A total number of approximately 5500 animals are registered with pedigree -

Breeding Galloway cattle in Germany,
December 1996: 11073
1420 pedigreed bulls, 9653 pedigreed cows.

A total number of approximately 29500 animals with pedigree are registered.

The largest population in Germany is to be found in the country Niedersachsen, Lower Saxony, with 488 breeders and 2584 breeding animals with pedigree.

Estimated, there is no exact counting available, there are further 5000 head Galloway cattle without registration / pedigree in Germany, also imported cattle.

Less than 5% of these numbers are Belted-, White-, Rigget- or Red Galloways, there are not exact numbers available. Belted- and White Galloway there should be a maximum of 500 animals each, 15 Rigget- and 5 Red Galloway are registered. For all these there is an increasing demand and always paid very good money. Less than 10% of the total numbers are Canadian Galloway cattle or animals with more than 50% Canadian blood.

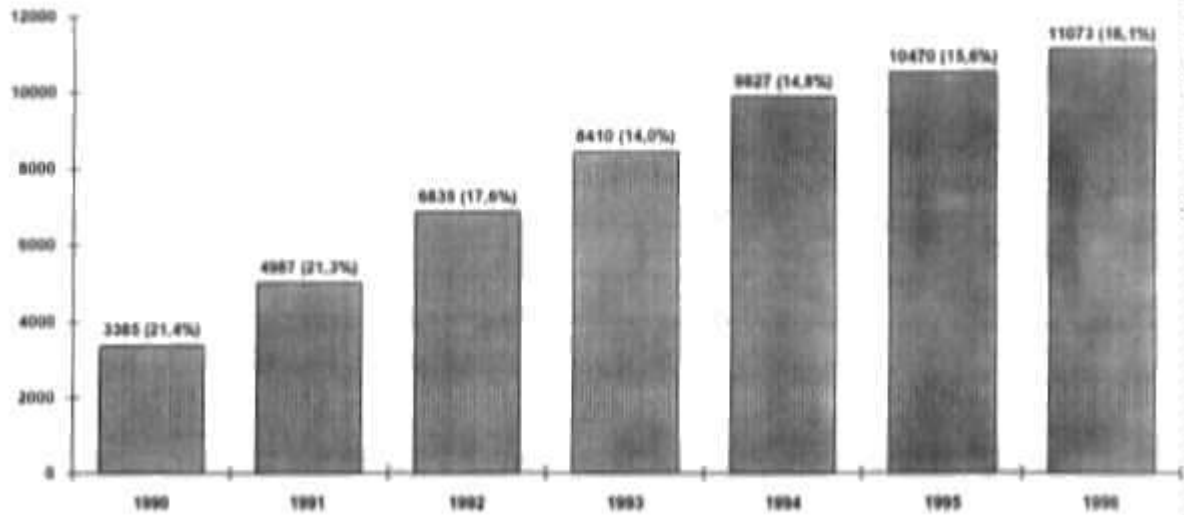
Responsible for this are several points. In Germany most Galloway cattle is running on wet ground all over the year, up to now economy is not main purpose for breeding Galloway cattle, the character of the Scottish cattle is much more beloved by the German breeders, prices well above average have been paid only for good Scottish type cattle. Last but not least the costs for the transport from Canada, United States, Australia or New Zealand are too high and this counts double under the present circumstances in Germany with a great number of good cattle not to be sold.

The BSE-disease in Germany at present and for the nearest future is as follows. From 1993 to 1996 December we have had five known cases of BSE and all with imported cattle from Great Britain. One Welsh Black, one Hereford, one Highland and two Galloways, all from herds in Great Britain with not any case of BSE up to now. The last case in December 1996 with a Galloway is doubted by many experts having BSE, but this is not anymore to proof because all material of this animal was destroyed very soon by the vet-service in response. Agriculture officials of the German government deny the feeding of contaminated concentrates but this is the only explanation for this disaster.

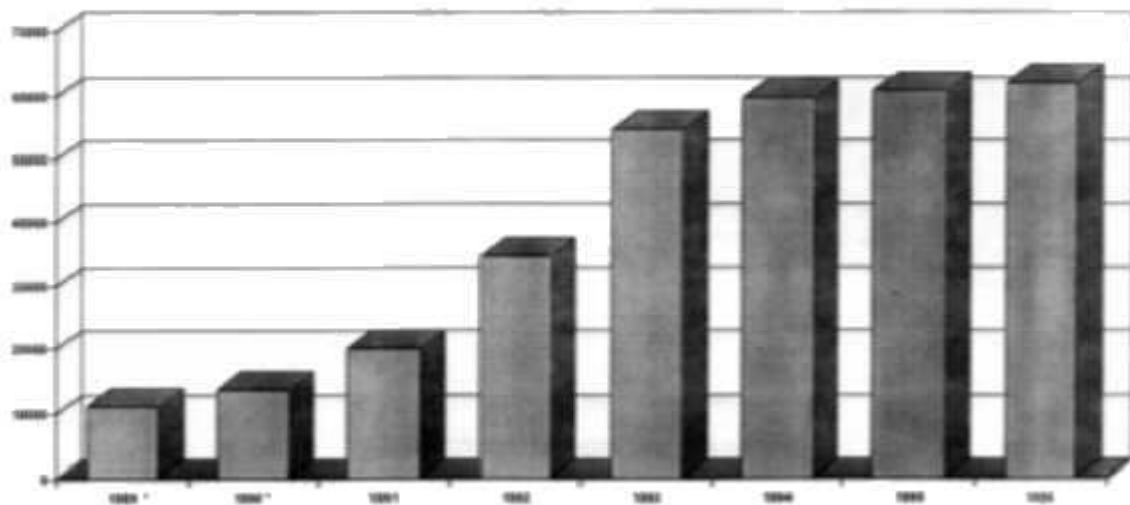
The German government has made two attempts to get all imported cattle from Great Britain and Switzerland killed but up to now the breeders have been victors in this ugly war of commerce, as they see it. Those breeders who opposed, have all their cattle still alive. Many German countries' courts for administration affairs have forbidden the killing and also forced the government to open the market again for the first offspring generation, which was forbidden to become sold or slaughtered. At the moment the market for breeding cattle is nearly zero but the request for the beef is rising again so that the breeders seem to have a good outlook for the future. Agricultural extensivation is continuing and grassland conservation is not better been done than with Galloway cattle and there is a steadily rising demand for naturally produced healthy and tasty beef. If the beef is requested, normally the demand for cattle for the breed should follow.

Registered herdbook Galloway

(% = percentage Galloway / whole suckler-cow population)



Suckler Cows in Germany (herdbook-cows only)



Alle Bundesländer

The German system of herdbooks and registration of cattle!

The German herdbooks for cattle and the way of registrations, although working under the rules of the E.G., is quite different to that of other countries. I will try to explain how it works, so that the reader may understand, why German breeders sometimes have their special difficulties with pedigrees of other countries for imported cattle. The German system is

neither worse nor better than others, only a little different.

First of all, and this really is a curiosity in a nearly united Europe at the end of the twentieth century, Germany is a federal republic consisting of sixteen countries with many own rights reserved. The herdbooks for instance are not kept by the breed societies, but by the countries own herdbook-societies under supervision of the government. Due to this we have fifteen herdbooks for the black Galloway cattle, fifteen own ones for the Belties and fifteen for the White cattle with in some of our countries different regulations of registration and also different pedigrees.

Since 1990 the Bundesverband Deutscher Fleischrinderzuchter, the all German beef cattle society is working for standardization and simplification for all German breed societies and is attaining advance step by step. This roof-organization, consisting of members of different breed-societies, the herdbook-societies and the authorities, just has attained standardization in selection of cattle for different classes of pedigree-breeding, working since 1st October 1994 for instance.

By rules of the E.C. German herdbooks for cattle have to be open and consist of two parts with together five sections. The open part for upgrading with two sections „D" and „C", called herdbook and the closed part with three sections „B", „A" and „A-Elite", called main-herdbook.

The herdbook section „D" and „C" only are permitted for female cattle to become registered after official inspection, when having their first calf on foot. They have to show the full character of the race and have to be scored above average in quality of beef-growing, frame and skeleton, especially legs and feet. After this a cow of unknown descend will become registered in section „D", when sired by a bull with full registration in the main-herdbook, a cow-calf of this cow will become registered in the higher section „C" after inspection again.

A female offspring of a cow registered in the section „C", also sired by a bull registered in the main-herdbook will become registered in the main-herdbook after inspection as mentioned before into section „B" of the main-herdbook. No bulls of these descends will become any registration and are for beef only.

All calves being offspring from cattle registered in the main-herdbook have to become registered in the section „B". Female offspring again will become inspected when having their first calf on foot to get registration in the higher section „A" or „A-Elite. If the results of the inspection are below average,

the cow has to remain „B" and will only get the acceptance to breed female offspring with registration in the main-herdbook. Bull-calves again will only be for beef. If the results are average and/or a little above, the cow will become registered in section „A" and will be permitted to breed females with no restrictions. For male offspring there are some restrictions, they will be given later. With a well above average result of inspection a cow will become registered in the highest section „A-Elite", that means mother of bulls for the breed.

Bull-calves to become registered in section „B" of the main-herdbook have to be sired by bulls registered in the main-herdbook and have to be offspring from cows registered in the main-herdbook. Bulls sired by a bull in section „B" have to remain in „B" what again means beef only. The bulls from the better descends have to become inspected too, to get permit for the pedigree breeding. This has to take place after twelve months of age the earliest date, the official tendency goes towards eighteen months for galloway bulls. This makes a lot of sense and is accepted by most of the breeders already.

Bulls with a dam registered in section „A" will never get acceptance for a registration in section „A-Elite", even if getting best results by the inspection. That means, they will not become permitted to breed bulls for the full pedigree status. Bulls with no restrictions for the pedigree-breed have to be offspring from bulls and cows registered in section „A-Elite" both. The descend has to be proved by blood-tests and has to be certificated. They have to be inspected with results well above average. The German scoring system for this starts with the note 1 and ends with the highest possible note 9. Since 1st October 1994 a bull inspected for the section „A-Elite" has to become scored at least the notes 7 for beef growing ability, 7 for character of the race and 6 for frame and skeleton. Otherwise he can not achieve the minimum points.

If bulls will in the breed not go confirm with the expectancy they will become eliminated in total because of no possibility for downgrading. If cows in the sections will not confirm with the pretension they will be graded down with the restrictions given for that section. Up to today this will be done in Germany, but for the future there is a tendency also to eliminate cows instead of grading down step by step.

The German system of herdbook registration looks to be very good to select the best cattle for a steady advance in the breed. But as with all human work it functions or fails by the quality and skill of the personal working with and for the system. Only highly qualified and skilled personal

will be selected and accredited by the herdbook societies, the breed societies (in some of our countries still in partly preparation) and the countries' departments of agriculture to do this work. This is said, but the reality shows that there is a lot of hard work to be done for standardization in Germany, although it becomes better any day. Every system is as good as the people working with it.