



HIGHLANDS

in Canada

THE CANADIAN HIGHLAND CATTLE SOCIETY



HISTORY

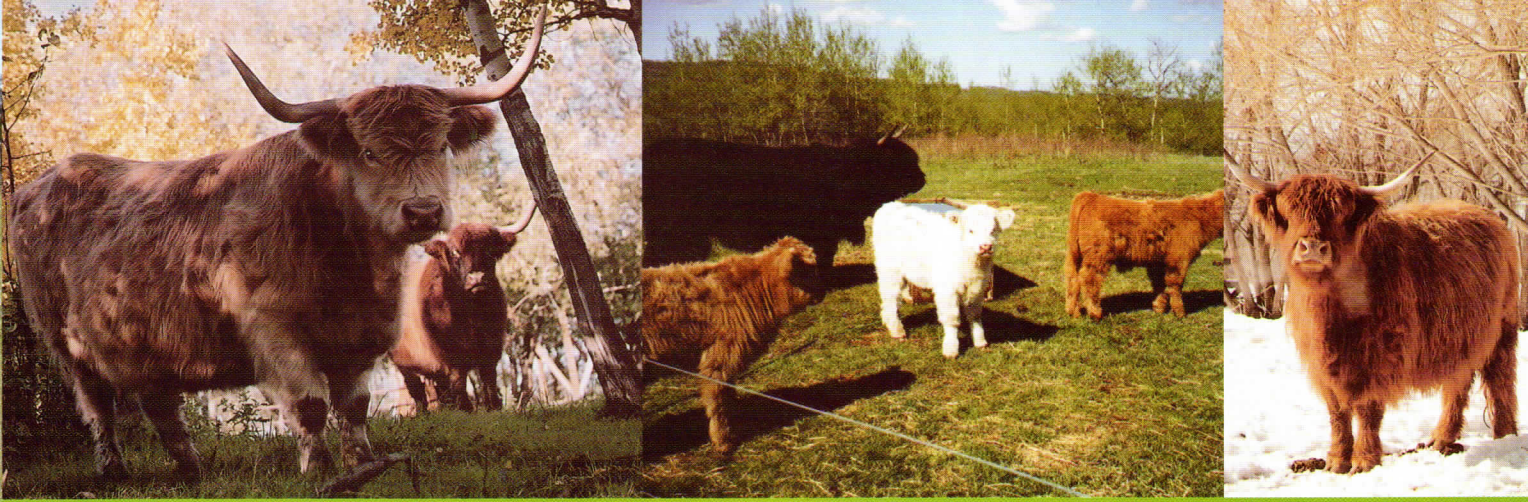
The Highland breed of cattle has a long and distinguished ancestry, with written records dating back to the 18th century. The Highland Cattle Herd Book, first published in Scotland in 1885, lists pedigrees since that time. Originating in the Highlands and West Coast Islands it is one of Britain's oldest and most distinctive breeds. Throughout the centuries, the breed has developed and adapted to withstand the harsh climate with its storms off the North Atlantic and survive on rough terrain with meager grazing. Only the hardest beasts survived the rigors of

weather to become the ancestors of the very efficient and versatile animal we know today.

HIGHLANDS IN CANADA

Highland cattle were first imported into Canada from Scotland, in the 1880's and their presence has been recorded in Nova Scotia during these early years. Beginning in the 1920's significant numbers of breeding stock were brought over from Scotland for breeders in the Prairies and Central Canada.

In 1964 the Canadian Highland Cattle Society was formed and incorporated under the Livestock Pedigree Act. All Highlands registered in the Canadian Herd Book must be purebred and no 'breeding up' is allowed so that the purity of the Canadian Highland gene pool is strictly maintained.



CHARACTERISTICS & TEMPERAMENT

Highlands are often described as noble and beautiful with their handsome sweeping horns which can make them a formidable adversary to almost any predator. They have two coats, the inner is thick and woolly designed to act as a blanket to retain heat, and the second is a long outer coat to shed rain and snow to prevent the inner coat becoming damp and cold. This double coat protects them from driving rain or snow in temperatures as low as 40 degrees below zero and therefore they do not need any special housing.

In colour they range from white through dun, yellow, red, brindle to black with red being the most common.

Highlanders are no different from most other breeds of cattle. They generally respond well to human contact and on the whole are docile. However, cows are particularly protective when danger is around their calves so care should be taken when approaching cows with very young calves. Bulls are generally good natured but they are bulls and should

be respected. Anyone who doesn't want to own a bull can use artificial insemination (AI) or rent a bull to get their cows in calf.



CALVING, MOTHERING & FEEDING

CALVING

The Highland cow is noted for fertility, calving ease and mothering instincts. Heifers and cows calve unassisted outdoors, often in adverse weather conditions. Highlanders are very protective mothers, taking great care of their calves and making sure they get their first feed unaided. The cow has a plentiful supply of rich, high quality milk. Remarkable for their longevity, many Highland cows continue to breed to ages in excess of eighteen years, having borne fifteen calves.

FEEDING

A wholesome diet is necessary for good health and growth. Here the Highland has a distinct advantage as its needs are simple and economical. During the summer months they should have an ample supply of grazing and access to fresh water. In winter, good hay, straw, green feed or silage can be fed with no need for extensive feeding of concentrates. They will require access to minerals to ensure vitamin levels are maintained. Cows with calves at foot can be offered supplementary

feed rations such as oats, barley or corn in adverse weather conditions.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

Highland cattle represent one of the best ways to preserve our landscape. The cattle are experts at improving unproductive land and maintaining a balance of plants and they will thrive on rough fodder enabling less competitive grasses and flowers to flourish.



CROSS BREEDING, BEEF & NICHE MARKETS

CROSS BREEDING WITH HIGHLANDS

The Highland bull is excellent to use on heifers of any breed as it produces a small-headed, short-necked calf, so calving problems are almost unknown. The calf is vigorous and soon is up and feeding. You get a lot more sleep when you use a Highland bull! Highlands are a beef animal and cross well with other beef breeds. Research showed that Highland/Hereford cross cows were fine range cows – hardy, excellent mothers, efficient users of pasture, with high conception rates.

WEIGHTS

- a) Bulls in breeding condition: 1800 lbs. (815 kg.)
 - b) Cows in breeding condition: 1100 lbs. (500 kg.)
 - c) Steers will finish at about 1000 lbs. (450 kg.).
- This weight can be attained with heavy feeding as a long yearling, but most breeders prefer to grow their steers on pasture and finish them at 18 months to two years.

BEEF

Highland beef is slow-maturing making it a lean, well-marbled premium beef with low fat and

cholesterol levels whilst remaining rich in protein and flavour, criteria increasingly demanded by today's market. Highland beef commands a premium price over other breeds due to its succulent fine flavour and healthy eating appeal.

Highland breeders pride themselves in raising their steers as naturally as possible without any hormones or additives creating a wholesome product ideally suited for niche marketing. One of the most common remarks when the beef is first tried is, "It's just like beef used to taste".



The Canadian Highland Cattle Society
Website: www.chcs.ca
E-mail: highland@chcs.ca



THISTLESTONE FARM
REGISTERED HIGHLAND CATTLE
RR 3, COLDWATER, ONTARIO • 705-323-9826
WWW.THISTLESTONEFARM.ON.CA

**HARDY, THRIFTY, EFFICIENT FEED CONVERSION,
CALVING EASE, HIGH-QUALITY BEEF**