

The Lincoln Letter

Publisher-North American Lincoln Red Association

Fall/Winter 2013

A PASSION FOR LINCOLN REDS

Patrick Milner

The reason I choose to show Lincoln Red was because I wanted the breed to be known. Many people didn't even know Lincoln Reds existed. And many people still don't which is why I am continuing to show them. Every heifer I show returns to our farm and then gets bred to a Lincoln Red bull so we can keep the breed going and showing. This year I showed at our local exhibition in Oxford Nova Scotia where I placed second in my class there which allowed me to go on to Pro Show. Pro Show is short for the Nova Scotia Provincial 4-H show, which is the biggest 4H show in the country. This year it was held in Bridgewater Nova Scotia. It is where the best of the best animals from Nova Scotia go to compete. I was placed in the intermediate other pure bred class. I was put into that class because Lincoln Reds are not well enough known to have their own show class.

Within that class of intermediate heifers (DOB between April 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012) I placed first against a Maine Anjou and a Belted Galloway X. Out of that class, the top two went on to the grand champion other pure breeds, which consists of all age ranges, junior (DOB January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013), intermediate (DOB April 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012), and senior (DOB January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012). I received a Reserve Champion ribbon in that class (2nd). A senior Speckled Park received the champion ribbon (1st).

We do raise our own Lincoln Reds, but this spring we had no heifers, so we had to buy heifers from John Ashby. We purchased two heifers from him and I choose the best one to show. For the next show season, I will be showing one of our own heifers. Hopefully after a few years, we will have enough cows that we can start selling breeding stock to fellow Lincoln Red breeders or people that want to get into raising and breeding Lincoln Reds.



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REMEMBERING

Gordon MacRae

Mr. Gordon MacRae passed away in August and will be greatly missed. According to his nephew and niece, Sandy and Julia MacDougald, he was a hard worker, miller, avid sportsman, farmer (he loved especially his Lincoln Red cows), gardener, story teller, historian, comforter, lover of the arts, a keener to hear the local, national and world news and he was always filled with dry wit. Gordon imported Lincoln Reds from England and at one time had a herd of over 75. Nephew, Sandy MacDougald, will carry on the Lincoln Red tradition.



Dr. Donald McQ. Shaver shared these comments:

Gordon was truly a gentleman of the old school; always helpful and considerate in his relations with others. His hospitality was legendary; over the years my family experienced this first hand. Gordon's supply of succulent lobster had no equal! He had a keen eye and fondness for good cattle. I never saw a second rate animal in his herd. He set extremely high standards for Lincoln Red breeders to match. We mourn the loss of an outstanding colleague.

Burton Rose shared the following observations:

Son of a member of the Prince Edward Island legislature and a real peach of a fellow. Purchased about 50% of Brolor herds of Lincoln Reds and also some from Donald Shaver. Outstanding character and honesty. Ambition galore. If you never met him, you have truly missed something. An honorary life member of the Lincoln Red Association.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for **February 15th** by teleconference. Since Gordon MacRae passed away, we will need to elect someone to fill his director position. Remaining members of the board of directors include: Scott McClinchey, John Ashby, Sarah Pedelty, Dennis Hoffrogge, and Dan Lamarche.

OPTIMUM or MAXIMUM?

Bob Nusbaum

We had a calf break its leg this spring. It was above the hock and not able to be cast, so we had to euthanize the calf. The cow really wanted to mother something so she chose a heifer calf that belonged to a two year old. Both cows nursed the calf all summer. Needless to say, the heifer calf became very fat. It's quite easy to pick her out among the calves.



Seeing her excessive body condition brought back memories of fat calves and nurse cows when I was a young 4-Her in the 1950's and 60's. Back then, fat heifers and steers were the norm because the Prime Quality Grade was the most desirable. Steaks from Prime carcasses were the most tender, juicy and flavorful and we educated the consumer to prefer and choose Prime in the grocery store. In order to grade Prime, a carcass needs lots of marbling (intra muscular fat, IM) in the rib eye. As animals grow in the feedlot, outside fat (subcutaneous, SQ) is deposited before very much marbling shows up. (Marbling is that last fat deposited, and the first used up in a stress condition.) After an animal deposits about .5 inches of SQ fat, the marbling score is generally close to the Choice Grade. Therefore, as an animal gets fatter, more marbling is deposited and the quality grade may improve from Choice to Prime. So, most Prime carcasses are fatter than Choice ones and have more marbling. The market wanted Prime beef, so the extra fat needed to produce it was merely an expendable byproduct.

Breeders in the 50's figured out that smaller, earlier maturing steers got fatter sooner. Feedlots fed lots of cheap corn that also helped speed up the development of the Prime grade for their market steers. Show cattle also reflected this quest for fat and nearly all beef exhibitors had dairy "nurse cows" for their show calves to add that extra "bloom". They even hauled these cows to the shows so their calves wouldn't be stressed during the show. Fat was an acceptable part of the beef industry. Fortunately, the Yield Grade (% lean retail cuts) was implemented in 1965 to identify excess fat in beef carcasses and smaller cattle became less favorable in the marketplace. Breeders sought larger cattle and the fastest fix was by crossbreeding to Continental breeds. Charolais,

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Simmental, Gelbvieh and other breeds came to the forefront in the late 60's when the race for increased mature size began.

That started a whole new way of thinking. A numerical Frame Score (height at yearling age) was invented to estimate a logical slaughter weight for fed cattle. Bigger framed feeder calves grew faster and were worth more money. Bigger was better and the race was on. The industry went from fat, "belt buckle" high cattle to huge, later maturing, hard-doing "elephants". We went from one extreme to the other.

Both of the extremes were corrected over time. The selection for smaller cattle became unprofitable because the small carcasses were too fat and too light. Packers needed more total pounds to be efficient. Consumers also became more health conscious and "fat" became a bad word. The new pitch to the consumer was that the leaner, Choice quality grade was better, which ultimately eroded the value of the Prime grade.

On the other end of the spectrum, after several years of breeding the biggest to the biggest, we had huge cows. Many breeders bragged about the number of 1400 pound cows in their herd. Unfortunately, these big cows were not the answer, either. Big cows needed lots of feed to stay in the herd as more of them were open at pregnancy-check time. A higher percentage of heifers were not getting bred due to late puberty. Feedlots were feeding some steers to 1500 pounds that still graded less than Choice and packers found it difficult to sell these lower quality carcasses.

This historical review has a point. In 50 years, will cattle breeders look back at this time period and wonder what we were doing? Will they look back with amusement, dismay or pride? Not every breeder bought into the "smaller, fatter" fad of the 50's. Nor did they all follow the "elephant" fad that evolved after that. The purebred breeders back then that used a common sense approach in genetic selection survived, and many even thrived when others in the industry discovered and purchased "corrective" genetics from their herds.

That brings me to my final point. As a purebred producer, what traits do you select for in your genetic program? What traits will make you a survivor in the next decades? What traits are profitable and sustainable? Commercial breeders buy your genetics. What do they want and what do they actually get? Nearly all commercial producers I talk to basically want a bull that will stay sound and fertile for several years, settle high

percentages of females each year and calve easily to heifers. He should be non-aggressive, and produce daughters that are gentle, have very good udders and get pregnant every year. Most of the commercial producers I talk to replace their bulls prematurely because a bull is deficient in one or more of these areas. I don't often hear of them replacing a bull because of poor weaning weights, yet, most purebred breeders concentrate on weaning weight as one of their most important herd traits. When we select replacement heifers, or decide whether or not to castrate a bull calf, we mostly look at weaning weight. Continual selection for increased production traits (weaning weight, ADG, etc) doesn't necessarily improve net profit.

Bull buyers will go to purebred auctions or bull test stations and pay lots of money for bulls based on growth rate EPD's or indexes and never even think about the bull's dam. Does she have good feet and a great udder? Did she calve at 2 years and breed back every 12 months. Is she still producing? Early departure from the herd for cows and bulls due to unsoundness or being open is one of the most costly expenses. A bull client of mine brags about the number of teenage cows he has in his herd. He's very successful and very aware of which traits actually make money for his operation. Be wary of fads. Think carefully about the traits you emphasize in your program and why you really choose them. Are they selected to be optimum or maximum? We've seen that continual selection for maximum causes unsustainable extremes. Select for traits that lower expenses and increase longevity that will keep your customers in business. That not only will make them happy repeat buyers, but will insure your continued success in the purebred industry.

CIRCLE H FARMS

BRIAN & SONJA HARPER & FAMILY

BRANDON, MANITOBA

I hope that all who receive this article have had a bountiful summer both with time to enjoy one's self as well as the abundance of feed stuffs for the winter months, which is longer for some of us than others, with us being from Manitoba, Canada.



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As I sit looking out at the gray skies and the dry fall leaves drifting across the yard on the cold breeze I begin to wonder what jobs have I not gotten to yet. The summer waterlines are shut down and the winter system is up and running, there are 640 hay bales sitting in the winter pasture ready for bale grazing, and all of the temporary winter fences are built. I believe we are set for old man winter! Oh wait, all the cows and calves are still on summer pasture! We walk all the herds home in fall. The farthest group is 5 miles away, not too bad I guess, but usually into the wind it seems! Once home then comes vaccination and weighing the entire herd, cows and calves. Although weaning won't happen until February we still weigh everyone at about the 200 day age on the calves. At this time (November) we will access the momma cows and again at weaning time (February). Any of the cows that can't raise their calf for 10 months and remain in good body condition move down in the herd. We feel some should fail every year, if they don't we made the test too easy! It is the calves from the top cows that we will retain and develop for breeding stock on "forage only", both for sale and our own use.

To help with the selection of genetics that will function best on "forage only" we have adopted the teachings and techniques of Mr. Gearld Fry of Rose Bud Arkansas. For years Gearld has promoted "Linear Measuring" as a way to help identify the animals that will perform best on "grass only". We have been using practice since 2007 and have been impressed with the results and the progress we have made. You may find out more about this at Gearld's website

www.bovineengineering.com .

I always felt that I knew who the best cows were! It's easy right? It's the one with the biggest calf... in my opinion I now realize that is "Wrong"! Most genetics of the beef industry today are designed for milk quantity not quality (butterfat), thus the largest calves are from the quantity milk producers. It is true they likely will have a large calf but at what cost?

High milk producers also require the most inputs to maintain their systems even when they are dry. In our management high milk producers don't make it too far up the ranks because they fail the test of time due to the environment they must perform in. Here we select for optimum milk production that is high in butterfat. You can visually identify the animals, male or female, that have the genetics to produce high butterfat once you learn how. Cows with moderate tightly attached udders with high butterfat content will raise a growthy calf and one that will then produce gourmet quality beef because, it is the butterfat content in the fat cells in the marbling that makes beef tender and tasty.

This brings me to our search for quality cattle that genetically possessed high butterfat. We found the **Lincoln Reds**, moderate framed, easy keeping with natural butterfat production that has not been bred out of them by breeders targeting performance. This seems to be the case in a lot of breeds

and within breeds also. Possibly in the **Lincoln Reds** as well, but I have not found them to be that way, yet anyway! Now that we have become breeders of **Lincoln Red** cattle we will begin to select amongst them for forage only performance and quality/gourmet meat production. They already have docility, fertility, efficiency and the butterfat production that I seek. Now I must **find or create the best of the best!**

It all must start with a **superior proponent** sire! Close attention and strict selection must be put on him as he will produce the daughters with which to build the herd. Ya his feet, testicles, frame, growth must all be present. Wide masculine shoulders on the sire, means

wide hips and calving ease in his daughters. First time bull buyers at our place are afraid of this kind "because they will be hard calvers" ... not true! Ok for argument sake on your present females maybe (not likely!) but his daughters ... no! Narrow shouldered bulls with small heart girths thought of as calving ease bulls or "heifer bulls" are degenerative genetics designed for feedlot production not forage only

production and are not superior prepotent sires. You will never get a female from them that will perform on grass!



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Been there, done that, and it is expensive to operate with those genetics!

What about the teat placement on the sire, his hide, heart girth % to his topline etc.? These are also areas where selection pressure must be applied. There are correlations everywhere once you know where to look and how to apply or understand them. Teat placement on the sire will affect the quality of the udder in his daughters! A sire's teats must be flat on his belly if one wants excellent uddered females. If the back teats are on the neck of the scrotum for example, many of his females will have tilted udders and this depletes milk production in the front quarters.

A defined line on the scrotum, showing the separation and support of the testicles will show up in his daughters in the way of well supported udder with defined quarters. These females inherit this from a prepotent superior sire! The hide, cannon bone, connective tissues, poll of the head etc. can point you in the direction of tender meat production.

As stated earlier we have learned and progressed so much genetically from using Linear measuring and other indicators that we are very confident in our "forage only" genetics. There are areas within every herd and breed I feel could use improvement especially ours; however we all see something different as being the most important so I leave each to his own. As I find this information intriguing and hope others will too, I challenge everyone to go to Gearld Fry's website www.bovineengineering.com and find a Genetic Selection School and attend, learn today how to identify the superior genetics on your operation, or do like us, talk to Gearld and host a school of your own.

Wishing a safe winter season to all, and happy holidays! Brian & Sonja Harper, Circle H Farms, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada harper4@goinet.ca



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall has arrived and many of our Lincoln Red calf crops have been weaned. Our calf crop will wean heavier than last year due to more favorable pasture conditions and careful mating decisions. The addition of Spur genetics, infused into our herd a few years ago from a couple of bulls imported from the Pedelty's herd, has benefitted our herd by opening up our genetic base. In 2012, we had one of our foundation cows bred by artificial insemination to Anwick Yield in which resulted in a very nice bull calf. Our future Anwick herd sire will continue to add different genetics to our herd for the next couple of years. Breeding requires a long term outlook and I believe we can all keep genetically diverse Lincoln Red cattle by making sound breeding decisions and by acquiring different genetics from each other. Benefits are not always evident in the short term, but it is very gratifying in the autumn to observe when your previous matings have produced solid, growthy and uniform group of weaned calves. Have a great fall, Scott McClinchey



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SEEING IS BELIEVING!

Take a look at Lincoln Reds at one of these farms:

- **John and Lorraine Ashby**
Stonehedge Farms
Prescott, ON
(613)925-5778
- **Jean Babineau**
Meadow Brook, NB
- **Sarah Band**
Mohil Farms
Puslinch, ON
(519) 824-5619
- **Tom Fillmore**
Oxford, NS
- **Valentina and Richard Harness**
Stover, MO
- **Brian & Sonja Harper**
Brandon, Manitoba R7A 5Y3
204-725-2515
harper4@goinet.ca
<http://www.shaverbeef.com>
- **Dennis and Mary Hoffrogge**
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085
(507) 227-5745
50% bulls & heifers available
- **Dan and Lily Lamarche**
St Charles, ON POM 2W0
(705) 867-2683
- **Scott & Heather McClinchey**
Orton, ON LON 1N0
(519) 928-3106 (h)
hlm.dvm@sympatico.ca
For Sale: 2 yr old bulls
- **Gordon MacRae**
Montague, PE
- **Wallace Milner**
Nappan, NS
- **Larry and Sarah Pedelty**
sarahpedelty@yahoo.com
Straws for US Breeders
(Collected and Shipped
from Hawkeye Breeders)
- **Cedar Ridge Lincoln Reds**
Bill Reid
Oxford Station, ON
(613) 926-2456
bill@lincolnred.ca
- **Kevin Rivers**
Ingersoll, ON
- **Rose's Lincoln Reds**
Amherst, NS B4H 3Y1
(902) 667-9834
- **David and Barbara Wetzel**
O'Neill, NE

HELP YOUR ASSOCIATION SAVE \$\$

Let us email you your *Lincoln Letter*

Please send contact info to
Sarah Pedelty at sarahpedelty@yahoo.com
or call Sarah at 507-867-9041

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

SUBMIT ASSOCIATION DUES

Please submit your dues to
Canadian Livestock Records Corporation
2417 Holly Lane
Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0M7

Or pay your membership online at www.clrc.ca
Annual membership is \$80 Canadian currency.

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