The Lincoln Letter

Publisher-North American Lincoln Red Association Fall 2018

Presidents Report

It was great to host the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the NALRA at our farm this past June. It was a good opportunity to visit with existing members and to meet new members from across the country. There were many great discussions throughout the day while strolling through the Lincoln Red herd and during the formal meeting. We realize that time goes by quickly since the last annual general meeting was also held at our farm in 2006. We must plan to have more frequent face to face meetings in the future.

Our son Davis proudly showed his Lincoln Red 4-H heifer Echo at his achievement day in Orangeville this fall and is already looking through our herd for his 2019 project.

Have a great winter!

Scott

Obituary

It is with great sadness that I announce that Dr. Donald McQueen Shaver passed away July 28, 2018 in his 98th year. I first met Dr. Shaver [Donald] in the Fall of 1994 when he interviewed me for a University co-operative education position to work at the Shellard Farm in Cambridge where pure lines of egg laying chickens and Lincoln Red cattle were maintained. Dr. Shaver originally brought the Lincoln Red breed to Canada and they became a foundational part of the Shaver Beefblend composite breed. Dr. Shaver also donated Shaver Abner semen to the North American Lincoln Red Association where it was important to have semen available and provide additional funds for the Association. The discipline used in selecting and culling Lincolns, planned matings for the females, meticulous record keeping , and bringing in new genetics to maintain diversity are many of the skills that Dr. Shaver passed on to me. When the Shellard Farm closed in 2004, the remaining members of the Shaver Lincoln Red herd came to our farm where we still proudly breed [his] Lincoln Reds under the Shaver name. Dr. Shaver would continue to visit our farm annually to see the cattle and visit with our family. Many Lincoln Red breeders have been so fortunate to have the friendship, guidance and mentorship provided by Dr. Shaver.

Best Regards,
Scott

WDF Femme Fire Skye 9F Bred by William Vancise, Canada

Sire: XP4115 St Fort Essex Dam: X-21968LR Hill Haven Cumberland Skye 9C

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Selection for Production or for Show Can Change Breeds

(This article is reprinted with permission from Dr D Phillip Sponenberg. He can be reached for questions at dpsponen@vt.edu)

Breeds come to us through a variety of pathways. Most breeds were developed to suit specific purposes. Varied purposes and environments shaped them into the wonderful array of breeds we have today. As breeds, especially rare breeds, become the target of increased interest, most breeders want to select for either main-stream production or show. Either sort of selection changes the breed, and the changes can either be good or can be a challenge. Selection goals need to be chosen carefully and wisely!

Selecting for production sounds innocent enough, but how to measure that production is the key important aspect. In benign temperate environments setting priorities is pretty easy, because animal survival is not all that challenging. The more challenging the environment, the more necessary it is to place emphasis on survival as a target of selection. In the most challenging environments, animal survival is right at the top of the list for selection goals, with any production secondary to that.

Production can be measured in different ways. If production (meat, milk, eggs) is 'per individual animal' the usual result is large, rapidly growing or heavily-producing animals. If production is 'per unit of land area' the result can be more moderate size, great fertility, and longevity. In some situations the outcome of selecting for fertility and longevity can yield smaller individual animals, but greater production per unit of area. This is a subtle sort of production, and is difficult to capture if one breed is compared against another.

When selection for production or show become intense, the result is to change the underlying genetic variability of a population. This needs to be done wisely, because selection goals can change over time, and in some situations can reverse. Changes require modification of goals, measurements, and selection practices. As a breed moves through temporary fads in either production goals or show-ring traits, it loses variation. Eventually it can lose enough underlying variation that future response to selection is hampered. That then dooms the breed to being irrelevant, and cast aside.

While showing can be productive and constructive, it often fails in both of these goals. Showing is an effort to predict overall merit, and this can be difficult to assess from a visual appraisal. In my own goat herd, my students periodically come out to do ultrasound examinations. Invariably they will manage to have two does side by side. One big, smooth, and lucky to raise a single. The other rough, moderate in size, and consistently producing twins or triplets. Asked "which goat is better?," they usually respond that the larger one is. A herd of the smaller, rougher sort would out-produce those bigger ones every time!

Selection responds to goals, and goals therefore need to be set carefully. Breeders can shape and change breeds dramatically in just a few generations, so fads like blue eyes or specific color patterns really do need to take a back seat to issues like adaptation, productivity, and general utility. And, don't forget temperament, which is highly heritable and either a source of joy or dismay!

How many inches of snow will Lincoln Reds dig through if they have good grass underneath?

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Low Risk, High Reward

Bob Nusbaum, Professor Emeritus, Univ of Wisc Platteville nusbaum@uwplatt.edu

Some occasions in one's life are remembered with great clarity. During every fall harvest season, I recall a momentous decision of mine that remains crystal clear. I don't remember the exact date or even the month, but it was in 1988 and I know precisely what I was doing at the time.

I was sitting in a John Deere 4030 hitched to an empty gravity box waiting for the combine to fill up with corn. It was sometime after midnight, very early on a Sunday morning, and I was watching the snow flurries bounce off the glass of the tractor's cab. A few hours earlier I had gotten a late evening call from my combine guy who asked if I had lights on my tractor. He was a week late because of a breakdown but was ready to go. I said "good night" to my friends visiting from Iowa and went outside into a chilly, windy night. About 7 am my friends brought me a cup of coffee, said good-bye and headed home.

I had a lot of time to think that night while hauling and unloading corn into the bin. That crop only averaged about 70 bushel per acre due to a severe flood that happened the day after I had the corn cultivated. I thought about the cash outlay in the spring for seed and fertilizer. I thought about having the field worked up for planting. I thought about keeping the cows and sheep out of the growing crop which was protected mostly by temporary electric fence (think flood plain). I thought about the repairs for the dryer on the grain bin and ordering a tankful of LP gas. I thought about the selling price of corn after storing and drying it, (< $2) and the cost to transport it to market.

I decided then and there to become a grass farmer. I converted. No more corn. Life was too short to worry about a high cost, high risk, low return crop. Leave it to the corn-growing professionals and buy the necessary grain my operation needed. My 30-acre, flood plain bottom and another 20-acre field were planted to grass and legumes the next spring and have never been plowed since. They became permanent hayfields and pastures. Life became simpler and less hectic. I still watch my neighbors stress over corn and bean planting in the spring and subsequent harvesting in the fall. I don't miss it. I sold my grain bin, dryer and silo just in case of a relapse.

That was the first step in my recovery. Since then, I've gone whole hog. Total immersion! I started a subscription to "The Stockman Grass Farmer" magazine and found other producers who had similar awakenings. Through that I found out about the University of Missouri Grazing School and talked my neighbor into attending it with me. That experience exposed us to fencing, water systems and grass management. A tremendous experience! I read books about profitable grass farming and began attending local "pasture walks" on other farms where producers shared ideas and experiences with solving grazing issues. I attended Grazing Conferences in Wisconsin and other states where knowledgeable speakers presented timely topics and vendors showcased supportive equipment.

I'm discussing this topic of grass farming, or grass management, because I believe that this is probably the biggest area where we, as beef producers, can realize the most improvement in our bottom line. Every fall, usually about mid-October, pastures are just about used up and frequent frosts pretty much stop any grass regrowth. Many producers are feeding hay by November 1st, or earlier, which makes for a very long, very expensive feeding season considering that most won't see grass until at least May 1st, if not later. It costs about 4 times as much to feed a cow hay vs. grazing, so the goal is to increase grazing days and reduce hay-feeding days. Right now, most producers gaze 5-6 months and feed 5-6 months. Can that be changed to 7, 8 or 9 months of grazing with shorter hay-feeding periods? The answer is "yes", and I have met several producers from the snowy Midwest that are successfully grazing for 8 months or more.

So, what are the obstacles that prevent better grass management which is necessary to prolong a grazing season? In my opinion, most producers either don't care or don't understand what it takes to make a pasture more productive, and this is where a lot of money is left on the table. Controlling the grazing area is the biggest and most important issue. Splitting a pasture in half allows 50% of the grass to rest and grow while the other half is being grazed. Smaller subdivisions allow for more grass to rest more of the time. At the same time, water needs to be available to animals in these subdivisions. Fortunately, there are many inexpensive solutions to satisfy these two necessities. Many grazers have greatly increased their stocking rate by utilizing simple, rotational grazing techniques.

Another area of concern is making hay which also is an expensive crop. Put the baler away around the first of August. Stockpile the grass for fall or even spring grazing after the snow melts. Let the cattle harvest the grass rather than turn it into hay. As Jim Gerrish, a noted grazing professional states, “costs increase when more machinery is used between the grass and the cow”.

Burke Teichert, a well-known ranch consultant, says grazing is intimately linked to three key ratios that measure ranch profitability. These are acres per cow (management), cows per person (labor) and fed feed vs. grazed feed (cost). Since most of us are single family operations, the cows per person ratio is not a major factor. However, the other two are important and ones that we certainly can control. Being a better grass manager will improve the acres per cow ratio which, in turn, will improve the fed feed vs. stored feed ratio.

I have come to realize over the years that there is nothing easier and less costly to grow than grass and legumes whether they are in pastures or hayfields that double as pastures. Grazing and grass farming continually improve soil fertility, cattle disposition and quality of family life on the farm. I’ve also learned that there is no easier way to feed cattle than just by opening a gate! Have a great and safe harvest season!

Natalie Wood showing Patrick Milner’s Reserve Champion Heifer Renlim Everest 55E at the Nova Scotia 4-H Show

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SEEING IS BELIEVING!

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

- **Scott & Heather McClinchey - President**
  East Garafraxa, ON
  (519) 928-3106
  scott.l.mcclinchey@sympatico.ca
- **John & Lorraine Ashby**
  Stonehedge Farms
  Prescott, ON
  (613)925-5778
- **Sarah Band**
  Mohil Farms
  Puslinch, ON
  (519) 824-5619
- **Edward Barrett**
  Randolph, MN
  bsf_shorthorms@hotmail.com
  (507)302-9422
- **Elsie Beddoes**
  Duchess AB
  dmrranching@gmail.com
- **Sarah Bowley**
  SVF Foundation
  Newport, RI
  (401) 846-8670
  sarah@svffoundation.org
  www.svffoundation.org
- **Andrew Ditmans**
  Washington, KS
- **Lee Deutsche**
  Crete, IL
  farmspecialist@wildblue.net
- **Tom Fillmore**
  Oxford, NS

Females Available:
Contact Robert Latimer

- **Ryan Galbreath**
  Enderlin, ND
  showpigs@mlgc.com
  (701) 799-4568
- **Brian & Sonja Harper**
  Brandon, Manitoba
  (204) 725-2515
  harper4@goinet.ca
  www.shaverbeef.com
- **Dennis & Mary Hoffrogge**
  Sleepy Eye, MN 56085
  (507) 227-5745
  dhoffrogge@gmail.com
  www.dmhoffroggecattle.com

SVF Cattle for Sale
Contact Sarah Bowley

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  (519) 794-0842
  lisafenton@hotmail.com
- **Robert Latimer**
  Milton, TN
  mccllc98@cs.com
  (615) 337-6307
- **Sandy MacDougald**
  Milrae Farms
  Montague, PE
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- **George McQueen**
  McQueen-Vue Farms
  Nottawa, ON
  info@mcqueenpaving.com
  (705) 445-7065
- **Martindell Farms LLC**
  Hardyville, KY
  (270) 774-2283
- **Wallace & Patrick Milner**
  Nappan, NS
  patrickmilnercattle@hotmail.ca
  (902) 667-8815
- **Eric Pierson**
  Courtland, MN
- **Larry and Sarah Pedelty -Secretary**
  (507) 421-7112
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- **Rose's Lincoln Reds**
  Amherst, NS B4H 3Y1
  (902) 667-9834
- **Alycia & Ryan Salvas**
  Canterbury, CT
  radicalroots.llc@gmail.com
- **Sheldon & Wendy Schmaltz**
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  (780) 685-3336
- **Colby & Ellen Suttenfield**
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  (509) 723-6152
- **William Vancise**
  Walnut Drive Farms
  Stayner, ON
  williamvancise@msn.com
  (705) 445-2627

Semen Available-Straws for U.S. Breeders
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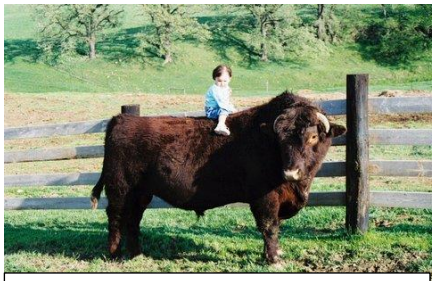

The Pines Caesar

Pedelty Xing

The Pines Dauntless

Pedelty Baron

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