

The Lincoln Letter

Publisher-North American Lincoln Red Association

WINTER 2023

President's Report

2023 is upon us already and life appears to be returning to the way it was prior the last few years of COVID-19 restrictions. Our son Davis selected Shaver Jade as a 4-H calf to show at our local fairs in the Fall of 2022. Even with a solid effort training her for the shows, she inherited her mother's spunk and was quite a handful in the show ring! In October our farm was asked to be a host on the Dufferin County Farm tour which is a great way to bring urban folks out to see how farms operate. It was a beautiful day and many guests had positive comments about our Lincoln Red herd.

With both kids in high school now and involved in other activities, they are not always available to help with day-to-day farm chores. One evening in the barn, the kids were standing in front of our pen with weaned calves which brought back memories of myself doing the same at my grandfather's farm. They then went on to pick out their favourite calves and commented that this has been one of our most uniform group of calves weaned. With a solid breeding plan and momentum in the beef industry, it continues to be rewarding being a Lincoln Red breeder.

Wishing you all the best with your Lincoln Red herds!
Hope you have a great 2023!



Davis McClinchey showing Shaver Jade
Sherburne, Ontario



Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Jim Washer, CLRC director, who lost his battle with cancer January 14th, 2023.

His leadership at CLRC will be sorely missed.

In lieu of flowers, Jim would want you to please perform an act of kindness in your neighborhood.



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Lincoln Reds in the UK, Summer 2022

By Jenifer Morrissey



Lincoln Red cows from Roger Wardle's breeding

In late summer of 2022, Bruce Murdock and I traveled to the UK to learn about Lincoln Red cattle. We had two particular questions: about udder quality and frame size. Because I have bred other UK rare livestock breeds, we also had the larger question of whether the Lincoln Reds in our herd would be considered good representatives of the breed in their home country. The resounding answer to that last question was Yes!

We visited three breeders, two in Lincolnshire and one in Scotland. We were warmly received by all. In Lincolnshire, we visited Roger Wardle and Gail Machen and their Manor herd, and then Richard Lakin at South Ormsby Estate. In Scotland we visited Andrew, Hilary, Casper and Rosie Myelius and the St Fort herd. (Casper, Andrew's son, and Rosie, Casper's daughter, prefer the Aberdeen Angus that they also breed). Our interest was in the 'P' herds, purebred Lincoln Reds. 'X' herds also are kept that have had crossbreeding done, though to our eyes we couldn't see much difference between the two types at St. Fort.



Roger Wardle talking to us about udder quality

Our first stop was with Roger and Gail, and we drank from a firehose for four hours looking at two different herds as Roger talked to us not only about Lincoln Reds but about land stewardship using grazing animals. Bruce is a lifelong cattleman, so he was better able to take in the voluminous information that Roger shared. Generally, though, Bruce felt the udder quality in our cows and heifers mirrored that in the UK herds we saw. Frame size varied amongst the UK herds, with some being larger but most being similar to what we have in our herd.



Bruce Murdock views one of the herds at South Ormsby estate

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The herd at South Ormsby estate numbered just 25 at the turn of the century but now is over 400 animals. It is stewarded by Richard Lakin. Bruce saw several bull calves he would love to have put in his suitcase! (It's not currently possible to import live cattle; just embryos or semen.) One highlight of the South Ormsby visit was getting to see the bulls St. Fort Squire and St. Fort Puzzle. We came away pleased to have Squire semen already and hope that Puzzle semen will be available someday on this side of the pond for outcrossing.

The stop at St. Fort ended up being an all-day affair thanks to the generosity of the Myelius family. Bruce has a commercial Angus herd, so he enjoyed seeing not only the St. Fort Lincoln Reds but also their Aberdeen Angus. Andrew's six decades of selection was evident in consistency of type and quality in both breeds. Bruce again wished his suitcase was bigger because he saw bull calves of both breeds that he would like to have here at home.



Two cattlemen of many decades discussing fine points:
Andrew Myelius at t St Fort and Bruce Murdock

I am also a breeder of Fell Ponies, a landscape-adapted breed from around the Lake District and the border region between England and Scotland. I have visited Fell Pony herds on their home terrain many times, and I always learn more about how that terrain has influenced the characteristics they have. I therefore have been curious why the Lincoln Red breed was developed. I knew it was

selected rather than landscape-adapted, but I still wondered why the characteristics of the breed were considered important. Our visit to their home terrain in Lincolnshire provided an answer.

The Lincolnshire Wolds are a geologic formation and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a designation of protected landscapes in the UK. Being quite familiar with the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales, though, the Wolds lacked the rugged, mountainous natural beauty I associate with those other areas. The Wolds were indeed beautiful, but instead were a farmed landscape, heavy on grains. As the picture shows, the grain fields are bordered by hedgerows and uncultivable land. It therefore made sense to me that Lincoln Reds were developed to thrive on these margins, letting the grain go to market and the straw be used for bedding, or increasingly, biomass. Our cattle need to do well with few inputs to be true to their heritage.



Note the dominance of cultivated fields in Lincolnshire. It's no wonder that Lincoln Red cattle thrive with few inputs since they are expected to live on the edges.

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A New Year's Resolution

**Bob Nusbaum, Emeritus Professor of Animal Science
University of Wisconsin-Platteville**

The first sale of the New Year at our local sale barn had a group of fed heifers that weighed 1678 pounds and sold for \$1.665 per pound. The total value per head totaled over \$2790. I first thought that was impressive, and then I remembered what I just paid for new tractor tires and what it cost to refill my diesel barrel. Everything is more expensive. And recently, an Ag Economics Professor from Kansas State University predicted that the annual cost for keeping a beef cow in 2023 will be over \$1000, up from \$963 in 2022. My second thought wondered if the higher cattle prices today are covering a larger portion of the bills compared to previous years.

The national beef cow numbers affect market prices, which in turn, drives supply and demand. Currently we have a low cow inventory, and there is competition for meat products reflected by high retail prices. The cattle cycle averages 8-12 years from high point to high point and is influenced by the combined effects of cattle prices and input costs which determine profitability. So how can we position our herds to prosper in the good times and the bad?

The best strategy to make a profit from year to year is to maintain, or even increase production, while simultaneously reducing input costs. One key area where this is potentially possible is reproduction. Fertility drives reproduction, considered the most important trait in a herd. Some simple data collection can be a tremendous management tool to determine the performance level of a herd.

Some measurements that can be obtained are:

- percentage of heifers conceiving
- AI conception rate, especially first service
- heifers, 3-year-olds, and all other cows calving in first 21 days of calving season
- percentage of assisted births for heifers and cows
- length of calving season; record the bull "in" and "out" dates
- percentage of calves weaned from cows exposed in the breeding pasture
- percentage of open cows at pregnancy check

These measurements coupled with cull cow information (age, weight, and total numbers) can help determine if your bull and heifer selection program is hitting its target as to mature cow size and fertility. Calculate the average age and weight of your cows each year and see if it changes over time. How long do your cows last? Which size cows have the most longevity? What is the replacement percentage of your cowherd? Selling the heifers on a high market and reducing herd costs by keeping older cows rather than developing replacement heifers may be a smart strategy this year. You might also consider devising a scoring system for udders and feet in your cow herd. A simple 1, 2, 3 (good, average, bad) numerical system can be averaged and compared from year to year to determine whole-herd improvement. Docility or temperament is a highly heritable trait and can be rapidly improved in a herd. Chute scoring heifers (1-quiet, 2-restless, 3-nervous) the first few times they are handled will identify the problems. In our farm's experience, 1's and 3's seldom change. The 2's sometimes improve, but usually stay the same or get worse. Let docility be a major factor for your replacement heifer selection. Once determined, these values should be put on a spreadsheet for yearly comparisons and adjustments can be made to see if any values fall out of an acceptable range. Keeping these at an optimal level will help maintain fertility and reduce related expenses.

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Another critical area to look for cost reduction is feed. On average, most beef cows graze for seven months and must utilize expensive, stored feed for the other five. Soil testing pastures and hayfields will expose nutrient deficiencies that can reduce forage quality and quantity. Also, annually testing the hay crop can help determine what types of supplemental feed may be needed. Both tests can be useful when compared over time to determine trends in the overall forage program. Additionally, high quality pastures and hay can significantly reduce supplemental mineral expenses. Other simple, but important measurements might include the pasture turnout date and what day hay is first being fed in the fall. Compare those dates from year to year. Hay is expensive to make, store and feed. Every extra grazing day reduces costs and high-quality hay can help to minimize supplemental grain, especially for developing replacement heifers.

Whether we have been in business for 5 years or 50 years, we started with certain goals or levels we wanted to attain. With the New Year, it may be a suitable time to reflect on our initial goals and to compare them to what we are currently achieving. Most of the measurements described in this article are easy to collect and you don't need to be a research statistician to analyze it. Most of us have already collected much of it. The key is to use it. Organize it in a form where production levels and trends over years can be visually analyzed. Are your goals being met? Are adjustments required to meet those goals and are they financially feasible? Are you making any improvement? It is difficult to manage any business without measuring output. Having accurate information helps us to be better managers that can make informed decisions about production strategies. All of this, hopefully, leads to improving our profitability in the good years and the bad.



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Pine Needles and Bovine Abortion

Courtesy of Jenifer Morrissey

Abortion or premature calving in range cattle due to ingestion of coniferous needles has been known since the 1920s. The active compound is isocupressic acid. Toxicity of needles varies year to year. Retained placentas are another large problem associated with pine needle abortions. In addition to cattle, bison are also affected. Elk, sheep, and goats are not. <http://osu-wams-blogs-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/blogs.dir/2753/files/2016/09/636-Pine-Needle-Abortion-in-Cattle.pdf>

Coniferous species known to be of concern include Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), Formosan juniper (*Juniperus formosana*), Utah



juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), pinyon pine (*Pinus edulis* and *Pinus monophylla*), Jeffrey pine (*Pinus jeffreyi*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), and Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*). Discarded Christmas trees have been known to cause abortions in cows.

Abortions are most common in the third trimester and occur 2-14 days post needle ingestion. Prematurely delivered calves require significant intervention to survive; mortality rate of calves and cows is high. Losses can range from 50-100%.

This is typically a winter issue. Forage specialists and ranchers have observed that cattle will consume pine needles in times of cold stress, snow cover, and inclement weather, regardless of the amount of feed provided.

There may be some correlation with high protein supplementation. “High levels of protein in a diet can result in mild ammonia toxicity. Condensed tannins, found in pine needles, lower ammonia levels in the bloodstream by binding with plant proteins. Binding prevents rumen microbes from converting the proteins to ammonia. Cows on high-protein diets may seek out pine needles to lower ammonia levels. Therefore, avoiding high-protein diets may help to decrease pine needle consumption.”

(https://www.beefmagazine.com/mag/beef_needle_nightmare) “Also, note that losses cannot be decreased by straw, mineral, salt, or bentonite (chemical binder) supplementation.” (<https://uwagnews.com/2022/01/26/effects-of-cattle-consuming-ponderosa-pine-needles/>)

One rancher in South Dakota has found that late afternoon or early evening feeding has helped. (https://www.beefmagazine.com/mag/beef_needle_nightmare) Another rancher in South Dakota appears to have gotten around the problem by selection of cattle who won't ingest needles.

The primary recommendation for avoiding loss due to pine needle ingestion is to avoid winter exposure of pregnant late-term cattle to needles through fencing or other measures.

Other resources:

- Snider DB, Gardner DR, Janke BH, Ensley SM. Pine needle abortion biomarker detected in bovine fetal fluids. *Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation*. 2015;27(1):74-79.
- <https://www.ars.usda.gov/pacific-west-area/logan-ut/poisonous-plant-research/docs/ponderosa-pine-pinus-ponderosa/>
- <http://osu-wams-blogs-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/blogs.dir/2753/files/2016/09/636-Pine-Needle-Abortion-in-Cattle.pdf>

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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
Available:
Yearling bulls, a two year old bull, and yearling heifers
- **John & Lorraine Ashby**
Stonehedge Farms
Prescott, ON
(613)925-5778
- **Sarah Band**
Mohill Farms
Puslinch, ON
(519) 824-5619
- **Edward Barrett**
Randolph, MN
bsf_shorthorns@hotmail.com
(507)302-9422
- **Elsie Beddoes**
Duchess AB
dmrranching@gmail.com
- **William Bruck**
Rockford, IA
IHman1256@icloud.com
641-512-0573
- **Tessa Desmond**
Hopewell, NJ
fireflyhomesteadfarm@gmail.com
- **Ryan Galbreath**
Enderlin, ND
showpigs@mlgc.com
(701) 799-4568
- **Brian & Sonja Harper**
Brandon, Manitoba
(204) 725-2515
harper4@goinet.ca
www.shaverbeef.com
- **Jim Hutton**
Onak, WA
(509) 429-0161
- **Larry and Sarah Pedelty –Secretary**
(507) 421-7112
sarahpedelty@gmail.com
Available:
Coming yearling bull and heifers
- **Kincaid Family Farm**
Sadieville, KY
Richarddkincaid@icloud.com
(859) 967-9610
- **Greg & Lisa Klages**
Williamsford, ON
(519) 794-0842
lisafenton@hotmail.com
- **George McQueen**
McQueen-Vue Farms
Nottawa, ON
info@mcqueenpaving.com
(705) 445-7065
- **Wallace & Patrick Milner**
Nappan, NS
patrickmilnercattle@hotmail.ca
(902) 667-8815
- **Jenifer Morrissey & Bruce Murdock**
Hot Spring, SD
workponies@goldenwest.net
(605) 745-3699
- **Weston Pease**
Chatfield, MN
westonpease77@gmail.com
(507) 273-9749
- **Eric Pierson**
Courtland, MN
Ericpierson06@gmail.com
(507) 276-8951
- **Red Heifer Ranch**
Lake View, OR
(917) 374-7879
Available cattle:
One bull, 8 cows, 3 heifers and 5 bull calves

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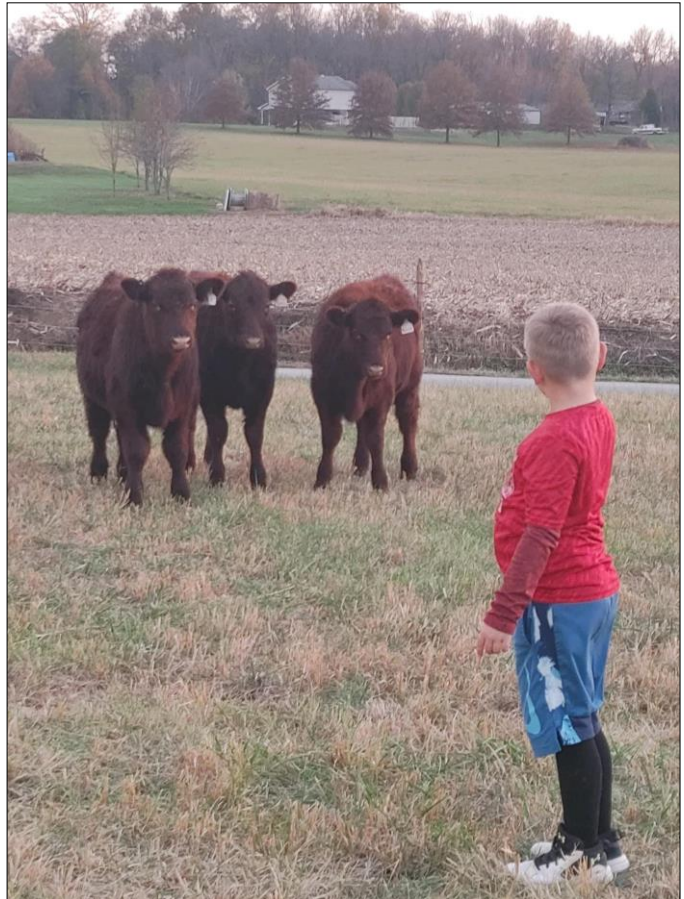
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Take a look at Lincoln Reds at one of these farms:

- **R. Ian Robertson**
Tara, ON
r.ianrobertsononlaw@gmail.com
- **Rose's Lincoln Reds**
Amherst, NS B4H 3Y1
(902) 667-9834
- **Clifford Rose**
Amherst, NS
cliffandjoannerose@gmail.com
(902) 667-2560
- **Alycia & Ryan Salvas**
Canterbury, CT
radicalroots.llc@gmail.com
Wanted: 10-30 stocker Lincoln Reds along with more cows
- **William Vancise**
Walnut Drive Farms
Stayner, ON
williamvancise@msn.com
(705) 445-2627
- **Ernest Weissing**
Utica, MN
norseman870@gmail.com
- **Rob Wilson**
Wilton, WI
robwilson1109@yahoo.com
(608) 387-1777
- **Brent & Sarah Wittenbraker**
Boonville, IN
(812) 480-3070



Welcome to our newest Lincoln Red breeders Brent and Sarah Wittenbraker and family. For me personally, it is hard to part with any Lincolns, but it sure makes my heart sing when they go to such great people. Pictured is their oldest introducing himself.



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