

Riggitt Galloway Cattle Society (UK)

After decades in the wilderness of not having a recognised 'pedigree' home, Riggitt marked Galloways have once more taken their place. After a faltering start in the 1980's, when the late Honourable Miss Flora Stuart brought together some chance-bred UK animals and their owners, a group subsequently coalesced on the 5th February 2007, to form the RGCS.

The Society steadily found its footing, and numbers of both herds and breeders crept up, carefully using the occasional Riggitt throwbacks on other registered Galloways. There are now some 300 registered breeding females across 40 herds in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

A key part of the Society's early success has been a handful of breeders taking their striking looking beasts out on the show circuit. While usually thrown into the 'Any other native breed' classes, they created ripples wherever they were led out, picking up new aficionados. Happily, some UK shows are now holding mixed Galloway classes, where the whole Galloway family can compete, providing a beautiful spectacle.

Another early help was the kind Patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales – Prince Charles as he then was. Known for his support of rare and minority breeds of livestock, and also the extensive grass based style of farming Galloways are given to, his backing has been immeasurable. A further feather in the Society's cap came after his succession to the throne, when he graciously continued his support in his new role. Having HM King Charles III as Patron gives the Society a presence, arguably beyond its stature.

The UK based Society also took it upon themselves to help various overseas groups start saving and promoting the Riggitts they were breeding. Some of these groups are now well able to speak for themselves, not least in New Zealand.

Recent works and actions include great successes in the post-Covid photographic competitions around the world. Some UK breeders are carrying out work studying carcass eating quality – notably rather than carcass shape, on the basis that chasing a more muscled beast is venturing into a market better served by other breeds. Rather UK Riggitt breeders are mostly focussed on the traditional Galloway shape and character, and its ability to thrive on poor fodder, and in extremes of climate.

Other traits being looked into are lines showing extremes of fecundity. Breeding early and fast isn't necessarily something you'd expect in Galloways, especially on native grass diets. Nonetheless, there are Riggitt lines exhibiting this highly commercial attribute.

With the world's focus on the supposed evils of intensive farming, it could be that the Galloway's time is really come again, and the Riggitts are – in some opinions - the nicest looking too!

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