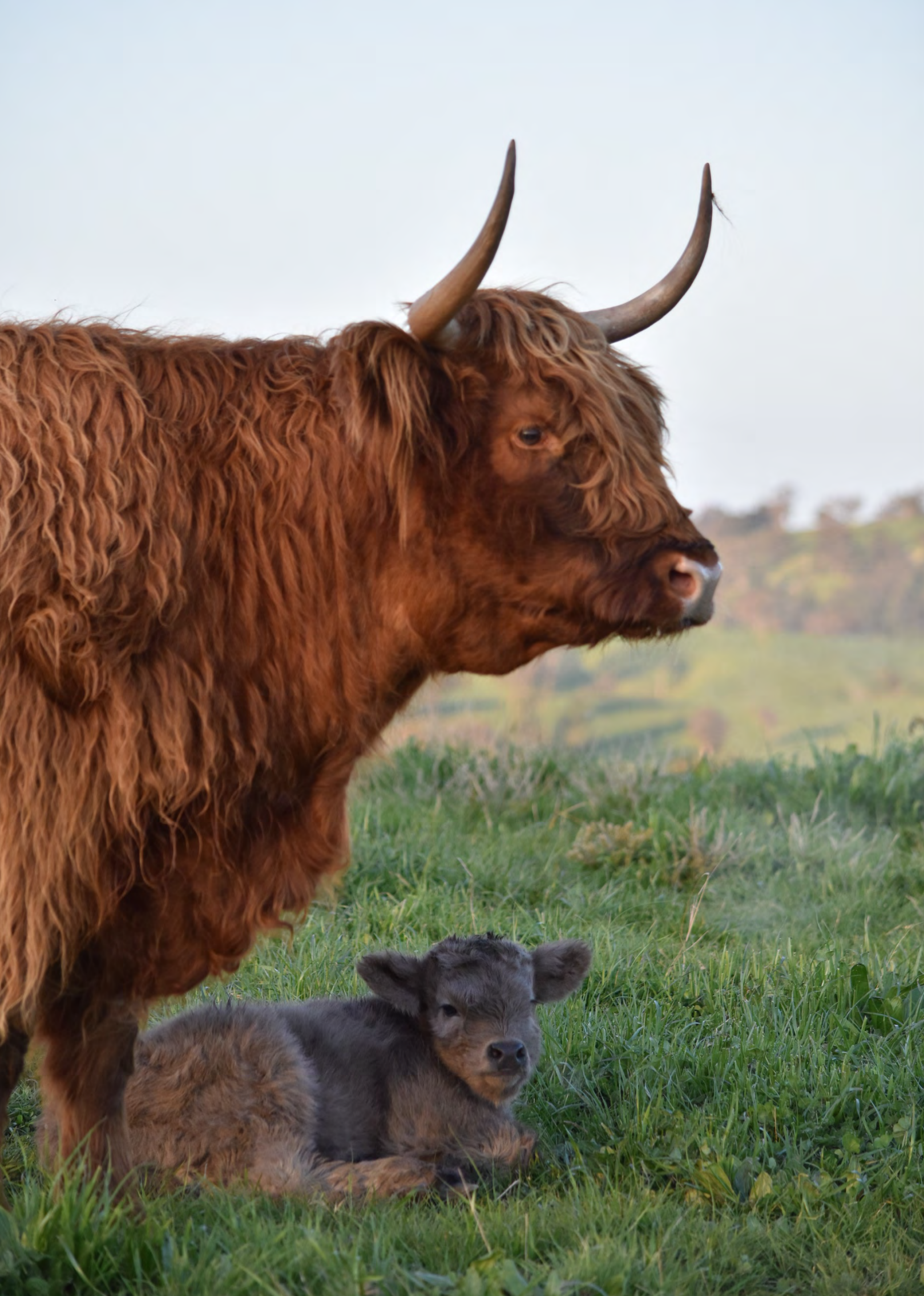
INFORMATION BOOKLET

The Grand Old Breed

Arguably one of the most majestic breeds,

easily recognisable, and once seen, can never be forgotten.

Contents



History of Highlands

One of Britain's oldest, most distinctive, and best-known breeds, with a long, thick, flowing coat of rich hair and majestic sweeping horns, the Highland Cattle breed has remained largely unchanged over the centuries.

Written records go back to the 18th century and the Highland Cattle Herdbook, first published in 1885, lists pedigrees since that time. It is believed that the Highland is the oldest registered breed in the world.

New "folds", as herds of Highland Cattle are known, are founded every year, both in their homeland and abroad, and in recent years Highland Cattle societies have been started in Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Holland, Finland, France, Switzerland and Norway, and there are also Highland Cattle in Luxembourg, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Faroe Islands. In the British Isles folds are found from the furthest south to the extreme north on many different types of ground varying from the slopes of the Sussex Downs, the fenlands of East Anglia, to the windswept rnachars of the Outer Hebrides.

But it is on the vast areas of poor mountain land with high annual rainfall and bitter winds that Highland Cattle thrive and breed where no other cattle could exist; Highland Cattle can be found foraging 10,000 feet up in the Andes.

Making the most or poor forage, calving outside and seldom, if ever, housed they make a real economic contribution to hill and upland areas. The breed is exceptionally hardy with a natural and unique ability to convert poor grazing efficiently.

They are remarkable for their longevity: many Highland cows continue to breed to ages in excess of eighteen years having borne fifteen calves. They are awesome mothers and form a strong bond with their calf. The versatility of the Highland breed led to a great upsurge in exports to the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Austria, Holland and South America.

Highland Cattle produce an excellent modern beef carcass with the lean, well-marbled, flesh that ensures tenderness and succulence with a very distinctive flavour. Highland Beef is healthy and nutritious with lower levels of fat and cholesterol and a higher protein and iron content than other beef.

Interest in the Highland Cattle breed has grown over the last 30 years, so much so that once considered a rare breed, it has recently been removed as a vulnerable breed due to its increase in popularity.

Highland Cattle in Australia

Highland Cattle were imported into Australia by various Scottish migrants in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The first arrival of Highland Cattle into Australia came onboard the Sovereign in 1829, imported by Lieutenant Surge Thomas Braidwood Wilson RN, namesake of the town of Braidwood in New South Wales. Lieutenant Surgeon Wilson owned a 12,000 acre property in Braidwood named Braidwood Farm which employed a huge workforce of 140 by the early 1830's. Once disembarking in Sydney Town, Lieutenant Surgeon Wilson's imports were driven overland to Braidwood Farm. In 1838 a huge drought hit the region and, the Shoal having dried up, district records show that Dr Wilson and Captain John Coghill turned over 1,000 long-horned Highland Cattle into the hills surrounding Braidwood, never to be recovered. It is reported that youths of the district had great sport in shooting the "wild beast" over many years later.

Other importations came later. In 1841, Chieftain Aeneas Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry, Scotland, landed at Port Albert, Victoria with his clan to set up a system of farming at Greenmount, on the Tarra River near the present-day town of Yarram. It is claimed that the clan drove its fold of Highland Cattle to Greenmount preceded by a piper.

Samuel Amess, who made a fortune in the Victorian goldfields and became Mayor of Melbourne in 1869, kept a small fold of black Highland Cattle on Churchill Island. This island is now owned by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Vic), which has re-established a fold of Highland cattle.

Sir William McGregor imported animals to his property "Ard Chaille" on Mount Macedon, Victoria. Some of these animals were shown at the Melbourne Show. In the 1880's a fold of Highland Cattle was re-established at "Ard Chaille" by Tim and Helen Cottrew.

It is believed that other cattle were imported in the late 1800's into Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania, but as no new blood was introduced, the breed died out.

Recent history started in 1954 when two unrelated in-calf cows from Barbrek Fold and Islay Fold and an unrelated bull from Achnacloich Fold were imported into South Australia by A.J.R. Wood. In the 1960's Mr Wood sold his fold to Bob Hawks of Currawong, South Australia. The fold at that time consisted of seven cows, four heifers and two bulls.

In the ensuing years, a handful of animals were sold to South Australia, New South Wales, and Victoria, including those purchased by Sydney Smith of Berwick, Victoria and Mr and Mrs J.M Blackwell of Lenswood, South Australia.

It is reported that there were Highlanders in the Melbourne Zoo from the 1940's and two heifers in Cudlee Creek Wildlife Park, South Australia, in 1966.

Due to a severe drought in South Australia in 1971, Bob Hawks had to relinquish his fold, which was purchased by Jack Brown of Warrnambool, Victoria.

Many good specimens of Highland Cattle remain from the original 1950's imports (known as the "old cattle"), thanks to the dedication of those early breeders. Many of the progeny of these animals were inspected by the Society Inspectors Ray Starritt, Brian Alford, Malcolm MacDonald and Andy Sproat and subsequently approved for inclusion in the Herdbook as A and B grade animals.

In 1973 Allister and Davina Stewart (Ardvorlich) of Teraang, Victoria, suggested to the Scottish Milk Marketing Board (SMMB) that semen be collected from a Highland bull for export to Australia and New Zealand. The SMMB, in conjunction with the Highland Cattle Society of the U.K., then collected semen from Callum of Pollok, which became the foundation bull for the Stewarts' breeding up program. Starting with Jersey females, each generation of heifers was inseminated with semen from a new bull.

Artificial breeding has been the major tool in the development of Highland Cattle in Australia. No fewer than 20,000 straws of semen from outstanding sires have been collected overseas for use in Australia, and this practice continues today with a few dedicated breeders around the country ensuring new bloodlines are continually being injected into the Herdbook.

In 1975 Mr and Mrs Reid (Trelissick) of Christchurch, New Zealand, imported three cows and one bull into New Zealand. From these, in 1979 a heifer was sold to Mr and Mrs J.M. Blackwell, and a heifer and a bull were sold to Mr. K and Mrs. Berta von Bibra (Macquarie) of Ross, Tasmania. During the latter half of the 1970's other breeders in Australia and New Zealand started their own folds using the semen that was then available. Among the first of these in 1977 was Bob Mackay (Durness) of Scone, NSW. With the use of Robert the Bruce, a bull purchased from Sydney Smith, and later, artificial insemination, his fold was bred up from red Shorthorn and Charolais females. Faye Taylor (Laurella Downs) of Woodville, NSW, also based her fold on progeny of the 1950's Highland imports.

Jim and Wendy Black (Glengarry) of Yarram, Victoria, established a fold originally based predominantly on Shorthorn females and in 1983 purchased the bull Corrie McNair and four females from Jack Brown.

During the 1980's interest in Highland Cattle blossomed, aided by newspaper stories, TV coverage and the showing of Highland Cattle at various events. More live importation occurred. David Miller (Strathbogie) of Nagambie, Victoria, imported two bulls and a cow from Scotland, five females from Canada and five females from the U.S.A.

Alan Hamilton (Hamilton) of Tocumwal, NSW, imported two heifers from Scotland, and Jim and Wendy Black imported one heifer from Scotland and four females and one bull from New Zealand.

At the same time imported semen from various bulls, mainly Scottish, was used widely in Australia.

Bulls in order of arrival in Australia were:

- Callum of Pollok
- MacDomhnull of Douneside
- Jock of Cullerne
- Gillie Coir of Pennygown
- Hallmark 2nd of Trelissick
- Jock 26th of Leys
- Rhomanda's Umberto
- Hallmark of Balmoral

The advent of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the U.K. in 1988 saw the imposition of stringent quarantine restrictions by the Australian Government. Imports of live cattle and genetic material from the U.K. were banned. Imports of the offspring of animals exported from the U.K. after 1982 were also banned.

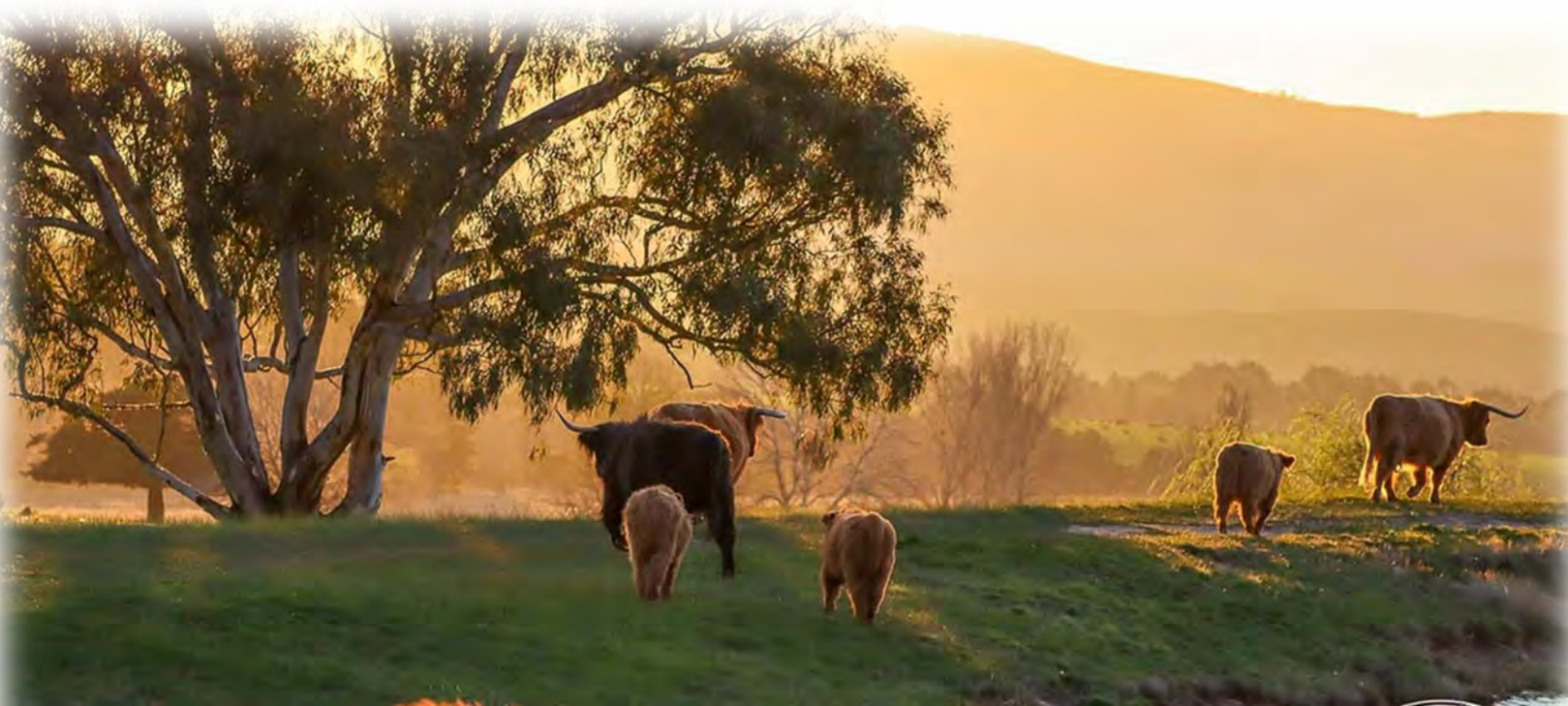
No history of the development of the Highland Cattle in Australia would be complete without mentioning the use of embryo transfer as a breeding tool. David Miller of Nagambie, Victoria, was the first to make extensive use of this technology in Australia. Since 1986 it has been used by various members with varying degrees of success.

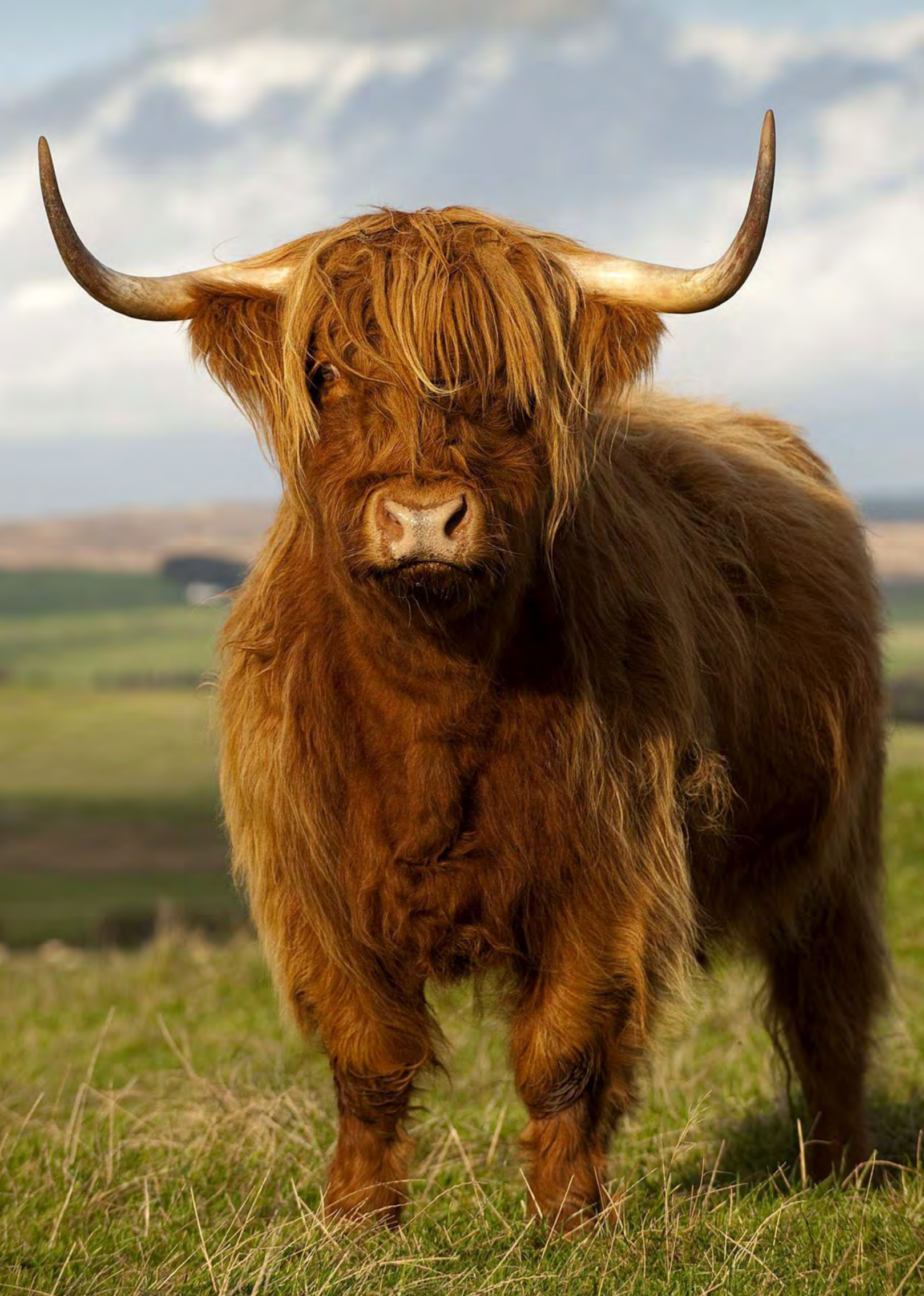
Formation of the Australian Highland Cattle Society

On 7th of May 1988 some 60 people gathered at a public meeting in Melbourne organised by Allister and Davina Stewart to form the Australian Highland Cattle Society.

The society became an incorporated body in 1990. By 1994 the membership had risen to 204 with approximately 2000 registrations of Highland cattle of various degrees of purity. In 2017, thanks to the efforts of AHCS breeders through history, the Rare Breeds Trust of Australia announced that Highland cattle had been removed from its "At Risk Watch List" and reclassified as a "Recovering Breed".

Today in 2022 there are over 250 members across Australia, nearly 10,000 animals have been registered in the Herdbook since 1975, and new cattle registrations average 190 annually, with over 88% of new registrations being classified as Purebred and Fully Imported Bloodlines pedigree.



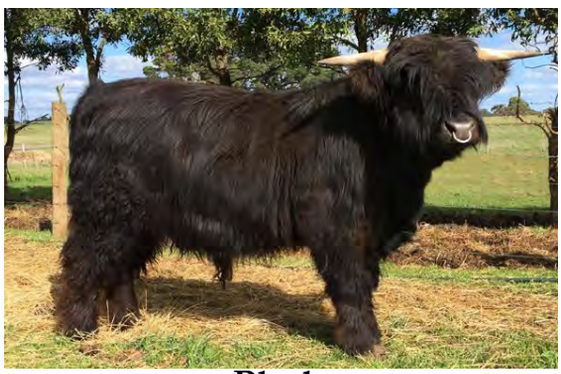


Recognised Colours

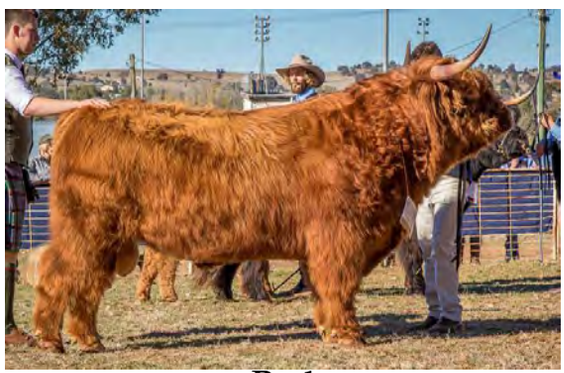
Colours of the breed...

The Highland breed is unique in that a range of coat colours is possible. It can be difficult to easily predict what breeding one colour to another colour might produce although future genetic testing techniques may change this.

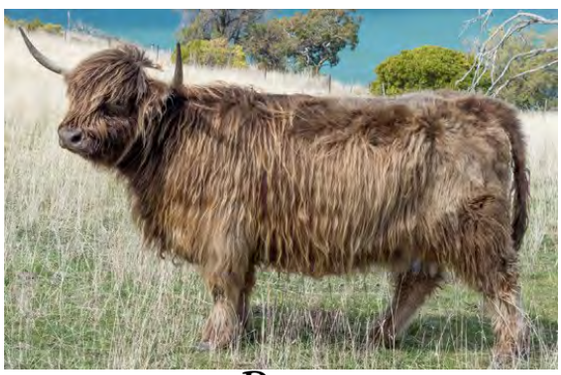
Recognised colours: Black, Dun, Silver Dun, Red, Yellow, White, Brindle and Parti-Colour.



Black

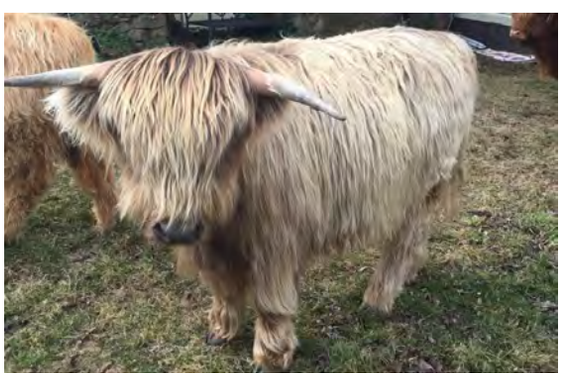


Red

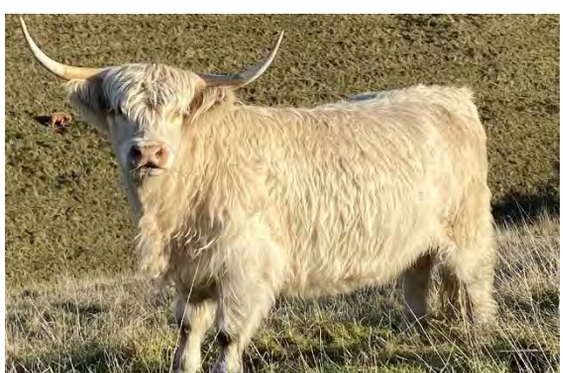


Dun

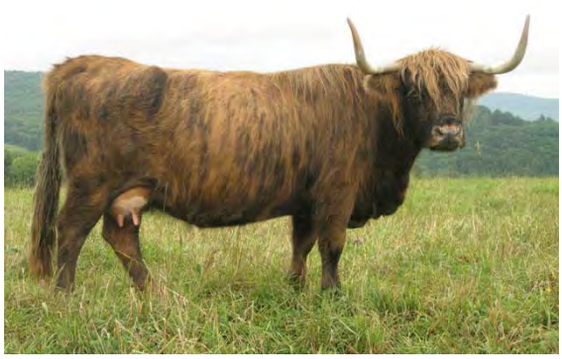
Yellow



Silver Dun

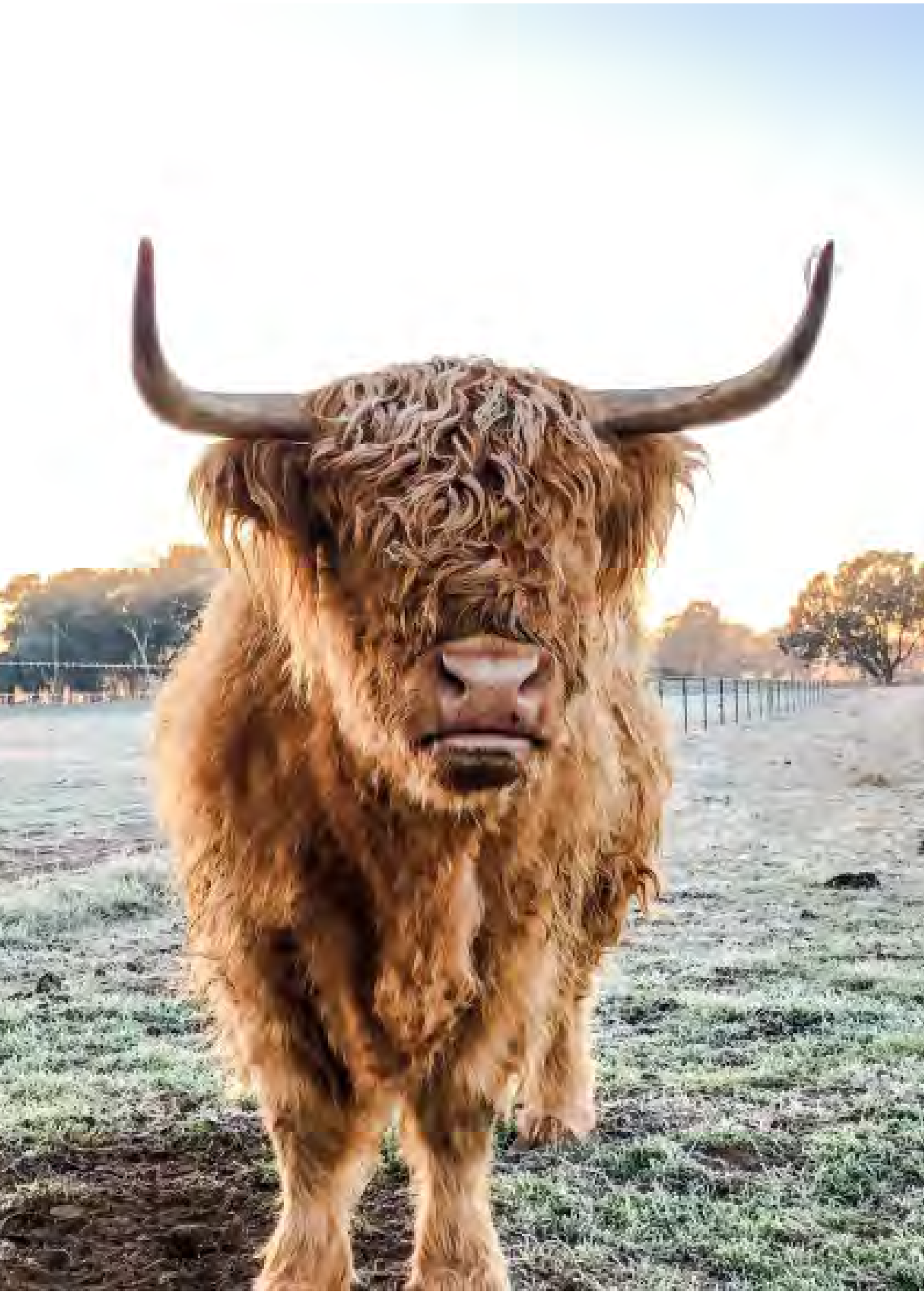


White



Brindle

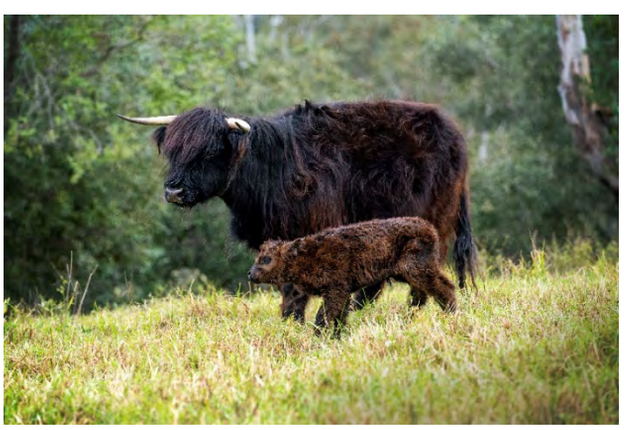
Parti-colour



Why Highland Cattle

For centuries the Highland Cattle breed lived in the rugged remote Scottish Highlands. The extremely harsh conditions that prevailed created a process of natural selection, where only the fittest and most adaptable animals survived to carry on the breed.

Originally there were two distinct classes: the slightly smaller and usually black Kyloe, whose primary domain was the islands off the west coast of northern Scotland; the other, a larger animal generally reddish in color, whose territory was the remote Highlands of Scotland.



Today both of these strains are regarded as one breed; the. Highland. In addition to the red and black of the original strains, yellow, dun and white are also considered traditional colours.

The Highland is the oldest registered breed of cattle, with the first herd book being established in 1885. Around that time, American cattlemen from the western U.S. reognised the natural qualities of the Highland animal and imported them to improve the bloodlines of their herds. As a result, the Highland is credited with having contributed in a great way to the success of the American cattle industry. Today Highland Cattle are found throughout North America, Europe, the South Americas and of course here in Australia.

Highland Cattle are said to require little in the way of shelter, feed supplements, or expensive grains to achieve and maintain good condition and fitness. In fact, Highland Cattle seem to enjoy conditions in which many other breeds would perish.

Cold weather and snow-have little effect on them, as long as hay is provided.

In their-summer coat, they adapt well and although they appreciate shade, learn to tolerate the harsh Australian heat: They are raised as far north as Queensland right down to the snow-capped peaks of Tasmania. Less than ideal pasture or grazing land is another reason to consider the Highland breed. It has been said that the Highland will eat what other cattle pass by ... and get fat on it! The Highland is also an excellent browser, able to clear rough undergrowth with speed and efficiency.

The Highland is a disease resistant breed. Long lashes and forelocks shield their eyes from flying insects, and as a result, the blight of many an Australian farmer, pinkeye and cancer eye are less common.

Highlands do not stress easily, so stress-related diseases occur with less frequency: Other bovine diseases affect the Highland less, due to the advantage of the genetic purity they have achieved.

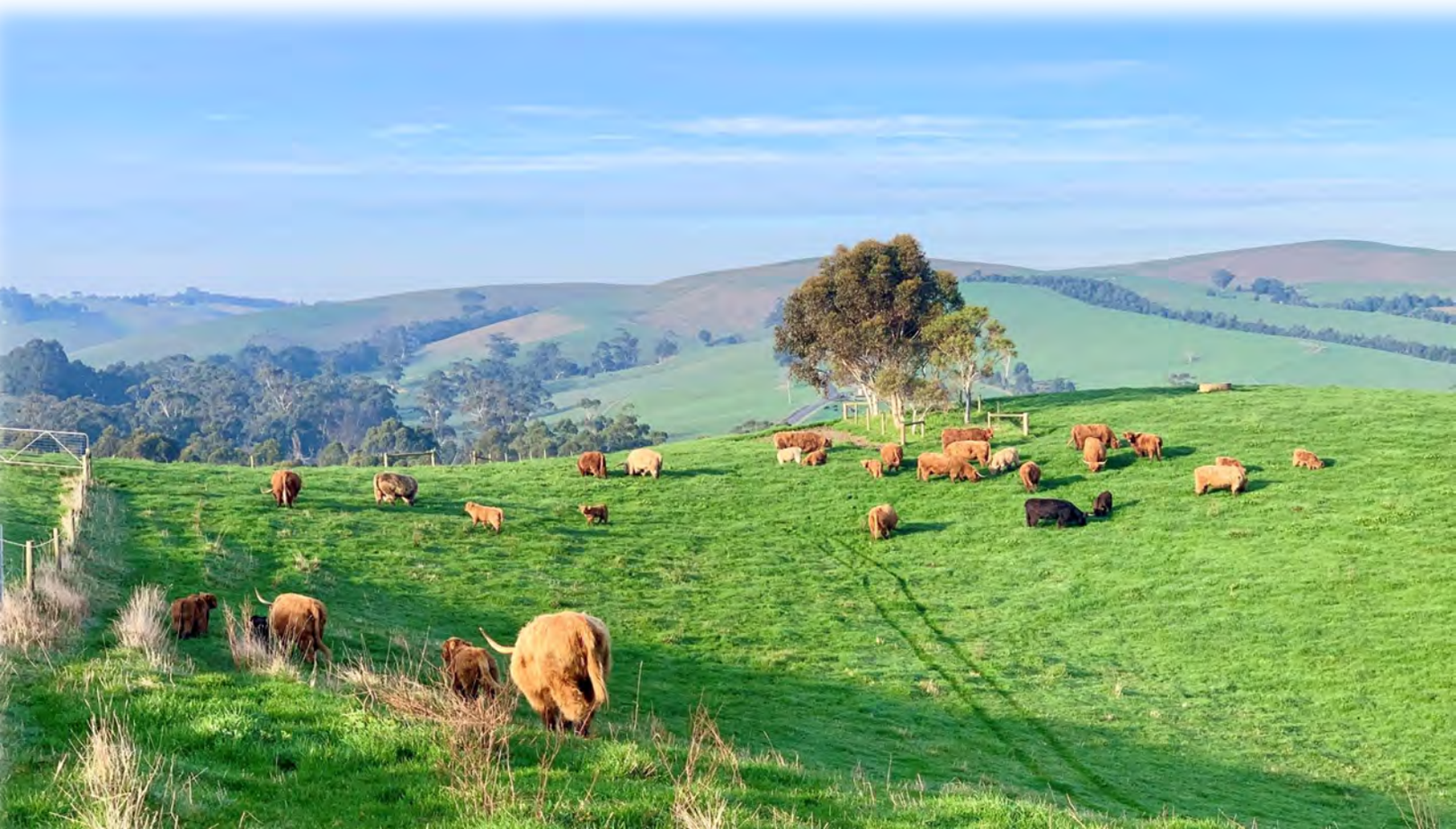
The business end of any beef animal is the amount and quality of the beef it produces. Today's market is demanding premium meat, yet leaner and lower in cholesterol. The Highland carcass is ideally suited to meet this challenge.

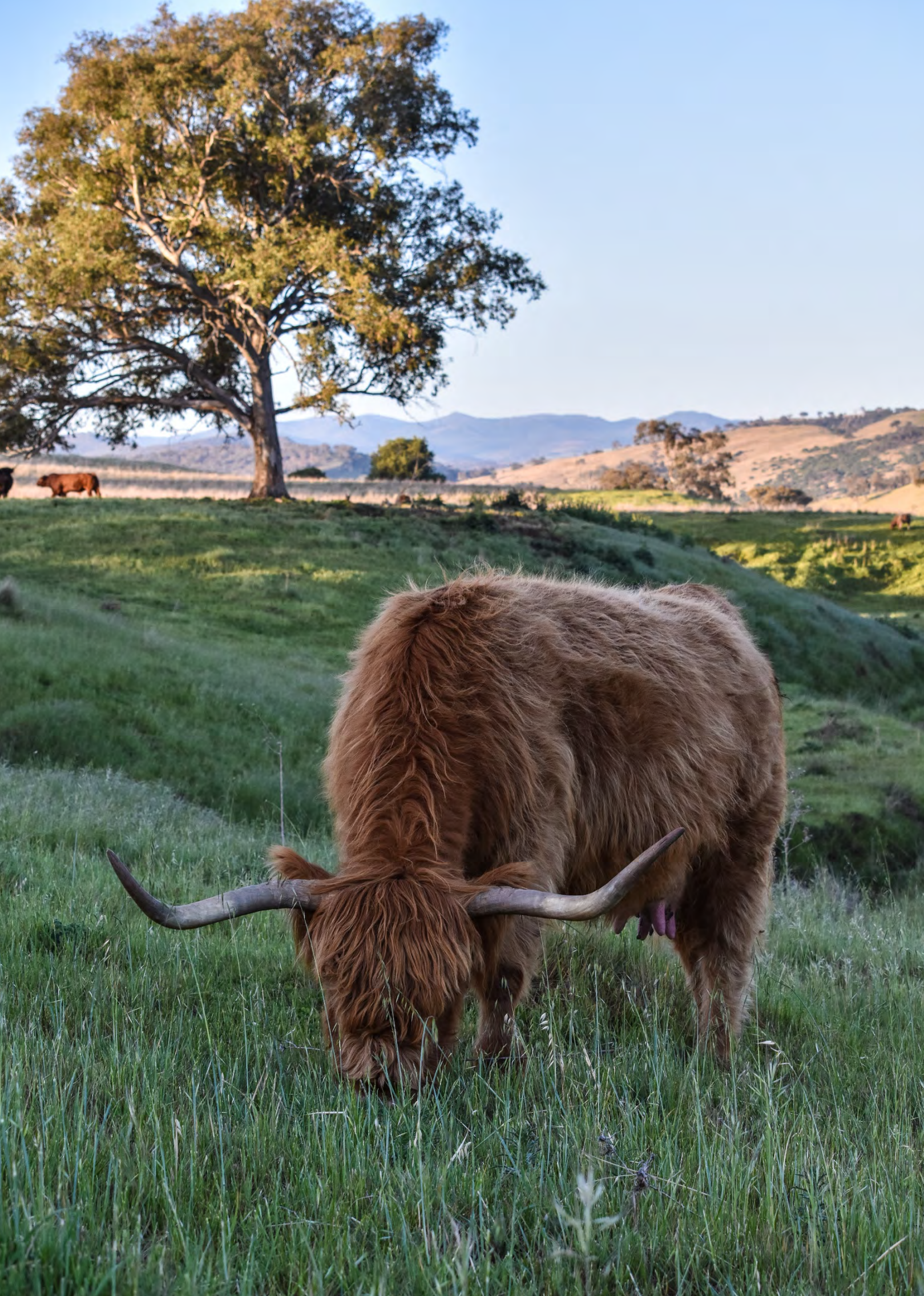
Highland beef is meat that is lean, yet well-marbled and flavoursome, with little wasteful top layer fat (the Highland is insulated by long hair rather than a thick layer of fat).

For many years Highland and Highland crosses have quietly achieved higher than average scores in any carcase competition around Australia. In the British Isles, Highland beef is recognised as the finest available,fetches premium prices, and this reputation is spreading as more and more beef producers utilise the advantages of this age-old breed.

Highland bulls are used as terminal sires over dairy and first- time beef heifers as the cross-bred calves thrive from the hybrid vigour produced. Calves from Highland bulls are generally of a smaller birth weight, which is then counter- balanced by quick growth and finishing off.

Today's cattle market is demanding. Regardless of whether you are a small farm with only a few head, or a large commercial operation with hundreds, your objective should be the same; to produce a fine cut of beef with as little effort and expense as possible. Highlands are the breed to help you do this. Whether your interest is in pedigree animals or cross-breeding, we are confident that the Highland Cattle will improve your bottom line.





Breed Standard

Type

The animal should be of good length, depth and elevation, with neck long enough to give the head a good lift. The head, horns, neck, body, hindquarters and legs should be in perfect balance. On the move the Highlander should show plenty of style, character and quality and look as if it is "going places".

Head

The head should be proportionate to the body of the animal, and broad between the eyes, while short from the eyes to the point of the muzzle. The hair between the horns, known as the dossan, should be wide, long - reaching to the muzzle-and thick. The eyes should be bright and clear. The muzzle must be broad with large distending nostrils and strong under-jaw with teeth meeting upper pad evenly (not over- or under- shot). The ears should be symmetrical and well formed. No cropping of the ear is allowed.

Horns

The 'horns in the bull should be strong, but not too heavy (heavy horns are undesirable), and come out of the head level, curving slightly forward. Above all, the head and horns of a bull must give the impression of strength and masculinity.

The horns of the cow take a number of different shapes, but in general must be slightly lighter than the bull. Coming out of the head more or less horizontally, they should not curve downwards too much before rising, and fining down considerably about six inches from the tip and up to the end of the horn denoting femininity.

In the case of both cow and bull the horns should by symmetrical.

Neck

The neck should be of good length, allowing for natural lift to the head. A bull should show masculinity, but this development should not be excessive at an early age. The throat and neck should be clean-cut without excess skin. The brisket should not be excessive or too fatty.

Body and Hindquarters

From the shoulder back, the top of the animal should be straight, with no hollows, and as wide as possible - particularly between the hooks, or hips, and should not be too hard, which indicates bone on which no flesh will develop. It should not narrow over the heart, i.e. behind the shoulders, nor should the shoulders be too prominent.

The body should be long and proportionately long from the hook to the tail end of the spine in relation to good length from shoulder to-hook. It is important that there should be no sloping of the spine from the hooks back to the tailend of the spine - it should be level and the tail set in smoothly to the body, not creating a knob or lump.

The plates on either side of the tail-end of the spine should be a good follow-through from hooks to pins, the latter being well set up and wide. The animal must not be flat sided so the ribs need to be well sprung. The thighs should be well developed and be as full as possible.

Finally, when viewed from the rear, the body should not appear to be split up to any great height by the legs, and the hindquarters should appear fairly square.

When viewed from the side, the body should appear rectangular.

Legs

The legs should be sturdy and straight with good bone and a good covering of hair, and the animal should be seen to be walking freely and easily, the legs not brushing against each other but set well outside the body.

The four legs should each be placed at a corner of the body, the front ones straight when seen from the front or side and well apart; the back should be as the front, but slightly hooked when seen from the side. If hooked too much it becomes a 'sickle' hock, which is most undesirable, as are all structural faults. When viewed from the side of the animal the back of the hock should be in line with the pin bone on the same side.

The legs should lead down into well-set and large even hooves, and when on the move the hind feet should step into the tracks made by the front feet for perfect traction.

Hair

Highland cattle have two coats of hair. The outer coat is long and strong and is presumably meant by nature to keep the winter weather away from the skin. The undercoat is soft and fluffy to keep their bodies warm. This undercoat does not grow long to renew the outer coat, but each coat is separately renewed.

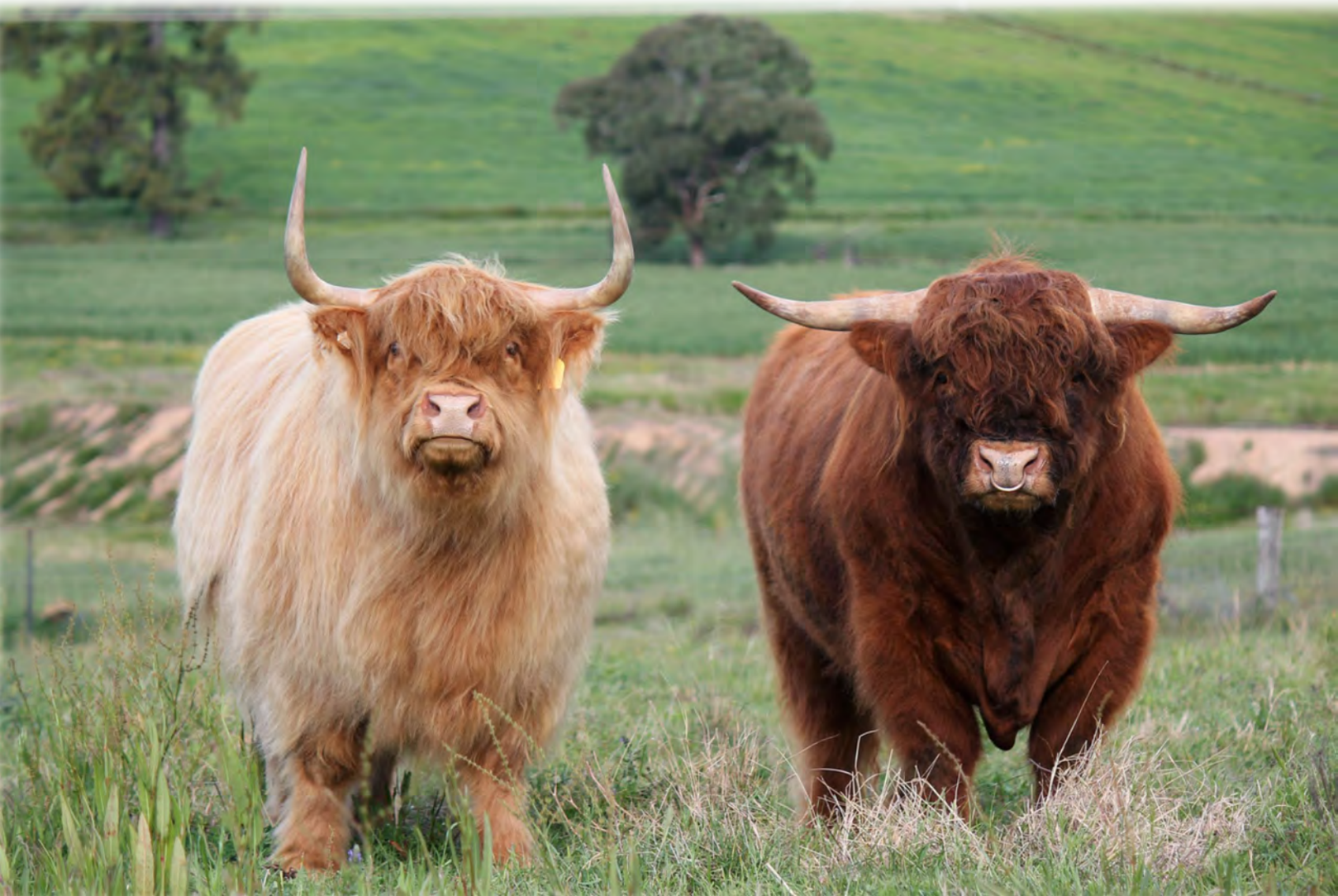
The Australian Highland Cattle Society's official Highland coat colours range from black through brindle, dun, silver dun, red, yellow, white and parti-colour.

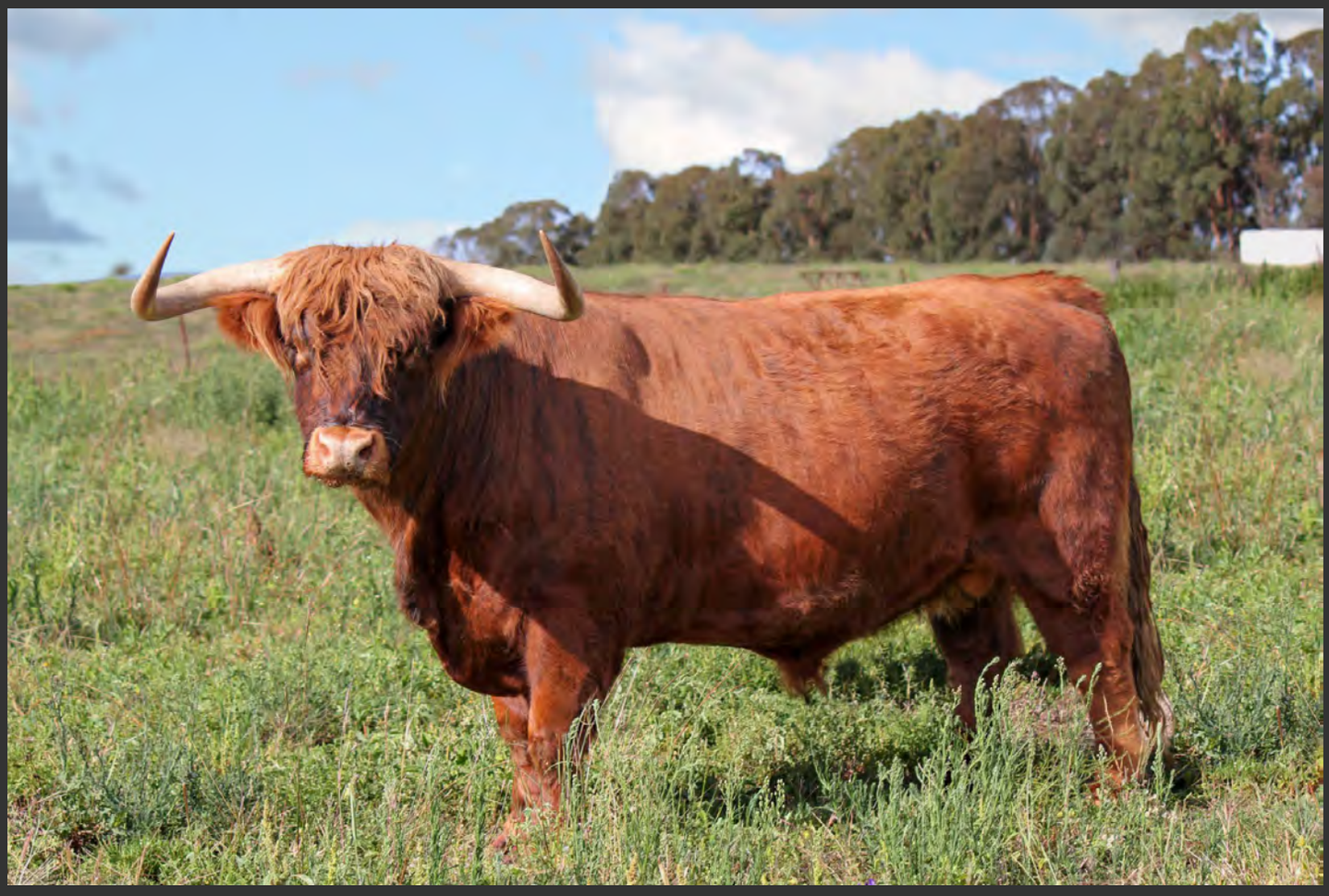
Sheath and Scrotum

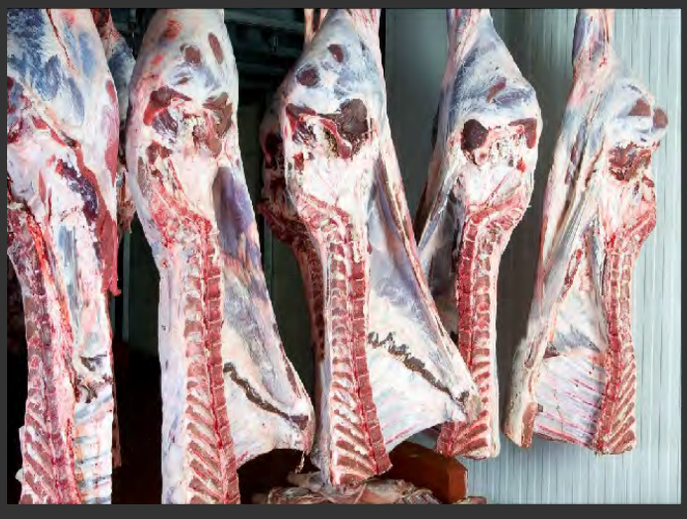
Bulls' sheaths should not be loose or pendulous. The scrotum should contain two testicles well let down of good and even size.

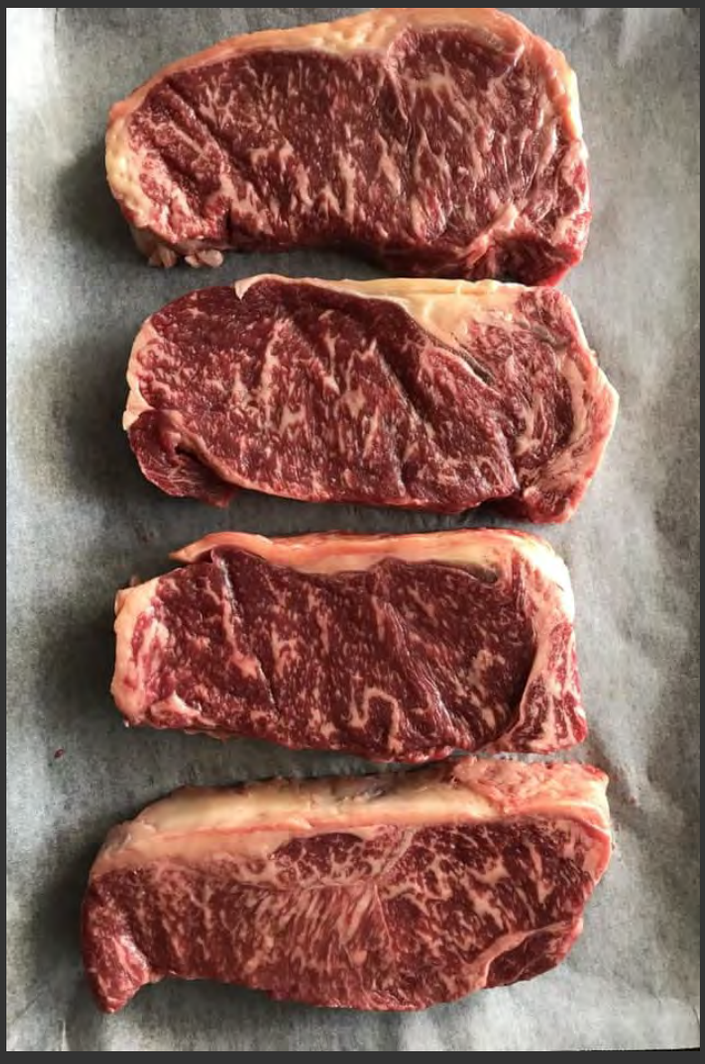
Udder

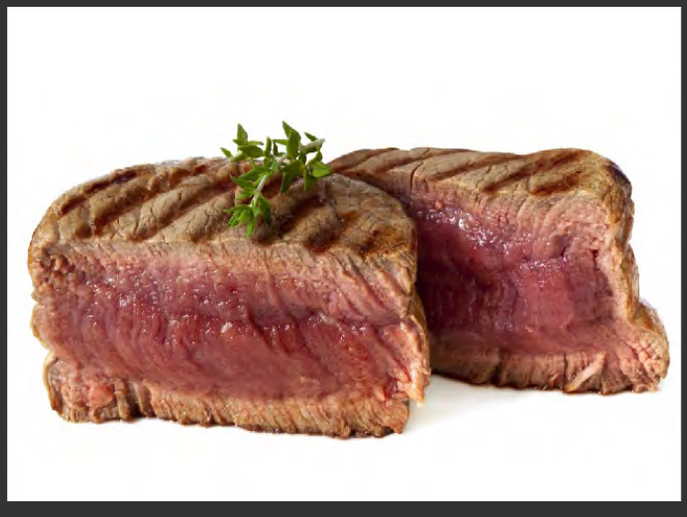
The udder on females should not be fleshy, coming well forward in line with the body and well up behind, with four teats well apart and of even moderate size.











Highland Beef

Highland cattle have developed into an efficient and versatile beef breed. They are natural foragers in a variety of terrains and years of breeding have adapted them to out-wintering in the severest of climates. Being largely self-sufficient, they require minimal maintenance.

Highlanders are fertile and usually calve outside unaided and unattended. Capable of surviving in the harshest weather conditions, Highland cattle thrive where other breeds would fail. The Highland cow is long-lived and matures on low input natural feed. The breed's outstanding hardiness minimises costs and many farmers are now recognising the inherent qualities of Highland cattle as a beef breed because of its ability to efficiently convert rough fodder into low-fat, high-quality beef. Because of the excellent way Highland cattle pass on their many virtues to their progeny, they have become the basis of many breeding programmes for beef with that sought-after quality.

Naturally Reared, Naturally Tasty

The considerable attributes of Highland Cattle make them the first choice to produce specialist beef. Their non-selective grazing and foraging habits enhance the flavour of the beef. This is because the composition of diet influences the products of digestion and hence the flavour and fat characteristics of the beef, both of which have profound effect on eating quality. Highland Cattle do well roaming freely and enjoy a diet of natural grass and fodder. The wonderful taste of the Highland beef produced is reflected in this diet of natural goodness because beef from grass and grass-fodder fed animals, as opposed to grain-fed animals, generally produces a better quality meat. Feed can alter the fatty acid composition, flavour and oxidative stability of meat, and forage-based feeds tend to give lower saturated concentrations of fatty acids. Grass-fed animals therefore produce ultimate flavour beef.

Full Flavour Beef

Pure Highland beef is slow-maturing, lean, firm, and very low in fat, while at the same time rich in protein and iron. It is unsurpassed for flavour, tenderness and juiciness that comes from having just the right amount of marbling through the meat to give that succulent flavour so typical of old-fashioned traditional beef. It lends itself magnificently to a range of cooking methods and different recipes.

CUT	FAT g/100g	CHOLESTEROL mg/100g	PROTEIN g/100g	IRON mg/100g
Pure Highland Rump	**4.2**	**45.8**	**22.4**	**2.0**
MAFF ALL Beef Rump	13.5	63.0	18.9	2.3
Pure Highland Shoulder	**4.7**	**42.2**	**21.6**	**1.9**
MAFF ALL Beef Shoulder	10.6	63.0	20.2	2.1
Pure Highland Sirloin	**7.1**	**37.0**	**21.8**	**2.3**
MAFF ALL Beef Sirloin	22.8	67.0	16.6	1.6
Pure Highland All Cuts	**4.5**	**40.9**	**20.7**	**2.1**
MAFF ALL Cuts	15.6	64.3	18.6	2.0

Table of results taken from a study published in 1997 by a team of scientists led by Dr Ivy Barclay, Head of the Food Science & Technology Department of the Scottish Agricultural College (The Beef Site). The comparatives for the study were taken from all beef results published by Mccance and Widdowson of the Ministry for Agriculture Fisheries and Foods (MAFF).

Contacts

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Our mission at Australian Highland Cattle Society is:
to preserve heritage, protect integrity and advance Highland Cattle in Australia through herd registration, education, promotion and fellowship.