

Weidefestival 2006

Kerry E Long

This biennial European show for Beef Cattle and associated businesses and products takes place in Bavaria, close to the historic and beautiful town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber. For the second time British livestock were represented, but this time the BLG (British Livestock Genetics Consortium) and the Longhorn Cattle Society took a much bigger joint stand, with more display boards, leaflets, AI information etc. The LCS was represented by me along with Andrew Gibb, and the BLG by their Executive Manager, Rob Wills - for whom this was a first visit – and David Bell who was with us two years ago.



Rothenburg

The Show was bigger this year, and incorporated the European Angus Congress which meant we got to know some of the British Angus breeders and their Chief Executive. They were kept busy with meetings and presentations but appreciated our stand for mini-meetings or a bit of relaxation.



The BLG & LCS stand

Sabine and Joe Zentis had done an amazing job in producing sixteen Longhorns belonging to them and also their friend Werner Schweitzer for the show classes, some of which were not even halter trained a couple of weeks before. It was no mean feat as the show is a good four hour drive from the Zentis farm. They had decided not to bring any of the newly imported bulls in case yet another journey was too stressful for them. Also they really had to be at home doing the job they were imported for! The cattle looked good and created a lot of interest. There were many other breeds present, though this year we missed the Hinterwalder with their owners in Bavarian national costume.



A Dwarf Zebu with her calf

The Longhorn Cattle Society scored a big hit with the three different leaflets we had translated (Sabine's work!) into German. Apart from a Galloway leaflet, ours were the only German leaflets on the stand and you could see eyes light up – even if they didn't

really want to know about Longhorns! A lot were taken and I hope some people will come back to us as seriously interested. A man from Luxembourg bought two junior heifers from Werner and will join the Society, while another restaurateur from Luxembourg wanted a steady supply of Longhorn beef and probably live animals as well. We were let down by the Show's organisers who promised a girl from their office to act as translator on our stand, they said she was too busy to be spared. David does a great job with his improving schoolboy German and we called on Sabine and Joe when possible.



Sabine selling the breed

Rob Wills was very impressed with the Show and he and David took twenty four enquiries from ten different countries. There would have been more people than usual from other countries because of the Angus Conference, but what an opportunity. We felt there was a need for some information on sheep as there were several requests.



Castlevew cows with calves

While we were at this show the news broke of the Bluetongue outbreak in Holland, close to the border with Germany and close to the Zentis' home. Joe, being a vet, was besieged with phone calls from anxious clients. Was there to be cull of infected animals or whole herds? Was it like Foot and Mouth all over again? Everyone was very worried and it seems this is yet another effect of global warming as the midges which carry Bluetongue and pass it to sheep and cattle are not usually found north of the Mediterranean. The Castleview and Hilltop herds are now under a movement restriction, but thankfully are showing no signs of the disease which is on several farms close by.

It was an excellent, useful Show and we must build on our contacts and help those keen to keep and breed British cattle. We also need to make joining our Society and registering cattle more European friendly.

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A delegation from Luxembourg has visited the Zentis farm and it was agreed to send cattle for breeding as well as cattle for slaughter once restrictions are lifted and veterinary agreement can be reached.