



# The Dexter Bulletin

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## A chronological account of the World Dexter Congress by Wes and Jane Patton

*Note! The following is information taken from our notes taken during the congress and may vary somewhat from the written proceedings when they arrive. We thought that our members who were not able to attend might like to know about some of the things we experienced during this well planned and expertly conducted conference.*

**AUGUST 27** - Jane and I arrived at Cirencester, England and the Royal Agricultural College on the evening of August 27 after enjoying the beauty and heritage of the Cotswold area of England. We had arrived in London on the 24<sup>th</sup> and rented a car and headed north to the center of sheep country. Driving on the left side of the road proved to be a challenge, but with some good maps and Jane's expert copilotage we soon were enjoying a new scene at every turn.

Upon arrival at the Congress we finally met "the other" Rosemary, Rosemary Brown, who played a major part in the expert job of organizing the first World Dexter Congress. What a delightful person she is and immediately she started to introduce us to countless people we had heard about but had never met. Soon we were settled in our college dormitory room, which brought back memories to us all. Later that evening we met up with other members of the ADCA contingent, along with other delegates from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, S. Africa, Denmark and Germany and headed to the local pub for dinner and refreshments. It was a time to get acquainted, and to renew old friendships.

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The champion cow with her owner Di Smith of Dover.



The UK judge, Piet Wilke and a red heifer named Cinnamon.



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## Dexters As 4-H Market Steers

by Joanie Storck

My husband and I started a herd of Dexters 3 years ago, because a 4-H'er came to us with some information about Dexter steers for 4-H projects. Marvin Johnson, Region 6 Director, was giving away a steer to be shown. We requested more information from him, and went to his ranch, in Elkhart, to look at his cattle. We were so impressed with the Dexters that we bought the beginning of our herd. In researching the information available on Dexters, there was one thing that really stuck in our minds: "be careful how much you advertise; the demand may exceed the availability." We have certainly found that to be true. We just completed our County Fair, and the TV and newspaper publicity created by the first Dexter Market Steer Class has got our phone ringing daily by people from all over the state wanting to look at and price Dexter Cattle.

We would like to share some information with current and potential Dexter breeders. Our purpose of getting into Dexters was to introduce these cattle to the smaller 4-H'ers and the small acreage landowners in and around the Wichita area.

We started out by giving a steer to a young 4-H'er to show in 1997. This generated enough interest that we sold a steer to seven year old 4-H'er, Cutter Cole, to show in the 1998 fair. He chose a short leg calf, which gained 1.5 lbs. daily, to a show weight of 445 lbs. His plan is to break him to drive and ride, and we have no doubt that he will do just that. Also showing in the 1998 show was the original exhibitor, Amy Avery. She showed two long leg steers. These steers gained 2 lbs. daily, to show weights of 500 and 520 lbs. each. The three steers were 12, 14 and 15 months old at show date. None of the 3 steers were quite finished, so we learned, they needed to start with older steers in order to get them finished by the middle of July.

We also learned that if you are going to promote your Dexters as 4-H Market Steers, you need to start by researching your County requirements from the Co. extension agent, or recruit a very dedicated 4-H parent leader to help, as we did. Our grateful appreciation to Shannon Avery! It also helps if you have a market for the finished steers. One of the reporters I was being interviewed by asked "How are you convincing these 'big' cattle breeders of Kansas that you have something they would be interested in?" I explained to her that "it is like trying to 'sell' the rancher that has always driven a ¾ ton, 4 wheel drive, F series Ford a Toyota! There is a place and a purpose for both of them!" If you conquer these hurdles, then be prepared to have enough steers, because once the parents and children have handled and petted these steers, they sell themselves.

In conclusion, the 4-H'ers were very happy with the Dexter calves, as they were very easy to break, easy to train, and very easy to fatten. We, the

breeders, are very pleased with the Dexters because they take minimal care on small acreage. We run seven head of cows, and a bull, on just 8 acres of ground, with just a two wire electric fence around it. We put up approximately 1½ big bales of hay, per head, for winter feed, then supplement with a few range cubes just to keep them coming in to visit. This way, we can check the animals' health, and keep them people friendly. We've never had to pull a calf, or had any kind of health problems with any of our Dexters. We'd like to encourage other breeders to promote their cattle as 4-H market steers, this way we are educating future breeders and meat buyers. ❖

**1999 Annual Meeting  
July 16, 17, & 18th  
Wichita, Kansas**



**Dexter cattle competed for the first time at this year's Sedgwick County Fair.**

*Photograph courtesy of Cami McAndrew/The Times-Sentinel.*




## World Congress

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For example, that was where we first saw Professor Wilke and his wife from South Africa and recounted the times he spent with the ADCA at the New Hampshire and California meetings. Many of the participants were suffering from jet lag (Robin Hunt from Australia said that he had been awake for 40 hours and had eaten seven meals on his trek from down under) so everyone retired early that night.

**AUGUST 28** - Everyone was up early on Friday morning to eat breakfast and get on the coach (bus) to go to one of Prince Charles farms. As it turned out it wasn't the Highgrove farm where he is known to frequent, but to Broadmead, a part of the Duchy of Cornwall, the estates which provide income for the Prince of Wales. The Duchy includes 128,000 acres of land in 22 counties of southwest England. The farm we visited along with the Highgrove farm is being converted to an organic farm and is farmed with a combination of crops and livestock. There are five breeds of sheep on the farm, including some rare breeds, 130 Ayrshire milking cows, 97 replacement Ayrshire heifers and three rare Gloucester heifers. The tour took all morning and involved a lot of walking to see the cattle, pastures where they grazed and the crops in their rotation to promote sustainability and maintain the organic status. It is quite probable that the specifications for qualifying to have an organic product in England differs somewhat from those in the US. They had just started an organic vegetable plot this year and plan to begin a free range pig operation this fall. All in all, it was a very informative tour and a chance to compare and contrast production practices and problems with what we are familiar with.

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A cow class giving an idea of size, color, showing and audience.



Cow & calf - note the showing, the show uniforms & the countryside.



Jim Johnson, Lee McIntosh and Donna Martin from the U.S. discussing what they had seen on the visit to the farm of Prince Charles.



## A chronological account of the World Dexter Congress.

Following lunch the Congress reconvened in the lecture hall for a report from each country on the status of their organization and Dexter populations.

Robin Hunt reported that though the Australians had imported Dexters around the 1900's, they had died out during the depression and were not reintroduced until 1979 when Bill Butcher imported semen into the country. In 1987 the Australasian Dexter Association was formed and bulls, semen and embryos were imported. Presently there are 697 members of the association with 5099 head of cattle on the up grading program with 800 head of purebred cattle registered.

The Organization has 10 council members and 17 regional promotional groups. Dexters are shown at all major shows and many regional shows.

Present council objectives include blood typing and/or DNA imprinting all Dexter breeding stock, getting data on feeding out Dexter X-bred cattle, determining the gene location of achondroplasia, setting up a classification system and compiling all the herd book information on a CD ROM.

Winona Crapp reported that Dexter cattle have been in Canada for more than 100 years. The first imports were from the UK. In 1960 cattle from Canada were registered in the ADCA since there was not registry association in Canada at that time. In 1986 the Canadian Dexter Association was formed.

The Canadian Association regulations specify that all white markings on Dexter cattle must be recorded on the registration papers. All bulls with semen available for sale must be blood typed and there are no dwarf gene carrying bulls in AI service. Short legged animals are accepted for registration. This year the Dexter Association has become a member of a joint classification board and herd and individual animal scores are being compiled.

The Board of Directors are composed of six members and the Dexters are registered by the secretary of the Canadian Livestock Records Association.

Gregg Federov reported that Dexters were imported to Germany in 1965 but by 1979 there were only two live calves, both bulls. In '79 and again in '86 animals were imported from the UK. In 1993 a Dexter Association was founded and in '98 there were 50 members with about 250 animals registered. Members from Switzerland and Austria and also included in the association. The Council is composed of five elected members.

Nancy Edge reported that New Zealand has only 3.8 million people and 1 million of these live in the capital city of Auckland. In 1960 the government prevented the importation of semen because of the lethal dwarf gene. Bill Butcher arranged for semen importation in 1970 from bulls not carrying the gene. Semen was imported from two bulls in 1984. The small number of bulls available for AI us has led to very close line breeding in NZ. In 1985 the first third cross Dexter heifer was born and the New Zealand breeders joined with Australia in the Australasian Dexter Association. In 1988 the first "purebred" 4<sup>th</sup> cross bull was born and in 1990 semen from Saturn of Knotting was imported.

In 1994 a New Zealand Dexter Association was formed with 20 charter members. To encourage new members, fees are kept low by a volunteer registration secretary. There are six council members including the secretary and meetings are held every two years alternating between the north and south islands.

In 1998 there were 94 members of the association. Objectives of the Council include formation of new local groups, revision of the constitution, raising purebred basis of bulls to the 6<sup>th</sup> generation and reduction of animals with white

marking to the lowest Grade 1 group.

South Africa imported Dexters in 1917 and 1938 and in 1959 the South African Dexter Association was formed. Tanya Breedt indicated that the achondroplasia problem was studied by the Universities and by the early 1980's there was a marked decrease in the number of bulldog calves born.

There are presently 129 bulls and 1242 females registered with an average herd size of 23.5 animals. The Dexters are milked in dairies in S. Africa and embryos and semen are exported to other countries.

In S. Africa average bull height is 45 inches and average cow height is 41 inches. Only black and red animals are accepted for registry. There are about 70 purebred herds and 140 commercial hers.

Association objectives include periodic revision of standards of the breed and an excellent program of educating and evaluating judges for Dexter shows.

Jim Johnson reported on the history of Dexter cattle in the USA. Between 1905 and 1912 over 200 head of Dexters were imported from the UK into Kentucky, New York and Michigan. Other importation's occurred in the 1950's from the UK and in 1982 from Canada.

The American Dexter Cattle Association was established in 1911 by Professor Plum from Ohio State University. In 1921 there were 63 bulls and 260 cows registered in the first herd book.

In 1981 the first AI animals were registered after much discussion and controversy. There have been only five national shows and sales held in the US.

There are presently 9000 animals registered in the US association. In '97 there were 500 members who processed 613 registrations, 500 transfers and over 600 inquiries were received at the Association office concerning Dexter cattle.

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## A chronological account of the World Dexter Congress.

Jim reported that concerns of the US association presently include the increasing size of Dexter cattle and the increasing appearance of white markings. The US has not adopted Dexter standards only guide lines for breeders.

Denmark reported that in 1986 Dexter cattle were imported from the UK. From '91 to '97 the number of herds increased from 26 to 80 and the number of cattle from 155 to 589. The Dexter Society was formed in 1987. The strategy of the society is to avoid bulldog calves, define the ideal Dexter type and then breed for type and production. The Society has set up a linear assessment which scores 19 characters. They also have a breeding value index which includes calving ease and weight, number of services, linear score, slaughter values and performance testing.

Presently the Society has 192 registered calves, 97.9% easy of calving, 4.9% stillborn, age at calving 28.6 months, and average calving interval of 391 days.

Popularity of Dexters in Denmark is due to their small size, economic source of meat and family milk, low building and feeding costs and high meat quality. Dexter meat receives 50-70% higher price than other beef.

There are now 500 breeders of Dexter cattle in the United Kingdom and there has been a very rapid increase in the number of cattle since 1976 according to John Garratt. The following statistics were compiled from a survey answered recently by 124 breeders. Thirty six percent of the people raise Dexters because they are easy to manage and have a higher return/hectare. Under another heading: 36% noted the character of Dexter, 24% their hardiness, 17% the rarity or traditional nature of the breed and 14% the quality of beef as their reason for raising the breed.

Eighteen percent of breeders breeding 24% of the cattle breed only non-short cattle while 3% of the

breeders breeding 8% of the cattle breed short legged to short legged. Thirty five percent of the breeders use their own bull, 25% us AI, 4% use a borrowed bull. The average herd size is 12.1 animals. Ninety four percent of breeders use Dexters to suckle only their own cow's calf, 13% use some milk for house use and only 9% raise more than one calf. This low number is due to new BSE regulations limiting export of beef from the UK. Breeders in the UK are concerned about the very rapid recent increase in cattle numbers and are encouraging use of lower quality females to cross breed to other beef breeds and for slaughter. The survey indicates many breeders are consuming these females for home slaughter.

After dinner and more information exchange we retired to our dorm rooms for the night.

**AUGUST 29<sup>TH</sup>** - Another early morning, as this was the day for the long awaited and anticipated Dexter show held nearby at Fosse Hill Farm. Over 100 head of Dexters from all over Britain were entered. The best of the best were there to participate in the prestigious event. The first heifer class was large and difficult to judge. The showing and judging is somewhat different than in the US. The cattle were very clean, but there is no trimming/clipping which would alter the cattle in any way. The feet are not trimmed for the most part because the breed is said to have strong feet. The showing was done in a good sized outside ring constructed of posts with rope strung between them. The cattle enter the ring and circle in an counter clock wise direction and then line up on the same side of the ring. Then one at a time the cattle are led toward the judge and he assesses the way they walk and their breed type. The cattle are stopped before him and he handles them to determine skin and hair characteristics, teat placement and

number, leg set and anything else that can be determined by close inspection. Some of us in the states would have to do a better job of gentling our cattle to allow the judge to feel the udder from the flank and between the hind legs as they do in England. The showpersons wear a white frock (lab coat) but do not use a show stick to set feet nor do most of them do any showing while the judge is working on other animals individually. The whole group was quite amiable and chatted with us on ring side and other showman as the show was proceeding. The judge from the UK who set the pace was reluctant to give reasons although he chatted with each handler individually about the animals. Others of us deviated from that pattern as do some of the other UK judges, I am told.

There were two heifer classes, a bred heifer class, two mature milking cow classes and a dry mature cow class. There was a Junior Champion chosen and then a Grand Champion Female. There were two bull classes then a Grand Champion Bull was selected. A Supreme Champion animal was then named. Beautiful trophies sponsored by many of the country Dexter associations were presented. The Grand Champion Female and Supreme Champion Dexter was a mature milking cow shown by Diane Smith of Dover. She (owner) was affectionately referred to as Lady Di of Dover. The Grand Champion bull was shown by Mrs. Jay Knight of Sway, Lymington. The first place group of three was shown by Miss Jane Paynter, Yelden, Beds.

With the exception of only a few animals, they were all of the short legged variety. The most notable exception was the Grand Champion Bull, Apple Joe. All the Dexters shown were very uniform in their type and kind. The Dexters shown were mostly black but there were also some beautiful red animals.

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## A chronological account of the World Dexter Congress.

The first three classes were won by red heifers. There were very few dun animals shown. The females by far outnumbered the males and were also much higher in quality. In the female classes it was very difficult to find a poor quality animal and the uniformity and quality ran very deep. In the bull classes the Champion Bull was by far the superior animal and several of the bulls had some structural problems.

That afternoon, we returned to the college for presentations by leading scientists. The first speaker was Dr. John Williams, a molecular geneticist in charge of Bovine Genome mapping and the Dexter cattle genome project at Roslin Institute, Edinburgh, Scotland. Dr. Williams reported that if the bulldog condition was controlled by one gene the expected number of bulldog calves born to short legged cows bred to short legged bulls would be 1:4. Using English data from 388 calvings of SL X SL, the results were 68 bulldog calves born or 1:4.7. The slightly lower figure of actual bulldog incidence could be due to uncounted early abortions or incorrect identification of short legged animals. Therefore bulldogs are probably caused by a single gene.

Strategies for identifying the bulldog gene include: testing known defect carriers, comparing the genosomes of unaffected, affected and bulldog animals and gene mapping these differences.

It seemed that the Dexter bulldog was similar to the human dwarf condition but when tested the bulldog gene was not in the same location as the human gene causing dwarfism.

Another logical location for the bulldog gene would be in the location of genes controlling the changing of cartilage tissue to bone tissue. Further testing of long and short legged animals is necessary to see if the collagen to bone formation of SL animals is intermediate

between bulldog and long legged animals. The gene controlling collagen formation in humans has been mapped but has not been identified in cattle.

Studies are now being done on families of bulldog carriers using information from the UK herd book.

The next speaker was Beryl Rutherford owner of the Woodmagic Dexter herd in the UK. Beryl reported that Captain Sutin was the first one to suggest that long legged bulls bred to short legged cows eliminated the bulldog problem. Beryl has found that the long and short legged condition are not related to other good characteristics of the Dexter such as milking and longevity.

In Ireland at least four strains of "black cows" were developed including the Kerry and the beefier Dexter type.

Beryl said that when looking at the day light under Dexter calves, if it is square the calf will be long legged. If the light is a rectangle (longer than tall) the calf will be short legged.

Mr. Andrew Sheppy from the Cobythorn herd in UK reported on his genetic and breeding research of Dexter cattle since 1970. Andrew has studied the genetics of size, bulldog calves, polling and color in Dexters. According to Andrew size is controlled by many gene pairs. Bulldog syndrome is due to the shortening of bones, the dominant gene causes shortening of bones while the double recessive causes the lethal bulldog condition. This same condition is found in three breeds of poultry.

Using data from 1800 Dexter calvings, Andrew demonstrated conclusive figures showing the ratio of LL:SL:BD of 1:2:1 which would support the one gene theory of bulldog inheritance.

Andrew discussed polled Dexters and expressed the opinion that polled could arise from a mutation and/or from cross breeding

influence. He seriously doubted the occurrence of two polled animals appearing simultaneously in the UK at one time.

Andrew demonstrated the inheritance of the black, dun and red color in Dexters. Black is dominant and red and dun are recessive. When crossing a red and a dun, the first generation you get black and by crossing these black animals you get a ratio of 9 black:3 red:3 dun and one recessive red and recessive dun which will be a different color.

Some of the color changes which are appearing in Dexters are animals being born one color and changing to another by adulthood, the mottled red color (as seen in the Guernsey breed, dark color around the face (as seen in Jersey and Aryshires) and white markings. While white on the underline is common more white is appearing on the body, head and as sock markings on the legs. This recessive white spotting is found in Jerseys and Shorthorns. Individual white hairs on the body can be due to age or to influence of the Jersey according to Andrew.

The next speaker was Dr. Peter Harper, the senior Research Veterinarian for the New South Wales Department of Agriculture Research Station. Dr. Harper discussed other genetic diseases affecting cattle in Australia, including those in Angus, Polled Herefords and Fresian cattle. Dr. Harper said that the bulldog gene expresses itself only in the long bone growth and causes interference with ossification of this bone. Twenty per cent of Dexters in Australia are carriers. These carriers were introduced from three sires used in AI.

That evening was the Medieval Banquet, which some of us were a bit apprehensive about. However, it turned out to be one of the most memorable parts of our visit.

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## A chronological account of the World Dexter Congress

We were entertained in the Tithe Barn before the banquet by four musicians with musical instruments somewhat hard to recognize and a Court Jester on stilts. When we moved to the banquet hall, King Henry the VIII and Queen Ann Bolin joined us. We ate on plates of baked bread and supped on roast Dexter and chicken. We were entertained throughout the meal by Lord Chamberlain and the musicians and singers. The jester juggled and ate fire for our entertainment. The banquet hall at the college was perfect for the feast with its huge beamed ceiling, long trestle tables and lists of college graduates since the 1700's.

Throughout the congress, during each break, at each meal and before and after lectures, the halls buzzed with conversation about Dexter cattle. The various delegates, though recognizable by their accents and attire, all made an effort to meet and talk to everyone attending the congress. The exchange of information about Dexters, genetics, disease, showing, feeds and types were thoroughly discussed and argued while measurable amounts of ale and beer were consumed.

**August 30** - Sunday morning found us again piling onto the coach to head to Fosse Hill Farm for the linear assessment discussion. Professor Wilke outlined the South African linear assessment plan and discussed each point of conformation covered. Mannie Oberholzer, president of the South African Dexter Cattle Society described their method of insuring qualified judges through a training and internship program. They have also published a judges manual which includes history of the breed, anatomy, standards of excellence, a list of undesirable qualities and disqualifications, weighing of faults and the role of the judge in the ring. They have also established a

judging course at the ag colleges and make sure that Dexters are included in the training. Helen Short and Mike Hasshill from the U.K. discussed Dexter judging and the training of judges in the U.K. Mike acts as a clearing house for shows which include Dexter classes. He tries to spread the judges around the country and move them to different locations and times to insure fresh opinions from show to show. Morgen Hansen from Denmark, who does classification for all beef breeds in his country then demonstrated the system on some of the show cattle.

We then returned to the college and after lunch had a picture of all of the delegates taken at the front of the Royal Agriculture College.

Patrick Curran, author of "Dexter and Kerry Cattle" gave the history of the Kerry and Dexter breeds in the U.K. and Europe. He explained that truth depends on facts and the truth about the beginning of the Dexter breed is not totally clear due to the turmoil in Ireland during the formative years of the breed.

Lawrence Alderson, executive director of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, spoke about the Dexter cattle origin and relationship with other breeds. Many of you will find his paper quite interesting when the proceedings of the congress arrive, as he reports a more distant relationship of Dexter and Kerry cattle than is normally assumed. Through blood grouping studies, he explains that Dexters may be more closely related to several other breeds, including Angus, Shorthorn, Ayrshire and Galloway than they are to the Kerry. Therefore, his conclusion was that there is a large variation in Dexter genetics due partly to their unknown origin and to other genetic influences along the way.

Andrew Sheppy then talked about bloodlines, breed structure and the influence of A.I. in Dexters. Because of the small holding atmosphere within which Dexters

evolved in the U.K., there were many influences which resulted in the development of what he suggests are eight bloodlines of cattle. His paper should be on your must read list as he points out a variety of influences on our breed, a narrowing of the genetic pool at one point because of diminished cattle numbers and other facts and points of view.

Next, the World Dexter Breeds Standards committee met in closed session to establish points of the ideal Dexter which all countries could agree upon. Each country sent two representatives and the meeting was handled in a very professional manner to insure that the most progress possible could be made. It was soon evident that there were several common ideals that all of the delegates could agree on and some that some countries could not. As it turned out, the English Society guidelines were used as a beginning and modifications were made on that. The points that everyone could agree upon were included in the final paper, while the points which one country or another could not agree to were left out to be included in the guidelines/standards of that country. The final product will be sent out in the proceedings or separately. To some readers it will seem too simple, but we have to remember, each country has to reserve room for traits they deem essential. No one should feel restricted with the ideal points agreed upon by all nations.

While the breed standards committee met, the rest of the delegates went back out to the cattle barns and Morgan Hansen talked more about the Danish system of linear assessment and actually went through the classification of several types of Dexter cattle.

Each country had the opportunity to put up a display which provided information about their Dexter organization and industry. There were some outstanding displays and tons of information

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## A chronological account of the World Dexter Congress

made available to everyone in that area. Video tapes of Dexter management played, printed material was available and best of all, lots of discussions among the delegates took place in that common area.

**August 31-** Monday morning the lectures began early with a discussion of BVD and mucosal disease by Graham Cawley. He went into great detail about the virus disease and its transmission, symptoms and how animals become carriers. He also discussed vaccination and management systems to control the disease. In addition, Philip Comer, who is a risk analyst, detailed the statistical method of determining the number of BSE cases which might result from eating beef on the bone in the U.K. There, all animals must be less than 30 months of age at slaughter and the meat must be removed from the bone to avoid consumption of the dorsal root ganglia near the spine which is associated with the condition.

Wes Patton then gave his talk entitled "Cute, Commercial and Conservation" concerning the uses of Dexters. He discussed the uses of Dexters as estate cattle, family cows, animals for rodeos, in youth projects and their use for excellent meat. Next, Melanie Rigley talked about the uses of Dexters to graze National trust lands in the White Cliffs Countryside project, including the chalk lands near the White Cliffs of Dover. She stressed that Dexters had reduced the coarse grasses and allowed native plants, including six rare orchid species to reappear in these areas. In her projects, the Dexters work well because of their small size, ease of handling and the fact that they provide a natural means of managing an environmentally sensitive area. Diana Smith, U.K. Dexter breeder, then talked about her use of Dexters to develop a home meat and milk sales business. She discussed the

difficult times U.K. beef farmers have gone through since the BSE flare up. The feeling that Dexters will become more and more successful in the next millennium because of their low input, low impact nature was expressed by this hard working, in-the-trenches Dexter breeder. Throughout the day, it was pointed out several times that there have been no cases of BSE in Dexters.

At the conclusion of the conference, delegates were asked to list the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities and objectives of the Dexter breed. Delegates listed: low input, small size, longevity, hardiness, adaptability, easy on environment, ease of calving, ease of handling and transporting, early maturity, high quality beef, good milking, BSE free, good mothers and prepotency in crossbreeding. Delegates listed Dexter weaknesses as: bull dog calves, poor feet and legs, lack of uniformity, limited bloodlines, doubtful pedigrees, horns, discredited on open market, color inconsistency, lack of culling and appeal to uneducated because of small size. Delegates listed as threats to the Dexter breed as: to

many cattle to fast, EEC could ban the breed because of the bull dog gene, proliferation of other breeds of miniature cattle and the loss of good traits by crossbreeding. Delegates listed the opportunities for the breed as: niche marketing, trade name marketing, terminal sires for heifers, use in developing countries, cooperation among societies to promote the breed (webpage, international AI and embryo sales organization), formulate a worldwide Dexter council and organize worldwide genetic research on the bulldog gene. Delegates suggested the following objectives: verification of all pedigrees through DNA testing, publish a worldwide gene pool database, get competitive quotes for DNA testing, establish international linear assessment or classification system, set up a worldwide system of training of judges based on the South African system and set up a worldwide organization or forum for the Dexter breed.

At the conclusion, Jim Johnson of the ADCA offered to set up a non-profit corporation status for a worldwide organization and to host the next World Dexter Congress in the U.S. in the year 2002. ❖



Typical countryside in the Cotswolds near where the Congress was held.



## Points to Ponder

### or what to breed for and what to breed out of our herds

by Carol Davidson

A cow that has good feet and legs, good thurl and pin location, good capacity, good udder attachment, and good hormone balance will live longer, be productive longer, cost less to feed, and is more likely to calve every year and not have problems doing it.

When I started with Dexters, I knew next to nothing about cattle. Slowly, I began to be able to distinguish between the probable (teat placement on bulls is inheritable) and the improbable (if you want heifers, the cow should face east while being bred). There are others out there who are starting out like I did, and judging by the tenor of the many phone calls I get, they too would like accurate information on what to look for and what to avoid.

Why is this information valuable to a breeder? Asking price, pride in our animals and responsibility to the breed are all affected by the quality of animal we breed. We, the owner-breeder, are in control of the destiny of Dexters. The breed is no longer rare, and the supply is now meeting or exceeding demand. It is no longer enough to just generate more animals; we must start to generate better animals if Dexters are going to continue to be sought after, and the breed—AND WE—prosper.

It doesn't matter if you have Dexters as pets or for production. With Dexters, we need to marry personality and temperament with function and production as, in the end, pet stock should be functional and productive and animals bred for use should be quiet and easy to handle.

Since a bull is "half the herd", his qualities are very important. Breeding to just any old bull can do irreparable harm. By the time his calves are old enough to calve themselves, and you discover the bull passed on defects, you have lost a minimum of three years and are stuck with a group of females you don't want (and, if they are smart, no one else wants, either). This is why it is so important to be really selective when you buy a bull, and why it is so important to register and use only those bull calves that you know will pass on good qualities. With cows, the same

applies: when you buy, how do you pick out the best animal in a group; when you sell, how do you know which to let go?

#### Calf Channel

Everyone talks about "easy calvers" when referring to cows, but bulls have calf channel criteria, too. The calf has a 50/50 chance of inheriting its sire's genes, so it is just as important to check out these measurements on the bull as it is on the cow. We don't usually think about the calf channel on a bull, but the factors that make up the channel are there, just the same. For both cow and bull, there are five main points to look for, plus several other related points.

1. Pin location: width.
2. Pin location: pin to underside of tail distance.
3. Tailhead placement.
4. Pelvic girdle: hook to pin slope.
5. Pelvic girdle: thurl angle.

#### Related points:

- muzzle width (pin width)
- chine height (body capacity)
- cow: shape and placement of vulva

#### 1 & 2:

#### Pin width and distance from underside of tail

Most of us know that pin width is an important factor in ease of calving. This is a horizontal (side to side) measurement, as seen from the rear. Also important is the vertical measurement of that area. The calf must be able to come out easily, and both dimensions are critical. If your cow has pins that are quite close together and/or if her pins are high and close to the underside of the tail where the spine separates from the body as seen from the side, then you are courting calving problems. Bulls have pins and tails, too, so these two measurements are also important on the sire.

#### 3. Tailhead placement

*High tailhead:* Not good. If the spine rises at the tailhead, the calf will have to come out up and over.

*Level tailhead:* Good with qualifications. If the tailhead is level, the calf is already heading downhill.

*Low tailhead:* This is less important, as long as there is still good distance between the pin and underside of the tail.

In some cases, a low tailhead aids calving, because the calf is heading downhill as soon as it is through the pelvic girdle.

#### 4 & 5: Pelvic girdle

*Hook to pin slope:* It is easier for the calf to go up, through and down than it is for it to go up, across, and then down. A slope from the hook down to the pin is desirable, because it allows the calf to start its descent as soon as it starts through the pelvic girdle. In some breeds, it was seen as desirable for pins to be the same level as the hook, and calving problems followed. A slope of not less than two inches, and not more than six is most desirable. Any less or anymore becomes extreme, and thus is as bad as no angle.

#### 5. Thurl angle

To ensure that the pelvic girdle is positioned correctly, and is of a shape that makes calving easy, an angle of 90 degrees from hook to thurl to pin is preferred. Also, the thurl should be equal distance between the hook and pin (horizontal measurement). If the thurl is not positioned thus, the pelvic girdle is tilted, and may cause calving problems. The thurl angle is in part dependent on the position of the pin bones: very low pins will affect the thurl angle, so all these measurements are interrelated, and must be considered together as one unit, rather than as independent items.

#### Further topics

Richard Henry has agreed to my writing a series of articles on the subject of breeding for quality, and how to select for it.

The next article will include the related points which complete *calf channel*; further installments will include: udder suspension; testicle placement, hang, shape and size and the relationship between testicles and udder; yield indicators; saleable meat yield calculations; the importance of hormone balance; capacity indicators; finish and excess fat indicators, etc. I'll also include a brief description of the three styles of system used for evaluation: linear classification (dairy), Expected Progeny Differences (beef), and new generic systems which work equally well for both types and for all breeds. ♦



## Points to Ponder:

## Calf Channel


1. Pin location: width 



Good

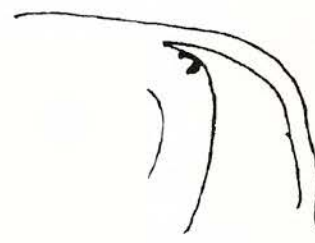


Bad


2. Pin location: pin to underside of tail 



Good



Bad

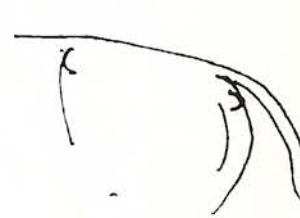
3. Tailhead placement 




High

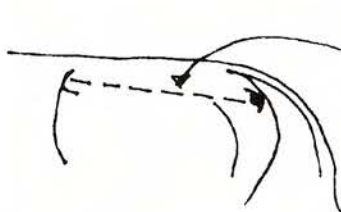


Level - Best

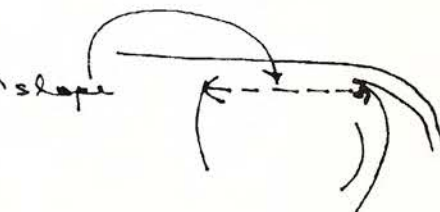


Low


4. Pelvic girdle: hook to pin slope 

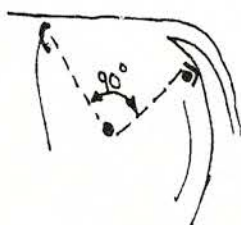


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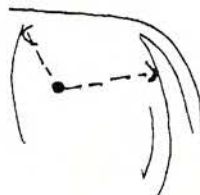


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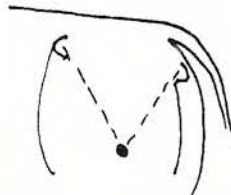
5. Pelvic girdle: thurl angle 



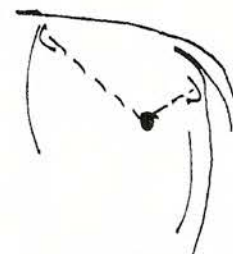
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Bad



Bad



Bad



## THE PARADOX OF THE PERFECT DEXTER

**By Dr. J.E. Beever, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

In the following I would like to address the genetic problem of lethal dwarfism (i.e., bulldog calves) within Dexters. First, as the title implies, I will discuss the conflict this genetic disorder poses concerning the general selection criteria used by Dexter breeders. Secondly, I would like to address possible methods to resolve this breeding restriction through the cooperation of Dexter breeders and the research community. However, I would like to start by telling you a short story that by tale's end will hopefully provide insight to the origin and continued recurrence of lethal dwarfism in Dexter cattle.

Once upon a time, during the long history of the Dexter breed, a calf was born. This was not an ordinary, everyday calf but, the type of calf that some breeders may spend a lifetime trying to produce. As the calf grew, it continued to epitomize the objectives of good Dexter breeding. In particular, this calf was especially small and compact, probably even described as extreme by some breeders. Eventually this individual was returned as a replacement to the breeder's herd and indeed produced some offspring of the same pattern and type. Not long after, this genetic line became popular among breeders, perhaps due to their success within the show ring. These seemingly prepotent genetics for the perfect breed type were soon dispersed among the entire breed. Inevitably, the first malformed calf was born; not to worry, it was probably something the cow ate or something like that, better luck next time. To make a long story short, we now know that this defect is genetic, yet for some breeders this is a story that could be told as part of more recent history. Herein lies the paradox, the mutation causing this genetic abnormality continues to persist, and is perhaps even selected for as part of

normal selection practices toward a desired phenotype. Thus, elimination of the disorder is in constant conflict with maintaining certain breed characteristics.

Fortunately, at the same time that breeder awareness is heightened, we are well poised as researchers to address the identification of the mutation causing this hereditary disorder. Over the past decade in the field of animal genetics, scientists have made tremendous advances in the characterization of domestic animal genomes; a genome being the entirety of genetic material that is the blueprint for life's functions. We now possess the molecular genetic tools necessary to study heritable traits in a highly efficient manner. As such, several research programs investigating dwarfism in Dexters are at various stages of development including research groups from the United Kingdom, Australia, and United States/Canada. It is hoped that the mutation responsible for causing bulldog calves will be identified by one or more of these groups within the near future.

Two general strategies can be used to help identify the mutation(s) responsible for dwarfism in Dexters. The first strategy is called candidate gene analysis. In this strategy we make use of the vast amount of information that the human and laboratory animal genome programs have accumulated. We use this information to select genes that may be "candidates" for the genetic disease. For example, we can readily identify, through database searches, genes already known to be involved in similar disorders in other species (i.e., dwarfism in humans). We can then analyze the DNA sequence of these genes in cattle. More specifically, we attempt to identify DNA sequence variation between individuals of known genotype for dwarfism. For instance, we would compare the DNA sequences of progeny-tested "long-legged"

individuals (non-dwarf or non-carrier), bulldog-producing "short-legged" animals (dwarf or lethal-dwarf carrier), and bulldog calves (lethal dwarf). If DNA sequence variation (called polymorphism) is identified, we can then analyze the relevance of these differences in regard to models of genetic inheritance and gene function. We can pose such questions as, are all bulldog calves homozygous for one of the variants or alleles (i.e., do they have to inherit the mutation from both parents)? Does the change in the DNA sequence also change the protein encoded by the gene and thus its function? Answers to these questions tell us whether or not we have truly identified the mutation (or a genetic marker) for the disorder. If successful, a simple DNA test to classify individual animals can be implemented.

The second strategy involves the use of highly variable genetic markers in pedigrees known to segregate dwarfism. Using these markers we can analyze the inheritance of particular chromosome regions when passed from parents to offspring, called linkage analysis. The co-inheritance of marker alleles with disease status enables us to localize the gene causing dwarfism to a small region of the genome, thus allowing us to refine our search for the candidate genes as described above. Most typical cattle linkage studies involve the use of paternal half-sib families (i.e., one sire, many dams). The bull used would have to be a known carrier of dwarfism. To identify these types of bulls we ask questions such as, does the bull sire both long- and short-legged offspring when mated to long-legged cows? Has the bull sired bulldog calves? If the answer to these questions is yes, this bull would qualify to be a pedigree founder for linkage analysis. It would be necessary to collect samples from the bull and cows he was mated to along with their offspring and their phenotype. *Continued on page 13*



## PARADOX

Although these methods are fairly straight-forward from a laboratory perspective, researchers often lack the resources to collect samples from animals of these categories. Thus, it is necessary to call on Dexter breeders to identify and submit samples of the above categories. Indeed, a collection has already begun in our laboratory through the involvement of the ADCA and several member breeders. However, it will require much more cooperation to accumulate a significant number of these samples for the performance of the above analyses. Samples of blood, semen or tissue can be used to extract DNA for these types of analyses. Blood samples (10 cc) drawn in purple top blood tubes (whole blood, not clotted), semen samples in straws or ampules, and tissue samples frozen and shipped on ice are all suitable. Samples can be submitted confidentially to myself, Jon Beever, University of Illinois, Department of Animal Sciences, 210 ERML, 1201 W. Gregory Drive, Urbana, IL 61801. Phone: (217) 244-6745. Fax: (217) 244-5617, and e-mail: beever@cagst.animal.uiuc.edu. Please include information such as relationship of the animals, identification (ear tag, registration number), and phenotype (tall, short, bulldog). For example, a data sheet shipped with the samples may include:

Animal (#)	Reg. #	Classification	Relationships	Comments
Little Joe (1)	#5562	short	sire to calves 4&5	has sired bulldogs
Xtra Special (2)	#4431	tall	dam of calf 4	paternal half-sister to #3 (sire #6670)
Bonnie Bell (3)	#6678	intermediate/ unknown	dam of calf 5	paternal half-sister to #2 (sire #6670)
98-02 (4)	NA	short		
98-06 (5)	NA	bulldog calf		

## Dexters and gators and bears! Oh my!



1998 ADCA BBQ at Jim Moody's. Photograph courtesy of Donna Martin.

The 1998 ADCA Annual Meeting began with a farm tour to Jim Moody's Snowbird Mountain Dexters in Franklin, N.C. Jim's herd was as good as promised - well-built cows with calves of uniform size and good proportion, and prize-winning bulls. In arriving at the farm guests were rewarded with a sign reading "Whew-you made it", attesting to the ride up the twisting gravel road. The view was worth it, however, complete with pastures full of wildflowers, and lots of cows and calves surrounding the house

built on the side of Snowbird Mountain.

Not to be outdone by the attention and admiration for his cows, Jim treated approximately 50 guests to a B-B-Q not soon to be forgotten. The tamest meat on the menu was the batch of Dexterburgers situated between plates of bear meat, alligator, venison, wild boar, and mountain trout. Corn on the cob, white acre peas, baked beans, and Jane Patton's "secret recipe" biscuits helped keep the meats separated on your plate. You hoped you hadn't eaten too much smoked salmon and salmon jerky for appetizers.

The lunch brought many people together, allowing Dexter owners to talk to other owners and compare problems and successes. For several people, it was the first chance to see a herd of Dexters and meet those who raise them. Jim's farm manager, Brenda Holt, was there to coordinate, share ideas, and make sure we all ate well. It was a memorable day visiting at Snowbird Mountain. We thank you, Jim, for your hospitality. ❖

Donna Martin



# ◆ Classified Advertising ◆

*Cost for an annual subscription (six issues) to the Bulletin is \$10 for non-members. Make check payable to the American Dexter Cattle Association and send to: American Dexter Cattle Association, Route 1, Box 378, Concordia, MO 64020.*

*Based on current studies the Association recommends that the breeding short-legged X (to) short-legged animals be avoided because of a genetic condition existing in some Dexters.*

## Dexter Cattle For Sale

### Raccoon Valley

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For Sale: Bull calf born 3/98, bred cows and heifers.

### ARROW WOOD FARM NEW JERSEY

**FOR SALE:** 1998 black heifer and bull calves, bred cows and bull. Very small and well conformed. Calves bottle fed and well handled.

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#### Registered Dexter Cattle for sale: bred cows, heifers, bulls.

Chuck and Bette Dickinson  
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Clarksville, Michigan 48815  
Day phone: 616 868 7394, Evenings: 616 868 0154

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**Stillwater Dexters**  
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Two 1997 red/dun bull calves; 1998 calves are arriving, both red/dun and black; calves are handled daily!

**K-Ro Acres**  
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3 short legged bulls - 1 black and 1 red/dun - both ready for herd service. 1 yearling short red/dun bull, 3/14/97.

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Cows, calves & bulls for sale. All cows are bred. Very nice set of 1998 heifer calves. Winter is coming to South Dakota and I am out of space. They must go. All offers will be considered. 20 plus animals.

(605) 456-9837 call anytime.  
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dob 9/1/97

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1 red/dun

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Registered Dexter cattle. Cows, bulls, and calves.  
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We have calves for sale  
Both red/dun and black  
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And their bags are all packed!

Yes, priced so reasonably.  
And, so soon they can go.  
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Or some photos we'll show.

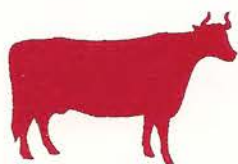
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We're easiest to find.

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**Bob & Kathy Smith**  
351 Lighthau Road  
Fort Plain, NY 13339  
Tel: (518) 993-2823  
Email: [Kesmith@telenet.net](mailto:Kesmith@telenet.net)

Welcome to the Dexter Association with the purchase of Rhema Farm Dexters to:

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Laura Clifford and Irish Rose of Kenton County Kentucky.  
Betty and Lucius Merrill of Adams County Ohio.

For Rhema Farm photos, see our web page at  
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phone Mike Vaughn (502) 322-8332, Hanson, KY  
email [ewewho@mcc-uky.campus.mci.net](mailto:ewewho@mcc-uky.campus.mci.net)



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**FOR SALE:** Good selection of registered cows,  
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BEAUTIFUL BLACK POLLED (dehorned) BULL, KING'S JESTER #5840. Long body, has produced outstanding calves. Will trade for comparable bull.

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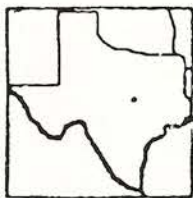
### For Sale:

Polled, (Cherry) Red/dun, 2 year old Platinum Grandson; also 6 excellent proportionate young cows bred to same.

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One (1) black heifer to calf/DOB 1/97

One (1) dun calf/DOB 12/19/97

**HARA ACRES**  
 Harlan Carpenter  
 Route 20, Box 81  
 Lincoln, NE 68528  
 (402) 795-2188



## Information

### Books For Sale

#### The Life and Times of Dexters

by Ted Neal

A full color book about Dexters direct from England.  
\$27.50 check or money order.

#### Dexter Cattle

by John Hays - USA

\$7.95 per copy, plus \$1.55 postage and handling.

#### The Dexter Cow and Cattle Keeping on a Small Scale

by Dr. William Thrower - England

\$9.00 each, postage paid.

#### Kerry and Dexter Cattle and other ancient Irish breeds,

#### A history

by Patrick Leonard Curran

Lecturer, Faculty of Agriculture University College,  
Dublin Council Member,  
Royal Dublin Society, 1990  
\$25

Please order all books from:  
**Rosemary Fleharty, Secretary**  
**American Dexter Cattle Association**  
**Route 1, Box 378**  
**Concordia, MO 64020**

#### Sales requirements for semen

Advertising pertaining to the sale of semen in the **Bulletin**, requires one to state the height of the bull from the shoulder to the ground and the age at which the height was recorded. The bloodtype for any bull being used out-of-herd A.I. must be on file with the ADCA.

### All Ads Due Nov. 25



*Happy Thanksgiving!*

#### Advertising

Classified advertisements of Dexter cattle or Dexter semen is \$5.00 for up to a 2" column ad or \$25.00 per year for six issues. Ads over 2" up to 4" are \$10 per ad or \$50.00 per year for six issues. All ads are limited to Dexters exclusively and subject to approval by the ADCA. Make all checks payable to the American Dexter Cattle Association. Please submit payment with your ad and send to:

17409 E. 163rd St.

Lee's Summit, MO 64082

All transactions are between buyer and seller. The Association trusts both will use their own good judgement and exercise the highest of integrity.

#### The Dexter Bulletin

The **Bulletin** welcomes articles and letters from the membership. Those published may be edited for length and clarity.

The reviews and opinions expressed in the **Bulletin** are those of the authors and may or may not agree with the American Dexter Cattle Association. The Association assumes no responsibility for technical data published by independent authors.

Send letters and articles to the editor:

**Richard Henry**

17409 E. 163rd St.

Lee's Summit, MO 64082

email: 103712.1643@compuserve.com

#### Fee Schedule

##### Cost of Registrations:

Cows up to 1 yr. old .....	\$20.00
Bulls up to 2 yrs. old .....	\$20.00
Cows over 1 yr. old .....	\$40.00
Bulls over 2 yrs. old .....	\$40.00
Animals from A.I. sires add .....	\$1.00

##### Cost of Transfers:

Regular transfers .....	\$20.00
Inner-herd transfers .....	\$10.00
Registration and transfers for non members .....	\$100.00
New membership (owning registered Dexters) .....	\$30.00
Associate membership (not owning Dexter cattle) .....	\$30.00
Annual renewal (for all memberships) .....	\$20.00
Subscriber ( <u>Bulletin</u> only) .....	\$10.00

Names for registration cannot exceed 21 characters

The tattoo code letter for 1998 is "H"





Champion bull at the World Dexter Congress. *Photograph courtesy of Wes Patton.*

## The Dexter Bulletin Sept. / Oct.

Richard Henry, Editor  
17409 E. 163rd St.  
Lee's Summit, MO 64082-4582

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