

SUSSEX CATTLE SOCIETY

LARGE HERDS COMPETITION 2025

JUDGES: Mr. W. Hurley & Mr. S. Wright

Place			Points
1st	S & F Carr & Daughters	Oxendean Herd	2135
2nd	Mr. G.A. Innes	Titsey Herd	1995
3rd	J & S Harmer	Offham Herd	1925
4th	Bowes Lyon Estate	Walden Herd	1920

Best Stock Bull in Class: Broadlands Captain 1st at Oxendean Herd

Best Cow/Heifer and Calf in Class: Offham Violet 39th at Offham Herd

Herne Valley Rose Bowl highest place NOVICE ENTRANT in the Herd Competition: Oxendean Herd

Judges' General Comment

Simon and I would like to thank all the exhibitors for their generous hospitality and showing us around their herds. Unlike last year the very dry spring and high temperatures had limited grass growth and this was reflected in the general cow condition. Most herds had to adjust their management to make up for lack of grass. The bulls in all five herds judged were of a very high standard showing good conformation without losing stature. Cows in the winning herd were of a very even type carrying good condition and rearing some of the best calves we saw.

INTERMEDIATE HERDS COMPETITION 2025

JUDGES: Mr. L. Angus & Mr. C. Reed

Place			Points
1st	D Spanton & F Paterson	Maygate Herd	2050
2nd	Augustinian Care	Augustinian Herd	2020
3rd	Broadlands Estates	Broadlands Herd	1960
4th	Buchanan Family	Black Ven Herd	1955

Best Stock Bull in Class: Maygate Poll Duke 1st at Maygate Herd

Best Cow/Heifer and Calf in Class: Augustinian Kendra 3rd at Augustinian Herd

Judges' General Comment

On behalf of Chris and myself, I would like to say a huge thanks to all the herds for taking the time to show us around, we thoroughly enjoyed it with a few laughs along the way. As far as the Intermediate herds are concerned the future for the breed is bright, not only for the stock but the stockmen and women within it. Wish such passion and dedication and knowledge we feel the breed will be in safe hands. We felt that on the whole the cattle did what they do best even after a hard summer with barely a blade of grass they pulled through and still looked well all things considered. It is becoming more evident that good bulls are becoming hard to come by.

SMALL HERDS COMPETITION 2025

JUDGES: Mr. L. Snelgrove & Mr. M.G. Hickman

Place			Points
1st	Faulkner Farm Partnership	Rectory Herd	2125
2nd	Mrs. S. Watts	Montgomery's Herd	2080
3rd	Mr & Mrs J Hobden	Nunningham Herd	2065
4th	Tom & Clare Heylen	Heylen Herd	1980

Best Stock Bull in Class: Trottenden Poll Astronomer 4th at Rectory Herd

Best Cow/Heifer and Calf in Class: Nunningham Poll Sylph 1st at Nunningham Herd

Judges' General Comment

Firstly, we would like to thank all the herds/farms that took part in this year's herd competition and your hospitality. It was wonderful to see a variety of ways people farm but to also see some great stock about. We saw some great cattle and despite the drought conditions this year the herds were fantastic and thriving and just showed us that the Sussex cattle can thrive on so little. Congratulations to you all for taking part & thank you!

CHAMPION HERD

Judge: Mr. Denis Jenkins

S & F Carr & Daughters' Oxendean Herd

JUDGES REPORT

I will begin with a very heartfelt thank you to Justin Harmer and the Sussex Cattle Society for the invitation to come and judge your wonderful breed of Cattle, I am truly honoured.

I should perhaps just introduce myself as I doubt many of you will know anything about me. Although I now live in Lancashire I spent the first 70 years of my life in Norfolk. My father was herdsman to the Shadwell herd of Red Poll milking cattle until they dispersed in 1964 and went out of milking. By 1965 the Estate had purchased 200 very lively Blue-Grey Heifers, straight out of Ireland to begin a suckler herd suited to the Breckland area which is largely sand and flint over chalk. My first sighting of the Sussex breed was in a bull purchased along with two Hereford and two Aberdeen Angus. He was a magnificent beast complete with a wonderful pair of horns and in my eyes easily outshone the others! This was quite a novelty to a 12 year old lad who only knew about the Red Poll which was naturally polled of course. I still remember how quiet and well-mannered this bull was. For my own part, I have judged sheep for 40 years and cattle for around 15 and now I have retired from livestock farming I am busier than ever having judged at six county shows this year. I have also been judging Herd Competitions since 2014. I am currently Vice-Chairman and Northern field officer of the Red Poll Cattle society. The Red Poll is still a dual purpose breed and is spread throughout the UK. Most herds are run as single sucklers although there still a few enthusiasts milking them, cashing in on the trend for vended whole milk at the farm gate. It remains an absolute pleasure to look at other people's herds of native cattle.

My first visit was to the Rectory herd belonging to the Faulkner Farm Partnership. Herd manager, Russel Denyer was away on holiday so I was shown around the winner of the small herd category by stock-woman Serena Puxty. Serena's passion for this herd was evident from the start. They had just changed bulls and a two year old replacement greeted us at the gate. He has a lot to live up to as his predecessor had left a real stamp of quality on this year's calf crop. The yearling heifers and steers were full of quality too, very well grown and in prime condition. I left this herd thinking it was very easy to see why they had won the small herd competition, I was also thinking the other two herds will need to be pretty good to be better than this.

The next stop was the Maygate herd, winner of the Intermediate class, belonging to D J Spanton and Mrs FA Paterson. I was shown around the herd by Richard Spanton, David's son and it was once again immediately apparent how passionate he was about their animals and indeed the farm. I was surprised by the variation in soil types and how they are managed, especially under the drought conditions of this year. The cattle looked really well, especially this year's calves. The stock bull was very impressive too. I know that stock can often do really well in a dry year and this reflected through everything I saw. When I left this herd I was aware that I had a very difficult decision to make.

Last stop was the large herd winner, the Oxendean herd belonging to S. & J. Carr. Stephen showed me around all the cattle together with herd manager John Foley. I know from experience how difficult it can be to put together and then maintain a large herd. With 80 cows to the bulls and a further 31 heifers in calf I was so impressed that this herd has managed to retain a type of female, largely through careful selection of bulls. Again I saw a very diverse range of soil types spread over a very large distance. This allowed for out wintering of young stock on the free draining chalk based fields. All the steers and a few heifers were finished on farm and fed into the organic food chain. So upon leaving here I had a very tough choice to make.

If I was looking for the most passionate about the breed, or the most knowledgeable about the breed or indeed the best stockmanship then it would have been a three way dead heat! As it is about all of those things as well as the cattle themselves, I looked more towards an evenness of type within each herd. I was surprised to learn that the breed is adding breeding from other breeds to continue trying to improve, via the use of bulls and cows. It's perhaps not for me to say but I think you have such a fantastic breed already which in my eyes needs no further input from outside as you already have everything you could possibly need. I have been so impressed with the quality of the udders, many native breeds have already lost this important feature of the true suckler cow.

So my champion herd is the Oxendean herd belonging to S. & J. Carr. The attention to bull selection, the type of cow throughout the herd and the fantastic udders being the main deciding factors. It has been a privilege and an absolute pleasure to be allowed to judge your cattle. I'm going to finish by once again thanking your Chairman, Justin Harmer for driving me round.

Denis Jenkins