

* Practical Country Living *

— CHOOSING A —

BREED OF CATTLE

5 Needs and 40 Breeds for Selecting Cattle That Fit Your Purpose



Michelle Lindsey

Please enjoy these sample pages from *Choosing a Breed of Cattle: 5 Needs and 40 Breeds for Selecting Cattle That Fit Your Purpose* (print ISBN 978-0-9975261-3-4; eBook ISBN 978-0-9975261-4-1), © 2019 by Michelle Lindsey. All content in this sample is protected under United States and international copyright laws. Permission is granted to reproduce these pages for personal, noncommercial use. For purchasing options and more information on the book, please visit HomesteadOnTheRange.com.

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INTRODUCTION

Part of the charm of a larger homestead is that there is room for cattle. But what kind?

The answer to this question will depend primarily on why you want to keep cattle. Do you want fresh milk? Grassfed beef? Pulling power in the field? Some of each?

When choosing a breed of cattle, there are other factors to consider, as well. Each breed has its own advantages and disadvantages, and what will work well for one family probably won't suit another.

This Practical Country Living guide is designed to walk you through the process of choosing a cattle breed. By the time you have finished the book, you should have:

- Clear expectations for your cattle.
- An idea of whether purebred or crossbred cattle will best meet your needs.
- A handle on characteristics to look for to find cattle that will thrive in your environment and production system.
- A list of a few breeds that have potential.
- Resources to help you make your final choice and purchase your first cattle.

The first chapter introduces the five needs every prospective cattle owner has. The five needs are purpose, scale, environment, marketing plan, and personal preference. The best cattle breed for you will be the one that most closely matches your needs. This chapter will help you take inventory of those needs.

The second chapter discusses the process of creating a breed, an important concept to understand before making your choice. You will learn how both natural and artificial selection shape the genetics of cattle breeds to create populations suited for specific circumstances. You will even have an opportunity to compare and contrast purebred and crossbred cattle with a view toward determining which is best for you. But even if you decide on crossbred cattle, breed composition is still something to consider, and this chapter will tell you why.

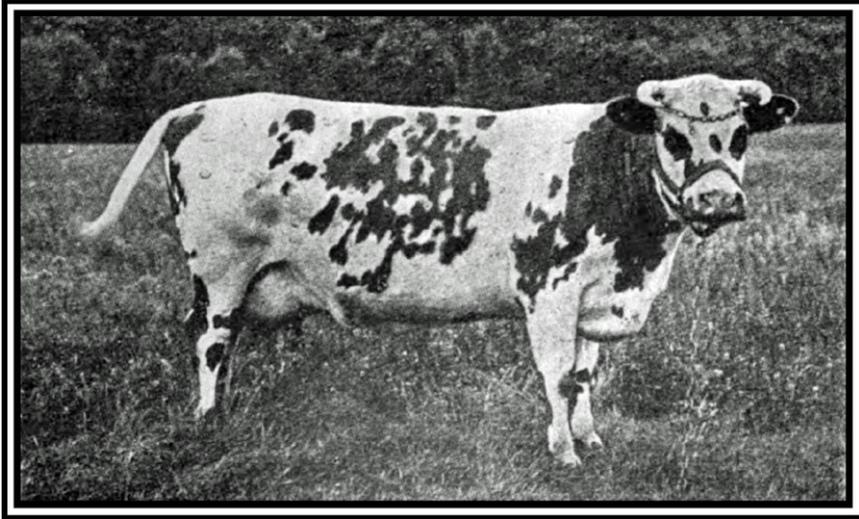
The third chapter compares the different types of cattle breeds. You will learn how different genetic backgrounds suit breeds to different environments and production systems. You will also learn about the five major geographic groups of cattle seen in America today, and you will compare the merits of modern and heritage breeds.

Once you have a clear picture of your needs and expectations, it is time to start researching the breeds themselves. The next four chapters offer a total of 40 profiles of beef, dairy, and dual-purpose cattle breeds, covering each breed's origin, genetic structure, population, uses, weight, preferred climate, temperament, health, and production characteristics. These profiles are by no means intended to provide a complete picture of each breed's pros and cons—you will definitely want to consult more comprehensive resources before you make your final decision. However, by reading the profiles, you should be able to quickly zero in on a few breeds to research further.

The final section of the book is devoted to helpful resources. Once you have whittled down your options, read the books and websites listed in this section to find out more about the potential

candidates. These resources include more in-depth information, and many provide links to relevant breed associations. Additional resources are also included to provide you with information on caring for your first cattle.

As you can see, this Practical Country Living book is not intended to supply you with all the information you need to keep cattle. Instead, it is intended to assist you with the process of setting clear expectations for your cattle and finding a breed that will meet those expectations. This is an essential process to complete before purchasing animals. The time and care you put into this process should amply repay itself in a herd that fits your circumstances and that you enjoy working with.



Normande

Origin: France, 800s.

Breed Structure: Standardized.

Population: Secure.

Uses: Dairy, beef, crossbred beef, crossbred dairy, draft, novelty.

Weight: Bulls average 2,200 lbs., cows average 1,450 lbs.

Preferred Climate: Adaptable to most climates.

Temperament: Calm, gentle, slow-moving; can be shy if unfamiliar with humans.

Health: No major problems.

Production: Average milk yield 14,000 lbs. annually, 3.5% protein, 4.2% butterfat; high yield of top-dollar beef cuts, lean, tender, excellent flavor.

The Normande has proven to be a great choice for forage-based systems—no matter what it is required to produce. On pasture, it is a healthy, vigorous breed that can deliver gourmet food every time. Confinement and high-energy feed will lead to obesity, lameness, metabolic disorders, and calving difficulties.

Ready to take the confusion out of selecting the right cattle breed for your family?

When you start by assessing the five needs of every future cattle owner, choosing between the many breeds of cattle available today suddenly becomes much easier!



This book will walk you through the process of defining your expectations and then arm you with key information on 40 common cattle breeds. With a little research, you will know:

- Whether to choose purebred or crossbred cattle.
- What genetic, geographical, and historical types of cattle are best suited to your purpose.
- Which beef, dairy, or dual-purpose breeds are most likely to succeed on your homestead, farm, or ranch, no matter how big or small.

Once you have picked a few favorite breeds, we'll even show you where to go to find more information.

Grab a pen and a piece of paper and start crafting your cattle-raising dreams today!



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