



devon **D E X T E R S**

www.devondexters.org.uk

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Devon Dexter Group

The Committee

Chairman Fiona Miles miles@groubear-farm.co.uk 01884 251181

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Andrew Perry 07771 542010 Chris Davis & Richard Cobb

Spring 2011

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2011. We hope that you and your cattle have survived the snows and hard frosts of recent months and are looking forward to spring and some welcome sun. The Committee has had a meeting and several sub committee meetings and is working hard behind the scenes to organize events and information which will be interesting to Dexter breeders. If you have any suggestions please contact a member of the committee. Don't forget to keep up to date with our website www.devondexters.org.uk

If you would like to be a member of the Devon Group or have not yet paid this years subscription, please send your £5.00 to Bernard Stamp, 11 The Willows, Shillingford St George, Exeter, Devon, EX2 9QS or visit us at the County Show.

Devon County Show 19/20/21 May

We will have a stand at Devon County Show this year (19, 20, 21 May) and we hope that members will come and support us. This is the county's shop window for Dexters and where we promote the breed and the delicious Dexter beef that many of you sell to local customers – so come and promote your beef! The exhibitors are always being asked "Where can we buy Dexter beef"? Well here is your chance for free advertising.

The Stand is being manned by Sue Archer, our Breed Secretary, on Thursday 19th, so if you can help on the stand on Friday or Saturday please let one of the committee know, we have tickets for volunteers.

Herd meeting – 25th June 2011

We are planning a herd visit on Saturday, 25th June, we are combining with the Cornwall Group for a visit to Andrew and Tammy Perry at their farm to visit their Penhayes herd at Grandpound near Truro. We are proposing to start the day with a visit to the local farmers market at Grampound Village Hall 10-1pm, where the Perry's sell their Dexter meat and where there will be refreshments, and then a farm walk is to be organised where we will be able to see their cattle. If you would like to attend please phone Tammy or Andrew on 01726 884630

Sedgemoor Sale 2011

Do you have cattle for sale? We are hoping to organise a sale at Sedgemoor Market again this year in Sept/Oct. If we get enough cattle forward, perhaps we can get our own slot, and a Dexter stand. Please contact Anna 01363 866385 if you are interested.

Our new Secretary. . . . Marie McGahey

Let me introduce myself. I am Marie McGahey your newly elected Secretary. I have lived at Southwood Farm since 1977 and recently retired from teaching although I have always been a part time hobby farmer. Dexter's have been part of the family since 2000 and although we rear them principally for meat we were persuaded to attend the odd show with our short legged heifers and have had a lot of really good days out.

My main contribution however, to this newsletter is of a culinary nature. I am including the following recipe for a really good beef casserole, Dexter beef of course!

This is an excellent casserole for a hot buffet. Serve with pasta and a green salad or with new potatoes.

Serves 6

2lb (900g) chuck steak trimmed and cut into cubes
3 tablespoons sunflower oil
1oz (25g) butter
1 1/2 oz (40g) flour
1 pint beef stock
3 tablespoons Worcester sauce
4 tablespoons redcurrant jelly (use less if you find this a little sweet)
8oz (225g) button mushrooms
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Put oil and butter in a large pan and fry the meat quickly until browned. Sprinkle in the flour blend well and add the stock and bring to the boil and stir until thickened. Add Worcester sauce redcurrant jelly and mushrooms. Cover and bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Transfer to a slow oven for 4 hours until the meat is tender. Check seasoning before serving.

I use the simmering oven of the Aga but this is just as good done in a ceramic slow cooker which can be set away in the morning and left all day and not come to any harm.

BEEF SALES

However many, or however few beef animals you rear, having the finished animals ready at the exact time your customers wants their beef can sometimes be tricky, just as having customers waiting when you need to send off animals can be. Once or twice we have had to ring a fellow beef producer to get finished animals just when we needed them. We have been grateful to him and when he has finished steers ready to go he has been glad to find a sale for them. By working together we can insure that our customers will come back to us, and not have to look elsewhere for their beef. The National Dexter Society also have a scheme working with a Irish company who are keen to come over here and buy has many good quality finished steers as they can find, but these animals have to be delivered to certain abattoirs where transport can be difficult, transporting certificates being needed on longer journeys.

With all this in mind, we would like to draw more of the Dexter beef keepers into our Devon Dexter Group, so that we can get to know and help each other whenever possible. To do this, each year our April newsletter will be sent to all the Dexter keepers in Devon that are members of the National Dexter Society

as well as our own members. To help pay for this bigger circulation we would like members to take the chance to advertise their herds, sales, bulls for hire, Semen for sale and any other Dexter related matters. You can design your own adverts or someone from the group will help you, Most of us have stock for sale and this would be a good way of letting all the local keepers know.

The price for the adverts would depend on the size you wanted, a half page would be £20.00 and a full A4 page would be £40.00. Not a lot to make sure your advert is seen by all the Dexter keepers in Devon and further afield. One of our committee members has also offered to give all the envelopes for this years mailing, so that will get us off to a good start. Our usual two or three line adds will still be printed free in the newsletters, but the larger adverts will give us chance to get pictures of our cattle seen, has well as giving them a good write up. The adverts with this news sheet will give you an idea what can be done and we will remind you about this again before next spring.

Gwen Mountjoy

Our Experience with Crossgar Meats

We acquired our first two in-calf Dexters in late 1995, a year after moving to our farm in Herefordshire. By the time we relocated to Devon in 2009 this had increased to a total of 43 including followers. Having previously managed to sell our beef via a network of family and friends it quickly became apparent that in this instance it wasn't going to work out: moving to a new area and both of us working full-time at some distance from the farm would not allow us the opportunity to deal with six steers who, in fairness, had managed to buy themselves some extra time due to the upheaval of the move.

With this in mind, we were very interested to read the article in the Spring 2010 issue of the *Dexter Cattle Society Bulletin* about Crossgar Meats. We felt that this could be a good solution to our dilemma; we would get commercial carcass grade prices plus a bonus, coupled the satisfaction that the meat would actually be promoting the breed (which wouldn't have happened had we felt the need to take the step of selling them at market). Having looked at the company details on the internet we made telephone contact with Steve Adcock. During a very positive conversation he told us that his intention was to arrange a shipment in May using one vehicle to collect carcasses from two collection points, one in Uttoxeter and the other at Stillmans in Taunton. He was quite happy with the fact that the steers were approaching 36 months and said he would be in touch when he had sorted out numbers at each point. In the meantime we e-mailed him the details of each steer, including their DCS birth notification number as requested.

When Steve next made contact it was not with the information we had been expecting: he had managed to fill his vehicle at Uttoxeter and would therefore, he apologised, not be taking any Dexters from Taunton. However the blow was softened by his assurance that they were planning another collection in September and he would take ours at the previously agreed prices in spite of their age.

Janet & Andy Dale

The eventual date was set for early October. We arranged for local transporter Richard Cole to deliver the steers to Stillmans first thing in the morning rather than the alternative of sending them the previous afternoon. We had put them in a paddock adjacent to our yard but at 6am in the dark they were (as we should have suspected) not inclined to co-operate! It took a change of plan and Richard's help to get them onto the yard but, once there, everything went like clockwork and Richard left with passports and food chain information within a short time.

Ten days later we contacted Steve by e-mail and he sent us the gradings by return. The weights varied between 220kg and 280kg, which is rather heavier than usual but no doubt reflected their age and another summer at grass. One of the lighter carcasses was not so good (P+4L) and when the confirmation of weights, grades and prices arrived through the post a day or so later we did find that this only achieved a price some 80p per kilo less than any of the others and also no premium – proof indeed of trying to ensure that all stock is well- finished!

So, would we use Crossgar Meats again? The answer, in similar circumstances, would definitely be yes. The cost of our time to achieve greater returns on these carcasses would have outweighed the additional income. We found Steve Adcock professional and easy to deal with, payment was prompt and direct into our bank account, and Crossgar's requirements were not onerous as far as we were concerned. The only regret was that we were not aware of the scheme earlier: in all likelihood their age and the cancellation of the May collection both contributed to a lower return than might have been possible. Breeders need to try and support initiatives such as this in order to try and reach a wider audience, many of whom may then look to buy direct from a producer once they have been seduced by the incomparable product that is Dexter beef.

Small Ads

We are keen to provide space in the Newsletter for adverts from Group Members – for sale, hire or wanted (stock, bulls for hire, equipment etc) and services offered. Please phone 01884 251181 – or e-mail miles@groubear-farm.co.uk. Keep it brief and Dexter related!

We can't always have room for adverts – but we will fit them in when we can.

Free to members, for details of trade rates, contact Fiona Miles

Dexter Beef in Stout with Dumplings - Gary Rhodes (with horseradish mash and glazed baby carrots)

Recommended by Anna Woollard

Menu for 6

Preparation time: 30 minutes for the beef and dumplings; 10 minutes for the vegetables.

Cooking time; 3 hours for the beef; 25 minutes for the vegetables.

For the Beef;

1.3kg (3lb) brisket of beef, cubed
2 tabs olive oil
225g (8oz) onions, peeled and sliced
1 heaped tab of plain flour
600ml (1pint) Guinness
2 sprigs fresh thyme
2 bay leaves
2 garlic cloves, crushed (optional)
salt & pepper

For the parsley dumplings;

175g (6oz) self-raising flour
85g (3oz) shredded suet
1 ½ tbsp fresh chopped parsley
salt & pepper

For the Horseradish mash;

900g (2lb) floury potatoes, peeled and quartered
115g (4oz) unsalted butter
150ml full-fat milk, warmed
salt & pepper
3 tbsp fresh finely chopped chives and parsley
1 tbsp horseradish cream

For the glazed carrots.

600g (1lb 5oz) baby carrots
salt
1 tsp caster sugar
55g (2oz) butter

Pre-heat the oven to 140C/275F/Gas 1.

Heat the olive oil in a large ovenproof casserole dish on the hob and brown the meat in batches. Set the browned meat aside and put the onions in the pan, Cook until softened and lightly browned. Lower the heat and return the meat and any juices to the pan. Stir in the flour. Add the Guinness, thyme, bay leaves, garlic and seasoning. Bring to a simmer, cover with a lid and transfer to the oven. Cook for 3 hours until the meat is tender.

Making the Dumplings

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl.

Add 4-5 tbsp cold water and mix to stiff dough. Shape into 6 large dumplings, place on a floured plate, cover and set aside.

When the beef has been cooking for about 2 ½ hours, place the dumplings in the casserole and continue to cook for 20-25 minutes.

Making the horseradish mash;

Boil the potatoes in salted water for 15-20 minutes until tender, and then drain them.

Mash the potatoes, adding the butter and milk a little at a time. Season, add the herbs and horseradish, and continue mashing until the potatoes are creamy.

Making the glazed carrots;

Put the carrots in a pan with a pinch of salt. Barely cover them with water and add the sugar and butter. Bring to the boil and simmer for 8-10 minutes until tender.

Drain the liquor into another pan and boil to reduce to about 6 tbsp of thick liquid. Add the carrots to the pan and reheat in the glaze. Check the seasoning and adjust if necessary.

To Serve;

Ladle plenty of beef and gravy and a dumpling on to each plate, together with helping of mashed potato and carrots.

NB. This can be made with stewing steak and even topside beef - it's all delicious