

Lesson Plan to accompany the 'Moo Who?' vote.

Learning Objectives

- to gain an understanding of the importance of preserving rare breeds
- to recognise the financial decisions that farmers are forced to make
- to decipher relevant information from a video or printed source
- to use a range of speaking and listening skills to plan and deliver a persuasive answer to specific questions.

Resources

- PDF lesson plan and rare breed mask print outs
- video clips (links to the video clips are at the bottom of each information sheet)
- rare breed fact sheets
- scissors and string or elastic for the masks

Introduction

Show the pupils the three mask images of cows faces and ask them think about what they represent. Tell them that the images represent three of the rare breed herds at Home Farm. The names of these breeds are Gloucesters, Shetlands and Irish Moileds.

Tell the children that all three of these breeds are on the 'At Risk Register' as there are fewer than 750 breeding females known to exist. With this in mind and as part of the National Trusts commitment to supporting rare breeds Home Farm has decided to get a bull to mate with one of the herds. Unfortunately it is very expensive to buy a bull and for this reason they need to decide which of the herds they should buy a bull for.

The breeds that do not get a breed bull will be cross bred with Juggernaut, the resident bull at Home Farm. Below is some basic information about each of the breeds, this is duplicated on the fact sheets for the children if they are unable to watch the videos.

Gloucester Cows:

- there are 7 senior females on Home Farm
- they are dairy cows that are famous for making Double Gloucester Cheese
- they grow tall first and then take longer to fill out meaning that they take longer than the recommended 30 months to make it worth being sold for meat.

Irish Moileds:

- 10 senior females on the farm
- from Northern Ireland
- no horns and have a domed head
- dual purpose cows meaning they can be milked and the beef is highly sought after
- Home farm has worked hard to move from 3 to 10 senior females on the farm

Shetlands

- 14 Senior females ready for the bull
- dual purpose cows meaning they can be milked and the beef is highly sought after
- small cows from the shetland isles
- fatten really well and make good meat quickly
- lots of people are working to support this breed, Home Farm are trying to introduce some red and white Shetlands and will hopefully make red and white calves.

Main Activity:

The activity for this lesson is based on 'Blind Date' the children will be split into 3 groups, 1 group will represent the Gloucester herd, one the Irish Mollies and one the Shetlands. The teacher will represent the Stock Man and will be asking the herds questions which they need to answer in turn and try to convince the stock man to buy a breed bull for their herd.

Please make the questions to suit the needs of your class, you may want to ask something like, How quickly will you give me a return on my investment in terms of meat production? To answer this the children would have to look at the information and research how long it would take their breed to grow big enough to warrant selling for meat.

Each group will be given the questions at the beginning of the lesson and will have 20 mins to watch the video clips (or use info sheets and transcripts) to work out answers that would convince the Stock Man to buy a bull for their breed. The groups must choose a different spokesperson for each question and that person will wear the mask while answering.

At the end of the three questions the teacher will 'sum up' the answers he/she has heard and give a reason for the decision they make.

Gloucester Cows:



About the breed

Unsurprisingly, the history of Gloucester cattle has its roots in Gloucestershire where it was used occasionally as draught oxen but primarily for dairy production. It is particularly associated with Gloucester cheese. For example. Single Gloucester can, by official designation, only be made on farms in Gloucestershire which have a pedigree herd of Gloucester cattle. Nowadays it is classified as dual-purpose as it also produces fine-grained, marbled beef that benefits from slow maturing.

One of the highlights of the breed's history came in 1796 when the Gloucester cow Blossom provided the first anti-smallpox serum to Sir Edward Jenner.

An attractive medium-sized animal, the Gloucester is black-brown in colour. It has a white stripe on the back, down the hindquarters including the tail and along the belly. The head and legs are black. Horns are medium in length and typically upswept and fine.

The cows are docile and amenable and respond well to individual care. They calve their babies very easily. Even the bulls merit the breed's reputation for docility while being efficient at getting the cows in calf.

For more information and other links about this breed go to:

<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/on-the-farm/livestock/find-out-more/why-choose-gloucesters>

Irish Moileds:



About the breed

Another dual purpose cow, Irish Moiled cattle (or 'Moilies' as those who've worked with them affectionately call them) are a medium sized, hornless (polled), easy to handle breed with a docile temperament. They get their name Moiled (or Maol) from the Gaelic language. It relates to the distinctive dome or mound on top of the head.

Irish Moiled cattle are normally red in colour and marked by a white line or 'finching' on the back and under parts, with red ears and nose. However, they can vary from white with red ears to nearly all red. The face is often roan or flecked.

They are excellent on poor grazing. - tradition has it that they are "big bellied" to consume and digest large quantities of poorer quality forage which was their traditional diet.

Their beef is highly recommended.

For more information and other links about this breed go to:

<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/on-the-farm/livestock/find-out-more/why-choose-irish-moiled>

Shetlands



About the breed

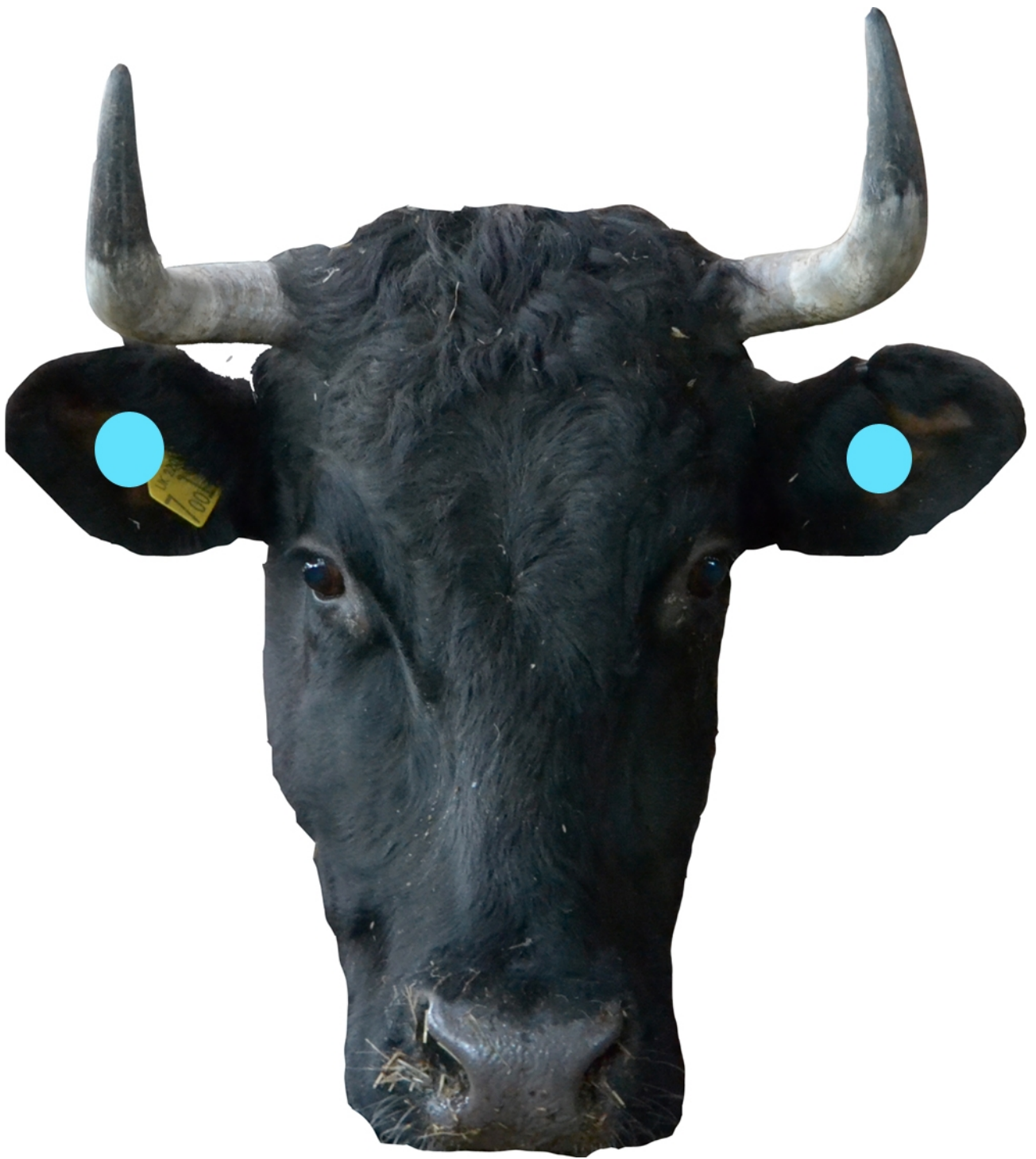
The Shetland cow's characteristics are unsurprising when you consider where the breed developed. In the harsh environment of their native islands they were used as a triple-purpose breed, although their role as draught oxen and meat producers were subsidiary to their milk.

The Shetland is a relatively small breed, with short, fine horns. Most animals are black and white, but red and white is also now firmly established, with grey and brindled cattle reappearing in small numbers.

Shetlands are a hardy and self sufficient breed which thrives on poor grazing. Its small size and light frame makes it less likely to churn up pasture in wet weather. They are calm and easy to handle, with high fertility and easy calving. They make excellent mothers. They also are relatively long lived, compared with other breeds, which means that they produce more calves during their reproductive lifetimes.

For more information and other links about this breed go to:

<http://www.my-farm.org.uk/on-the-farm/livestock/find-out-more/why-choose-shetlands>



Gloucester

Cut out the blue circles and thread string or elastic through them and tie behind head.



Irish Moileds Mask

Cut out the blue circles and thread string or elastic through them and tie behind head.



Shetland Mask

Cut out the blue circles and thread string or elastic through them and tie behind head.