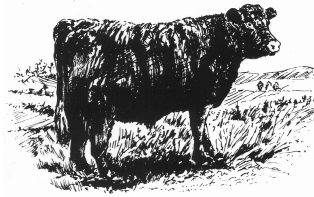


# THE LUIING CATTLE SOCIETY LTD

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23 August 2011

PRESS RELEASE

## **Luining Breeders make a big impact on Orkney**

Almost 200 Luining breeders and local Orcadian farmers travelled to Aikerness farm, Evie for the first half of the 2011 Luining Open Day on Orkney which took place on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August.

The impressive number was composed roughly half and half of local farmers and those travelling from mainland UK, including from as far away as Wales and Northern Ireland. Superb settled weather greeted the crowds who were addressed by local MSP Liam McArthur in the opening remarks.

Aikerness, run by Brian Ridland and his partner Fiona, is an organic farm and home to the Silwick herd of Luings first established on Shetland in 2002 and brought to Orkney in 2008 with the purchase of Aikerness giving the family the opportunity to farm full time. The aim of the 50-strong herd of pedigree cows is to breed Sim-Luining heifers for selling on to local farmers with any steers finished on a very successful clover-based grazing and silage system for the organic market. These details were reported by local SAC consultant, Mike Girvan. Host farmer Brian Ridland went into some detail on the background of the Silwick Luining herd and finally John Copland of Orkney Auction Mart gave a fascinating talk on the history of the Orkney Islands and the development of the farming industry over the ages.

The open day then moved onto the Wood family's Garson farm at Sandwick – another recently established herd of Luings having started in 2008 and now numbering 40 cows and heifers. Numbers here swelled to well over 200 as more local farmers joined the event having completed their days work. At Garson the tour took in some excellent groups of cattle including a particularly impressive looking group of grazing steers destined for Orkney Meat Ltd. and a premium butcher market. Stewart Wood led this tour covering subjects such as the overwintering system grazing kale on the old airfield and also the similar aim to Aikerness to produce Sim-Luining heifers to supply their own commercial herd numbering 170 cows. The event concluded with a BBQ at Garson featuring local Orkney food and drink which was very well received by all those in attendance.

Society Chairman Steven Murray commented, "Having taken in a sale of over 300 store cattle at Orkney Auction Mart on Monday morning, followed by two visits to the Quanterness and Skail Aberdeen Angus herds run by the Harcus and Davidson families respectively, not to mention our own joint open day, Luining breeders have left Orkney with a very positive impression of the islands beef industry. We have all been made to feel very welcome and having seen so many herds of cattle it's hard to remember anything less than a very good beast. The standard of stock up here is absolute top drawer and Luings will have to be good to make an impact in what is already a very strong suckler herd on the islands. However, both Aikerness and Garson are producing quality Sim-Luining females using their Luining cows and I'm confident that kind of breeding animal has got something to offer Orcadian beef farmers."

Ends

Notes to editors:

- The Joint Open Day was sponsored by 22 companies and organisations in all (RSPB, NFU Mutual Orkney, Orkney Meat Ltd., AJB Scholes, SAC Orkney, Birsay Farmers, Orkney Herring, The Orkney Brewery, Robertsons, Norvite, J&W Tait, Baker Tilly, Clarke Thomson, Argos Bakery, Orkney Fishermans' Society, William Shearer, Swannay Brewery, Orkney Cheese, Orkney Auction Mart, Terry & Sheena Coghill, Lobbans Butchers and Orkney Tool Hire).
- Almost £800 was raised via donations and bar profits for The Royal Highland Education Trust's Highlands & Islands Countryside Initiative.

Further information:

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