

Irish Dexter Cattle

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The Ohio Valley Dexter Breeders Association are hosting an annual Dexter Cattle show at the *FAIRFIELD COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS* (157 E. FAIR AVE. LANCASTER, OHIO 43130) on May 19th at 9 am, please come stop by and see Dexters and their owners from all over the U.S..

A breed of cattle that you don't hear of everyday is the Irish Dexter Cattle.

Dexters are a cattle breed that is not as popular as your common Holstein and Angus, yet. Dexter Cattle are a multiple purpose, efficient, docile, and unique heritage breed of cattle that are suited for small farms and can support a business, with little input and an amazing outcome.

When you first at the Dexter breed, many people think, "Aww

look at the miniature cows!" Dexters are not a miniature breed at all, a pure breed Dexter

will have no miniature genes in their DNA. Dexter are just not modified or supersized to be as large as the big dairy and beef producers. "It was developed from the Kerry, an Irish dairy breed, through selection for smaller size and improved beef qualities. The breed name came from a "Mr. Dexter," who promoted the cattle during the mid-1800s." (<http://livestockconservancy.org/index.php/heritage/internal/dexter>)

A mature Dexter cow ranges from 36-42 inches in height, measured at the hip and weighs around 600lbs. A matures bull ranges from 38-44 inches in height measured at the hip and can get up to around 1000lbs. There are two main sizes Dexters, short legged and long legged. This breed comes in 3 different colors: dun, red, and black. Dexters also have traits for heritage horns and natural polled. Despite their size, Dexters create a strong and large impact on their owners. "The Dexter's calm, gentle nature, and natural curiosity have given them the honor of being labelled the ideal family cow. The combination of less feed required, high meat and milk quality, and their docility, makes them a perfect choice for first time owners and small land owners." (<http://www.dextercattle.ca/about.html>)

Dexters are very docile and excellent with young children and timid people. These cows are perfect for hobby farms that have a few acres and not many buildings. "Dexters are popular with acreage owners; their size makes them easier to handle compared to many other breeds, their docility allows for easy training to new situation." (<http://www.dextercattle.ca/about.html>)

But Dexters can also be used for a business for dairy, beef, or the market of selling Dexters. They are convenient and just a joy to be around and own without a lot of hassles. Dexters produce rich milk with a 4-6% butterfat, lean meat, and gives birth to calves easily. There are 3 types of milk genes that are key parts of Dexter's genetics: A1A1, A1A2, and A2A2. The best quality milk gene is the A2A2 gene with more cream and can drank by people that are lactose-in-tolerant. A1 beta-casein is the most common milk gene in cows. Dexters produce lean, not-fatty, quality meat with good marble and color. "Pound for pound, Dexters cost less to get to the table, economically turning forage into rich milk and quality, lean meat."

(<http://www.dextercattle.org/edu/index.html>)

This breed will eat about ½ of what commercial cattle breeds eat, they feed on hay, little grain, and pasture. The Dexter breed originated from the poorest parts of Ireland, so these cows is used to feeding on poor quality, sticky pastures and hay. Dexters are quality animals that are easy to feed, low maintenance, and can produce many different types of production. The Dexter breed is becoming more popular each day. Many people still have many question about the breed. If you like to have your questions answered and see Dexters from all over the nation, you are welcome to attend our Dexter show at the Richland County Fairgrounds on May 19th at 9 am. If you have any questions, please visit the Ohio Valley Dexter Breeders Association website at <http://ohiovalleydexters.weebly.com/> or follow us on Facebook at Ohio Valley Dexter Breeders Association (OVDDBA). Thank you!