

History of Devon Cattle in this country

Devon cattle records maintained by the ADCA date back to 1623 when the pilgrims came to this country. The pilgrims sailed from Plymouth, on the south coast of Devonshire, England to the New World and named their settlement in America the Plymouth Colony. On the ship Charity, along with the crew, were three Devon heifers and a Devon bull which were sent from Devonshire to Edward Winslow, the agent for the Plymouth colony. These records are the start of the ADCA registry and correlate with records in England, which date back to 23 B.C. Records were kept in England on the cattle maintained in this country until 1851. Between 1800 and 1851, Americans received 15 shipments of Devon from England.

Records for Devon as a purebred began in 1851, when John T. Davy of Rose Ash in North Devon published the first volume of Davy's Devon Herd Book. The Davy family, along with the Quartly family from the same area, had been breeding pure Devons for at least 150 years prior to this publication. In 1884, the copyright for the book was acquired by the Devon Cattle Breeders' Society in England and continuous records have been maintained by it in England ever since. Devon Cattle from England were selected for their hearty forging ability, their rich milking ability, their docility, and their strength; they were brought to America to be used for milk and beef production and as oxen in the settling of the American frontier.

James Buckingham, a Devon breeder in Zanesville, Ohio, began publication of the American Devon Record in 1881. The first four volumes were published under his direction, bringing Devon registry records up to May 1st, 1887.

In 1884, American Devon Cattle Club records were started and a continuous program of importation of top bloodlines lead to a resurgence of the quality of Devon Cattle as we know them today. Mr. Buckingham, with the aid of several other prominent Devon breeders, was instrumental in organizing the American Devon Cattle Club on March 26th, 1884, at a meeting in Pittsburgh's East End Hotel. The American Devon Record became the official herd book of the Club, which published six volumes. Like most other livestock registry associations in the United States, the American Devon Cattle Club found the cost prohibitive to produce a limited edition herd book. Volume 10, the final volume of the American Devon Record, was published in 1947. Duplicate registration certificates are maintained in the breed's registry office for verifying the ancestry of registered animals and to protect the genetic integrity of the Devon breed in the United States.

After the death of L.P. Sissons, secretary of the American Devon Cattle Club, in 1916, the club was reorganized and incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as the American Devon Cattle Club, Inc. This action was accomplished at a meeting of the incorporators held on July 24th, 1918, at the American House in Boston. The corporation operated under that name for 53 years until it was changed to the name, Devon Cattle Association, Inc., at an annual meeting of the membership in Springfield, Massachusetts, on January 22nd, 1971.

On October 11th, 1978, a Devon Cattle Association, Inc. was formed as a Missouri not-for-profit corporation. A merger of the old Massachusetts Corporation into the new Missouri Corporation was approved by the respective memberships on November 19th, 1978. The merger became effective January 1st, 1979.

In 1984 when The World Devon Congress came to the U.S., things were looking up, but by the years end several major breeders had left the cattle business and with the industrys shift towards feed lots and yield grade based pricing systems the Devon struggled to fit in. The years that followed were tough for the Devon and many breeders resorted to crossbreeding as the Devon cross seemed the only way to make money. Breeders continued to diminish in number as did registrations.

In 1990 the DCA 's records became computerized and real efforts were once again made for breed promotion.

In 1994 the DCA's leadership embarked on a grass-fed promotion and the Devon, as called in the 40's proved again to be Beef Supreme on Grass. Breeders have since put their cattle to the test. Linear measurement, Ultra-sound, and DNA among others have been put in front of the mighty Devons, who performed magnificently. The Devon were and have continued to be scrutinized by the industry and as they have done for hundreds of years and the Devon as usual excels in grass based, quality grade type systems.

By 2000 the Devon was well on its way, having been glorified in the grass-fed beef world, the prices, number of registrations and membership were all rising rapidly.

In 2004 Lakota Ranch imported semen from the Rotokawa herd in New Zealand, this Blood line was the first Devon import in over 20 years.