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Finished cattle, barren cows and contract schemes

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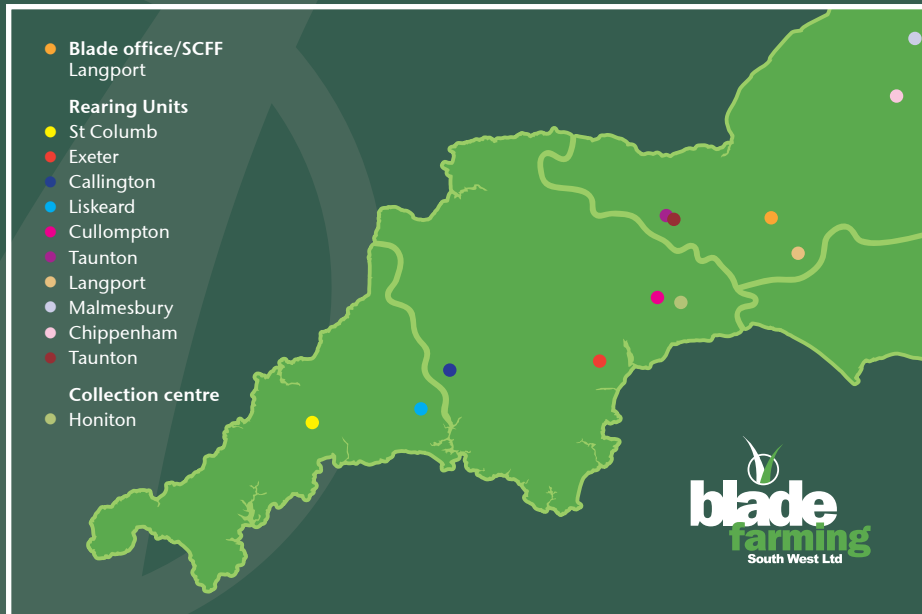
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CALF AND WEANED CALF SUPPLY

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Business Opportunities for Dairy Farmers



Introduction

Milk production has become more and more efficient as producers have focused on the returns generated from producing milk by using better genetics, refining their feeding systems and improving the health status of the herd. Sometimes it is easy to overlook other ways to add value to the business and this booklet offers some opportunities for pro active producers to add further value to their business.

Blade Farming was developed in 1999 as an independent beef farming operation with a focus on adding value to the beef supply chain. The operation is reliant on purchasing healthy dairy calves of all breeds from dairy producers.

Blade has been through a huge expansion process over the last three years as the demand for quality British beef increases and this will offer more business opportunities to dairy producers as Blade becomes the largest customer for dairy calves in the UK.



Calf supply

Blade farming operate a weekly collection centre in Honiton, East Devon for rearing calves and a network of contract calf rearing units throughout the region.



Calf supply

- All types of calves purchased;
- Good conformation F/Holstein bulls
- Aberdeen Angus bulls and heifers (Only by pedigree registered sires)
- Continental cross bulls and heifers
- Calves priced on farm by Blade Farming representatives
- Competitive prices paid
- Weekly collection
- Reliable fortnightly payment
- Contract breeding schemes can be agreed for Aberdeen Angus calves

TB isolation units

(Licensed and approved by Defra)

- Aberdeen Angus and continental cross calves only

Calf Specifications

- **Continental X and F/H bulls**
 - Minimum weight 50kgs
 - 10 - 28 days old
- **Aberdeen Angus X**
 - Minimum weight 45kgs
 - 10 - 28 days old
 - Sired by a pedigree registered bull

Aberdeen Angus cross calves must be sired by a pedigree registered Aberdeen Angus cross bull, and a premium will be paid for calves sired by GenusABS selected bulls, eg. Lorabar Mighty Prince.

This bull has been selected for its meat tenderness characteristics, its ease of calving and its exceptional growth rates.



Beef Quality Scheme

Blade operates a unique beef quality scheme focusing on customer feed back and using technology from the rest of the world. The key to quality beef products are:

- Tenderness
- Juiciness
- Flavour
- Consistency

Healthy calves are key to the start of the process as our rearers and finishers need to deliver good growth rates throughout the whole growing and finishing process. This will allow the cattle to finish at younger ages when they are in their prime giving the beef product the tenderness the consumer is looking for. The flavour and juiciness of the meat depends on the correct feeding and grazing in the finishing period.



Genetics have an impact on meat quality too. Breeds that have more natural marbling will deliver more tender beef and sire selection within the breed is important. Quite often there is as much variation in meat quality within breeds as there is across all breeds.

The beef quality scheme is reliant on healthy calves from approved sires, and we purchase large numbers of Holstein bull calves, provided that they meet our rearing specifications.



Blade Farming

Blade Farming SW is part of the RWM Food Group Ltd based in Langport, Somerset.

This is a family owned business that specialises in red meat production and operates Southern Counties Fresh Foods (SCFF) a large scale beef plant, and also a specialist lamb plant.

The company procures and processes beef, cows and lambs from dedicated producers in the South of England and Wales. Blade is the largest supplier to this operation through an integrated beef supply from calf to finish.



Finished cattle and Cull cows

Finished cattle

A considerable number of cattle are sold through Blade Farming into the Southern Counties Fresh Foods abattoir in Langport. The majority of these cattle are on contracts, but for those producers not wanting to take advantage of the pricing contracts, cattle can be sold on the weekly spot price.

Barren cows

As well as calves, Blade fieldsmen procure Barren Cows direct from farms. The cows are collected and delivered to the abattoir in Somerset as part of a well organized, welfare friendly system. All cows are paid on a deadweight basis using a payment grid.

