

Gloucester cattle

Clifford Freeman owns 25% of the UK's Gloucester cattle.

His family involvement with Gloucester cattle dates back to 1971, when his father purchased his first two cattle.



“I have been involved since I was about six, and when I took the stock on from my father I began to collect any of the Gloucester breed I could find,” he explains. “Today, I have 270 cows plus followers.

The cattle are slow to finish – at about 34 months – which can be an issue for cashflow.

However, with a hotel and restaurant in the Isles of Scilly, Mr Freeman can supply the kitchens directly, as well as selling the meat at a premium locally and some going into commercial trade – having found outlets that are prepared to slaughter beef over 30 months.

“We can sell the carcass at a premium and the rest at a commercial rate,” he explains. “The benefit of selling locally is that more and more people are becoming concerned where their food comes from; we are very keen on traceability.”

Despite farming a protected breed, Mr Freeman believes in a strict culling policy to preserve the best traits of the breed.

“There is no point in keeping an animal if it doesn’t stack up for commercial use. When keeping these rare breeds, it needs to be done as commercially as possible.”

At a glance

- Finishing: 34 months
- Carcass weight: 300-370kg
- Growth rate: Don’t weigh
- Feeding: Grass-based, grazing April-November with silage or hay in the winter. Calves reared only on milk and grass
- Breeding: Seven stock bulls, using homebred when possible
- Key traits: Good forage converters, level lactation therefore good sucklers, easy calving, good back end

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