

125th anniversary

From the archives

The men who saved the Gloucester cow

Photograph by Sarah Farnsworth

ERIC FREEMAN, pictured with his son, Clifford, and their Gloucester bull, Noent Spirit, played a pivotal role in preventing this magnificent breed of cattle from dying out—although it is still classed as ‘priority’ on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) watchlist. Now, native farm-animal breeds and grass-reared meat are coming into their own, thanks to the ‘eat local’ zeitgeist, interest in conservation grazing and recognition that some traditional farming methods are more environmentally friendly than the intensive modern alternative.

Mr Freeman Snr was one of a group of farmers in the early 1970s who scoured the country for dispersed animals to keep the Gloucester gene pool as wide as possible and who formed the RBST, which celebrates its half-century next year. ‘The thrill of finding them and saving them was enough for my generation, but people such as my son now have to make money on them,’ he observed. (*September 21, 2016*) *KG*

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