

198
breeder
profiles
spread
throughout
the
four
provinces

Robert Shannon

When Robert Shannon and Shirley Helen married in 1995, Robert moved from Ballydehob to the Helen farm in Ballinascarty where Shirley's father John ran a mixed farm with around 20 Friesian cows. Robert's father William had registered Friesians from 1969 under the *Ballydehob* prefix and Robert took this herd to Ballinascarty where the herds were amalgamated under the *Ballydehob* prefix. Back then, the 40-cow herd produced a quota of 250,000 lrs. Today, the Shannon farm in Ballydehob is used for the non-milking stock.

Farming close to the coast of the Atlantic ocean means that Robert's herd grazes almost all year round. During the mid to late 1990s, when stocking rates were lower, Robert only kept the cows indoors for about ten days around Christmas ; this was more for convenience during the holiday period than for anything else. Back then they were kept in at night-time for about ten weeks.

With stocking rates now tighter there isn't the same scope for winter grazing, so the cows come in by night from mid-November and by night and day from early December ; they go grazing by day from early February and are out grazing full time by Patrick's Day.

Currently, the 80-cow herd is yielding 8,060 lrs., 4.1 % F and 3.7 % P.

Robert Shannon with his Ballydehob Herd.



Ernie and Naomi Gregg

Ernie Gregg from Ballybollen, Ahoghill, Ballymena (Antrim) also first saw Aubracs at the Ploughing Match and decided to investigate further. His enquiries led him to the farm of Kyle McCall from Armagh who runs a herd of 130 Aubrac and Aubrac-x cows. Kyle had found the Aubrac to be ideal in achieving his desired aims - a cow that was easily kept on grass without meals, one that fleshed easily, had a big pelvis and possessed excellent feet. Ernie was convinced.

In June 2014 he bought five good maiden heifers from George Hayes, Borrisokane (Tipperary) - Ernie's daughter Naomi fell in love with them. Then in December 2014 they bought a very well bred in-calf heifer, *Exquise*, from Anne Marie Valette, Le Bessieres, Huparlac (Aveyron) and on Feb. 21st 2015 *Exquise* delivered a bull, *Ballybollen Kristoff* - the first registered calf of the Gregg's new *Ballybollen Herd*. Since then the remainder of the heifers have successfully calved and are back in calf again. Ernie is delighted with the milk yield of his first-calved heifers and with the natural body score of the calves themselves.

Kristoff was entered in the inaugural *Northern Ireland Beef Calf EXPO* held in Balmoral on November 14th 2015 where he attracted great interest leading to many serious enquiries about the breed.

Naomi Gregg with Finnoe Harriet, Exquise & Finnoe Honey.

