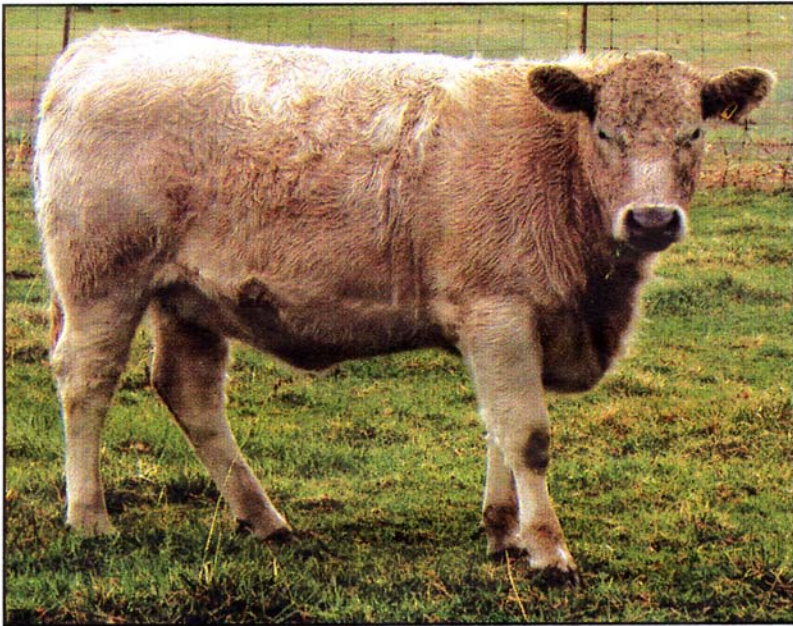


From: Farm World (Newspaper)
Vol. 49, No. 43
Wednesday, November 26, 2003

Front Page Picture



THIS MURRAY GREY BULL, F-2, owned by Carol and Richard Lightfield of Oxford, Ohio, placed second at the Beef Expo. For more on the Lightfield cattle farm, see page 19. (Celeste Baumgartner photo)



AGNES, ONE OF the Lightfield's many Murray Grey heifers, grazes in a paddock. They prefer grass to legumes. The Lightfields like Murray Grey cattle because of their ease of handling and suitability for small farms.

Murray Grey cattle found at Beef Expo

Ohio couple finds breed suitable for small farms

By CELESTE BAUMGARTNER
Ohio Correspondent

OXFORD, Ohio — Carol and Richard Lightfield were first attracted to Murray Grey cattle because of their ease of handling and suitability to small farms.

The Lightfields had been raising Brahma cattle but were moving to a smaller farm. They decided to look at the Beef Expo for a more appropriate breed.

"We wandered around for a day and a half and then I came around a corner and ran into a 4,000-pound Murray Grey bull from West Virginia and a young lady was hanging all over him and he could care less," Lightfield said. "That's got to be it," I said; something easy to handle, something we can enjoy and pass along to our grandchildren."

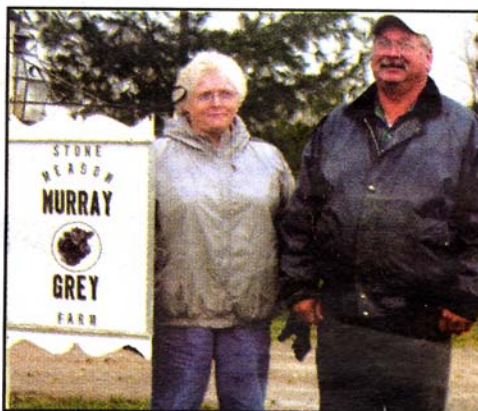
"That attracted me to the breed, and the more I found out that they were suitable for smaller farms. They have high exchange rates where they can live on a little bit," Lightfield said. "Brahmas are a grazing animal; they move constantly. Murray Greys don't; they'll stay in one area, eat it down and then they lay down and rest for the whole day which is ideal for smaller farms."

Lightfield sells his heifers and some bulls for breeding stock. A son finishes the rest of the bulls for slaughter on his Brookville, Ind. farm.

The Lightfields show each year at the state fair and the Ohio Beef Expo; in 2001 they had the Grand Champion Bull at the state fair.

"We got into showing by the back door," Lightfield said. "I've become so enthusiastic about the breed. And the only way I can show people what this breed of cattle looks like and what can be done with them on small acreages is by showing; and thus, we got into showing."

Grand Champion heifer or cow has always eluded him, Lightfield said, but he has had several reserve champions and is never out of the top three.



CAROL AND RICHARD Lightfield say Murray Grey cattle are easy to handle.

Last summer Lightfield began rotational grazing. He'd always fooled around with it he said, but really got started last summer. He has eight cows, a bull and six calves being rotationally grazed on a 12-acre hay field. He took a first cutting of hay off it in the spring.

"This year, with the profusion of hay, I was able to turn my hayfield into four pastures - it's only a 12-acre hayfield, but I'm able to satisfy my own hay needs, plus my son's hay needs. After the first cutting we divided it up into four paddocks, and we rotated each paddock every seven days."

Currently he's rotating the cows every four days.

"The way it stands I will not have to feed any hay until Dec. 1," he said. "Amazing things have happened this year. It's been one of those years when everything worked just exactly the way the book said."

"It proves to me that rotational grazing works especially well with these animals. With a good conversion rate, they don't require a lot. You'd be amazed just how well they can live on small acreage."

For more on Murray Grey cattle, contact the American Murray Grey Assoc. at www.murraygreybeefcattle.com



THIS MURRAY GREY BULL, *Mocha Man*, weighs in at about 2,700 pounds, yet it is docile to be around.

(Celeste Baumgartner photos)