Breeds of Beef Cattle

- Aberdeen Angus
- Blonde d'Aquitaine
- Charolais
- Galloway
- Gelbvieh
- Hays Converter
- Hereford
- Highland
- Limousin
- Lincoln Red
- Maine Anjou
- Murray Grey
- Pinzgauer
- Parthenais
- Salers
- Shorthorn
- Simmental
- South Devon
**Aberdeen Angus**

**Origins:** Originated in the Highlands of Scotland when cattle were bred primarily for quality of the carcass and meat. The breed first came to North America in 1878 and the first purebred calf was born in 1886 at the Guelph Experimental Farm in 1877.

**Quality traits:** Recognized for quality carcasses and maternal strengths of the cows.

**Weight of bulls:** 2300 to 2800 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1400 to 1800 lbs.

**Appearance:** Solid in colour ranging from reddish gold to russet. Beef has fine, dense hair.

**Hays Conserver**

**Origins:** First breed developed by a Canadian livestock producer in 1952. Registered in Calgary Alberta. Registered in December, 1975.

**Quality traits:** Fast-growing cattle adapted to range conditions of Western Canada.

**Weight of bulls:** 2300 to 2800 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1200 to 1600 lbs.

**Appearance:** Silver grey in colour.

**Belgian Blue**

**Origins:** Third largest breed in Great Britain. First introduced to Canada in 1976.

**Quality traits:** Noted for its quiet temperament.

**Weight of bulls:** 2700 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1400 lbs.

**Appearance:** May be either red or black and are always one solid colour. Naturally polled (born without horns).

**Blonde d’Aquitaine**

**Origins:** Originated in southwest France and date back to the sixth century. Today’s breed is a combination of the Garonnais of the plains, Garonnais of the hills and the Blonde des Pyrenees.

**Quality traits:** Crosses well with other breeds, is heavily muscled, and yield a high percentage of lean meat. Cows are known for ease in calving.

**Weight of bulls:** 1900 to 2300 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1100 to 1500 lbs.

**Appearance:** Range in colour from a solid wheat shade to darker shades with lighter rings around the eyes and muzzle, on the inner sides of the legs and under the belly and shins.

**Charolais**

**Origins:** Came from France and was the earliest European beef cattle to import to Canada.

**Quality traits:** Proven adaptable to a wide range of environments. Grow rapidly and have good muscling. Widely used in crossbreeding with other breeds.

**Weight of bulls:** 2500 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1600 to 2000 lbs.

**Appearance:** White to cream coloured, either horned or polled (born without horns). Have medium to large frames.

**Dexter**

**Origins:** Originally natives of the south and southwest districts of Ireland. The breed was in Canada prior to 1890 but has become more popular since 1977.

**Quality traits:** Well used to roaming shelterless hillsides with sparse forage. Their small size makes them easy to handle and their smaller cuts of meat have also proved popular. In Canada, they are classified as a dual-purpose breed – for both meat and milk.

**Weight of bulls:** 1000 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 800 lbs.

**Appearance:** Smallest purebred dual-purpose breed of cattle in the world. Can be black, red or dun. All purebreds are horned.

**Galloway**

**Origins:** One of the older breeds of cattle, originating in Scotland. They were imported from Britain to Canada in 1853 and are believed to be one of the oldest registered breeds in Canada.

**Quality traits:** Noted for its hardiness, maternal traits, ease in calving and foraging abilities.

**Weight of bulls:** 1500 to 2100 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1050 to 1600 lbs.

**Appearance:** Basic colours are black, dun, red. Belted Galloways come in the same colours but have a wide white belt around their stomaches. All are polled (born without horns).

**Gelbvieh**

**Origins:** Evolved in the early 19th century through the crossing of various breeds in Bavaria. In Germany, the breed was developed for both milk and meat production although emphasis in recent years has been on meat production. The breed has been in Canada since 1972.

**Quality traits:** Reputation for having a good size and heavy muscling. Known to have desirable carcasses.

**Weight of bulls:** 2300 to 2800 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1400 to 1800 lbs.

**Appearance:** Solid in colour ranging from reddish gold to russet. Beef has fine, dense hair.

**Parthenais**

**Origins:** The French Parthenais Herdbook, established in 1885, was one of the oldest in France. Parthenais were originally a three-fold use breed, used for “oxen”, meat and milk. The first embryos were imported to Canada in 1981.

**Quality traits:** Calving difficulties are minimal. Animals have an excellent rate of gain and have high cutability carcass qualities. They are very docile and cross well with other breeds.

**Weight of bulls:** 1800 to 2200 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1300 to 1600 lbs.

**Appearance:** Tan/buckskin colour and must have black pigmentation around the eyes, ears, nose, tail, hooves and genita for full-blood status. They are also a heavily muscled breed.

**Pinzgauer**

**Origins:** The breed belongs to a group of cattle indigenous to Austria and first arrived in Canada in the early 1970s. In Austria, they are used for both milk and meat. In Canada, they are used strictly as beef cattle.

**Quality traits:** Medium size with a reputation for gentle temperament.

**Weight of bulls:** 2000 to 2400 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1300 to 1600 lbs.

**Colour:** Generally chestnut-brown in colour but can range from light to dark brown. A cleanly defined white stripe of varying width can be found along the back and knees. Animals also have a white rump and tail and are generally horned but, on rare occasions, can also be polled (born without horns).

**Salers**

**Origins:** Bred developed in south central France and first appeared in Canada in 1972.

**Quality traits:** Known for maternal qualities of easy calving and milk production. Have good dispositions and are recognized for their ability to forage for feed and to tolerate extreme climates.

**Weight of bulls:** 2000 to 2500 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1300 to 1500 lbs.

**Colour:** Purebreds are generally a solid, deep cherry red in colour and are horned. A small number of animals are black.

**Shorthorn**

**Origins:** Originated in England and first appeared in Canada in 1825.

**Quality traits:** Called the “Foundation breed” because it has been used in the development of a number of other breeds throughout the world. Has a reputation for hardness, strong maternal instincts and a good temperment.

**Weight of bulls:** 2300 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1200 to 1400 lbs.

**Colour:** May be red, white, roan or any combination of red and white. Can be either horned or polled (born without horns).

**Simmental**

**Origins:** Originated in Switzerland during the Middle Ages where it was used for both milk and meat production. In the rest of the world, the breed is primarily raised for meat.

**Quality traits:** Heavy muscling combined with the length and weight of the breed gives a high percentage of prime cuts without an excess of fat.

**Weight of bulls:** 2200 to 2800 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1400 to 1650 lbs.

**Appearance:** Range in colour from a light tan to dark reddish-brown.

**South Devon**

**Origins:** Developed in Devonshire, England and is recognized as being the oldest of the English breeds.

**Quality traits:** Noted for its hardness and excellent marbling (marbling refers to the fat particles contained within the muscle fibres that give the meat’s juiciness).

**Weight of bulls:** 2200 to 2600 lbs.

**Weight of cows:** 1400 lbs.

**Colour:** Bright yellowish-red in colour and can vary in shade. Can be either horned or polled (born without horns).

**Note:** Weights are mature weights.

**Poster produced by the Beef Farmers of Ontario 130 Malcolm Road, Guelph, Ontario N1K 1B1 519.824.0334 | www.ontariobeef.com**

**Background Photo:** David Barr

**Bull photos and facts courtesy of individual associations.**