

Swatara Springs 'Belties', a cow of a different 'color'

BY SHEILA MILLER
HARRISBURG — Close to 140 black and white cattle dot the well-trimmed pastures of Richard and Emory Stein's farms.

But, unlike most black and white cows grazing southeastern Pennsylvania fields, these cattle are not the popular German breed, the Holsteins.

The Stein cattle are unique to the area and the entire state. These black and white's are a distinct breed called Belted Galloways and Dutch Belted.

A quick glance at these animals will tell even the untrained eye that this is a cow of a different color, or more correctly, a different marking.

As their name implies, the Belted Galloways and the Dutch Belted cattle wear a white "belt" around their middles. The rest of the animal is pure black.

As Richard Stein, the owner of Swatara Springs Farm explained, the Dutch Belteds are a dairy breed imported from Holland. The Belted Galloways, he said, were originally imported from Scotland and England and are a beef-type animal.

Stein told Lancaster Farming that his father, Emory, was in the dairy business until the four-lane highway, Route 283, bisected his farm. After the highway divided his farm in two, the elder Stein decided to sell off his cattle.

"The big barn just sat idle then," recalled Richard, until about nine years ago when I bought my first Belted Galloways from General James A. Van Fleet's herd at Sleepy Creek Farm, Virginia."

Four heifers and a bull made their way to their new home in Pennsylvania, and from that time on Stein was

hooked on the unique black and whites.

According to Stein, the first Belted Galloway cattle were imported into the U.S. by a man named Harry A. Prouk. Around 1948, six heifers and a bull named Boreland Admiral arrived from the British Isles to their quarantine station in Canada.

After undergoing another thirty day quarantine at a Canadian farm, Prouk was allowed to finally bring them into the U.S. Prouk picked up the cattle in a padded horse van, and the cattle were led down a ramp covered with red carpet to take their first steps on American soil.

Prouk, who lived near Philadelphia, insisted his Belties had no white feet and their white belts had to be uniform and not too wide.

These first seven head of Belted Galloway cattle started the American import

of the British registered animals. Others, like General Van Fleet, added to the growing numbers through more expensive, tedious imports.

From his four original heifers and the bull named Sleepy Creek Lord Fairfax, Stein has built his herd of championship cattle.

Stein speaks fondly of this first bull that still grazes in the lower pasture and keeps about forty of his cows company. "He is so gentle and has such a good disposition, you can feed him apples out of your hand."

Stein boasts about Lord Fairfax's pedigree while pointing to a beautifully framed picture of the bull. The bull, he said, is out of parents imported directly from Scotland. His sire is the famous Mossend Golden Boy who has more champion offspring to his name than any other Beltie bull in the country, Stein said.

Stein has numerous championship ribbons stacked neatly in a cardboard box — reminders of the thrill of victory at the State Fair of Virginia and the Eastern National over a four-year showing career.

Very carefully he unravels a banner from the Virginia Fair of 1972. Against fading purple, the words Supreme

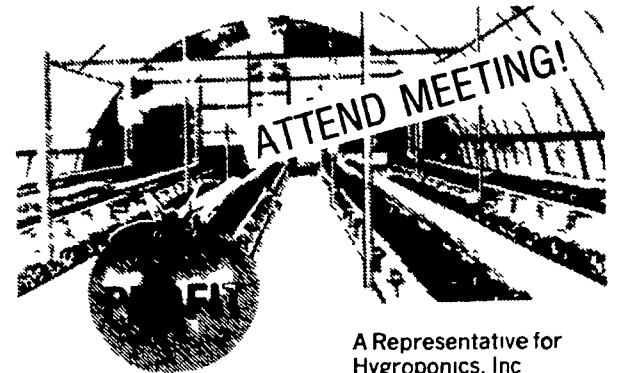
Champion stand out in tarnished gold letters.

The best Belted Galloway in the show was Stein's

Sleepy Creek Rowina. After being tagged the grand champion female, she was

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