

HUNGARIAN GRAY CATTLE (HUNGARY)

Hungarian gray cows with calves



Origin: The Hungarian Gray Cattle origin is close connection with history of Hungary. There are more theory of archaeologist about Hungarian Gray origin and domestication, but that sure its current appearance is developed in Carpathian Basin. Probably in this process had a part of *Bos primigenius primigenius* which was hunted in Hungary until 18th century. Until the beginning of the 20th century, long-horned Grey Steppe cattle were the foremost breed in Hungary. Used both for draft purposes and for beef, they were yoked in teams of four or more to pull merchants' wagons, or to plough, and until 18th century they were also exported in huge amounts of herds to west Europe on their own feet. From about 1850 onward, however, they began to decrease in numbers due to crossbreeding and the increasing use of Simmental.

An attempt to improve the breed was made when, in 1861, the superior herd of a Hungarian nobleman was disbanded and moved to a state farm, where selection for early maturing and heavily fleshed animals took place. But Hungarian Gray cattle continued to lose popularity until, in 1975, only several herds remained, with a total of 170 cows. By 1982 stock had increased to 850 cows in 6 herds. One of these herds is in the open-air museum at Hortobágy.

Hungarian gray bull



Characteristic: Their coat is almost entirely grey, sometimes with a little black around the eyes, but bulls have a more expressive sexual nature also is coat colour. They are long horned has very various forms. Hungarian Grey cow weighs an average of 500 kg, with a height at the withers of 135 cm. The average bull weighs 650 kg and stands 150 cm at the withers.

Products: Nowadays the most important aspect in Hungarian Gray cattle breeding is gene reserve, but earlier they were very famous beef cattle all over in Europe, and some lines were selectively bred for milk, as well. Moreover before industrial revolution they were used also for draft purposes.

Population number: Hungarian Gray cattle still now endangered breed, but they population number is increasing. They occurrence are only in Hungary and several in Transylvania. There are about 400 registered breeder, and 6000 gene reserve cows.

Bibliography: www.szurkemarha.hu

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