TUX-ZILLERTALER CATTLE (AUSTRIA)

Tux-Zillertaler cow and calf



Origin: There are different opinions about the origin of the Tux-Zillertaler. It is very likely that the Tuxer cow is a descendant of the Eringer cow, which comes from the Valais canton in Switzerland. The people from Valais brought it to the Tyrol during their migrations (12th-14th century). The Tuxer cow was originally unicoloured but the typical white fur in the lumbar region (also called "Federl", which means small feather) soon came into being by crossings with other breeds. The Zillertaler strain probably arose from crossings of the Tuxer with red Tyrolean strains.

Characteristics: The Tux-Zillertaler cow is relatively small. The height is only 125-130 cm and the weight is about 550-650 kg. They are black (Tuxer cow, which is also called "die Schwachzn" by the Tyrolean people) or red (Zillertaler, or "die Roatn"). They have very typical white spots on the pelvis, the tail root, the ventral abdomen and the udder. Breeders reject other white spots, like for example on the upper arm ("Fatschen") or the lower leg. The head is short and broad with strong horns. The tips of these horns, as well as the muzzle and the claws are black. The farmers appreciated the Tuxer especially for its intelligence, toughness, endurance, pugnacity and its ability to graze on every part of the mountainous pastures.

History: The Tuxer cow has also been used for cow fights ("Kuhstechen") which have a long tradition in the Tyrol. The

Tux-Zillertaler bull



farmers used only Tux-Zillertaler for these combats, because they are especially belligerent. Because of the fact that there are more efficient breeds, the number of Tux-Zillertaler declined. In the 1970s, there only existed about 30 Tux-Zillertaler worldwide. In Salzburg, the "Last Tuxer cow" has been exhibited in 1971. Fortunately some cows have been found in different Tyrolean villages and by crossing them with Eringer bulls the old breed could be saved. The foundation of the Breeders Association in 1986 was another important step for the preservation of the Tuxer. Furthermore, the breeders get a premium for every Tux-Zillertaler.

Population number: The Tux-Zillertaler cow is a highly endangered breed of Austria. In 2009 there were 1650 cows registered. The meat is finely fibred, succulent, slightly marbled and poor in fat. The average milk yield per cow is about 4500 kg (4.09 % fat and 3.31 % protein).

The Tux-Zillertaler is not a high-performance breed, but as it is part of the Tyrolean culture, it should be worth to be preserved.

Bibliography: "Die Rinderrasse der Tux-Zillertaler - Ein Stück Tiroler Kultur" (Christian Moser und Martin Reiter, 1996, Verlag Edition Tirol) www.tux-zillertaler.com; www.rinderzucht-tirol.at; www.marxerhof.at; www.arche-austria.at

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