

Screening for bull consignments: How and why this is done.

It is our intention to only offer bulls in this sale that are above average quality. Every bull is half the genetic contribution to an entire herd and thus each one has a much greater impact on the genetic progress and direction of that herd (and the breed as a whole) than does any individual cow. This fact should make them considerably more valuable to breeders than females and certainly means that more selection pressure should be placed on these males as well.

With this in mind, the 2024 South East sale committee has decided to screen bull consignments for quality. This will be our ongoing practice to ensure that bull prices are kept high and those few bulls that are sold are a quality that represents the breed standard well.

To accomplish these goals, a panel of qualified and unbiased Highland breeders has been selected by the committee to critically evaluate and weigh the merits of each bull consigned. This panel will assess the quality of the entries based on their structure, growth, fleshing traits, maternal trait potentials, temperament, movement (as much as possible) and breed character. None of the panel members will have bulls of their own breeding in the sale.

The committee is doing this special screening for the bull entries because there are typically just a few serious bull buyers and a disproportionate number of males entered. Limiting the options to a few of the very best entries will increase bidding competition while simultaneously increasing the average quality of bulls offered. While this means many bull entries will not make the sale, we believe this will be a benefit both to the sellers of those animals that do make it in and the buyers as well.

Looking at the bigger picture, the breed as a whole can only benefit from setting the bar higher for males given their influential genetic role.