

British beef back in Germany

British beef cattle breeding expertise was back on show for the first time since the BSE crisis at one of Germany's premier summer beef events this August.

By Norman Dunn

The 200-member British Livestock Genetics Consortium made its first move into Germany with a large information stand at the Franconian International Beef Cattle Event, Schönbrunn in Bavaria. "While semen and embryo imports from the UK have been permitted for some time, there's now a very real demand for live breeding stock on the continent," reported consortium member David Bell who'd journeyed over from Crackley Farm near Kenilworth to manage the German stand.

Bell, who also has his own genetics company, added: "There are good chances that the ban on export of livestock from Britain will be lifted next year and we wanted to be in on the ground at the right time." Interest in the information on show at the BLG stand by breeders from the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Austria as well as Germany was reported as "terrific and very encouraging."

Longhorns

Giving this event deep in the Bavarian countryside an additional British touch this year was a 25-strong English Longhorn section judged by UK breeder Mrs Kerry Long. Top of the Longhorn section was last year's interbreed reserve at the show: the bull Castlevue George from Mrs Sabine



Top German Longhorn breeder with a herd of over 100 pedigree animals producing for a private direct beef marketing program: Sabine Zentis. Pictured here with her breed reserve champion at the Schönbrunn international beef cattle event, Sabine Zentis is unique in her area of Germany through keeping her animals outside all the year round.

Zentis' 110-head pedigree Longhorn herd near Aachen. Zentis had to be content with the breed championship alone this year because the interbreed judging covering 10 breeds including German Angus, Fleckvieh, Limousin, Galloway and Charolais, was abandoned during torrential rainstorms – perhaps another English touch!

Zentis, who, unusually for Germany, keeps her herd outside all year round, finishes her own and neighbour's pedigree Longhorn cattle, slaughters them at a private abattoir and sells meat direct under the label Longhorn Beef to restaurants and butchers shops. "The beef sells at a premium because it is recognised as having superior taste and texture. My beasts are grass and silage fed with a minimum of locally grown cereals." The Castlevue Longhorns was founded in 1989 based on females imported from the Fishwick herd of Peter Close and with input from Grove House and Rousham bloodlines. □



English farmer and BLG consortium member David Bell represented British Livestock Genetics at one of Germany's premier beef cattle events this August pictured here with the English Longhorn champion at the event George of Castlevue from Sabine Zentis' prize-winning English Longhorn herd.