

# Charolais at 60

## Breeder Profile

### **Basil Bothwell**

**Dereskit, Killeshandra, Co. Cavan**

**Herd: DERESKIT CHAROLAIS**

**113<sup>th</sup> Member of the Society**

**Date of Membership: 10<sup>th</sup> August 1976**

## Q & A

### **1. Why Charolais? .... what first attracted you to become involved in Charolais Breeding.**

*My late father Fred was a man who loved to try something new and when Charolais came into Ireland in 1964 he was keen to try them out, so I think in 1966 he bought three Charolais cross calves (I was only 9 at that stage) and it was my job to feed those calves.*

*We were very impressed with the growth rate and conformation of these calves which were two heifers and a bull calf. The two heifers were kept for cows and at that time the Department of Agriculture were licencing cross bred bulls, so we kept the bull calf for a bull for a few years and he bred good calves off the shorthorn and black white head. Cows which had better growth and conformation compared to the traditional breeds. At this stage we were hooked on Charolais.*

### **2. When and where was the herds first Charolais purchased?**

*It was in 1971 that we bought our first purebred Charolais bull to run with our crossbred cows. He was bought from JJ McGrath at a sale in Maynooth mart. In 1974 we bought another bull from Francis Harte which we showed at the RDS that year and he won first prize.*

*In October 1975 we bought our first female, Moyglare Joyeuse, a two-year old in-calf heifer and she calves in July 1976, a heifer calf. Joyeuse was a Shamrock Ambassadeur daughter. She was a good cow but was very cross for 2 to 3 weeks after calving, so you had to be very careful with her. I had a few close encounters with her. We had her till she was 17 years old and she bred very well and some of the best cows in my herd go back to her.*

**3. What has been the biggest enjoyment/achievement from breeding Charolais cattle?**

*My biggest enjoyment from breeding Charolais over the years has been showing our cattle at Shows and Shows and Sales and making so many friends and meeting other breeders from different parts of the world. I have really enjoyed making so many friends all over Ireland, the UK and France and I love looking at good quality Charolais cattle.*

*Regarding achievements, I have had quite a few over the years and to just name a few – Winning 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the RDS in 1989 with our stock bull Skidoo Casimir who bet the Intermediate Champion from the North bull sales which cost 16,000stg at the time and bulls from France.*

*Another achievement was in 2004 winning Senior Heifer Calf Champion at the National Show with Dereskit Ulanda and in 2011 winning Supreme Champion Bull at the Christmas Cracker with Dereskit Fernando. He was bought by Mr. Andrew Hornall from Scotland for a stock bull for the Falleninch Purebred Charolais herd. He went on to breed prize winners at “Stars of the Future” and the Royal Highland Show. Also Dereskit Fantastic won Reserve Junior Champion male at the National Show in 2010, he was a son of Texan-Gie.*

**4. What do you think of the standard of Charolais in Ireland today compared to when the herd was first established?**

*I think the Charolais cattle today have come a long way from when we first started. I think the growth rate and conformation has improved over the years. The type of Charolais today have more width and better round of rump and that is what the market wants, but we must be careful to try and retain the milk in our cows or even improve it.*

**5. What do you look for in a good bull?**

*What I look for in a bull is good size and length, four good legs and feet, good width of shoulder at the top, good behind the shoulders, good depth of lion, good width of rump and round of rump. I like good width of pelvic and coming out square at the plates. A good head and he must be able to walk well.*

**6. What do you look for in a good breeding female?**

*I like a female to look feminine. She should have good size and length, a good head, good width and squareness in her plates. She should have good legs and feet with not too much bone. I don't want a female with too much muscle, a good R+ or a U- is all I would want in a female. She should have a good level top and width of rump and good behind the shoulder.*

**7. Do you have any special feeding regimes; (a) prior to calving; (b) when preparing animals for show/sales?**

*(a) I don't any my cows too fat before calving. The autumn calvers are usually kept on restricted grass and some minerals and two weeks before calving I put them in and feed hay and minerals. Its easier to watch them when they are in. After calving during the winter, I feed the best silo I have plus 4kg of nuts.*

*(b) Feeding bulls for sales; I feed the bulls twice a day with a good grower calf nut. When they are weaned, I start them on about 2kg twice a day and after a few weeks I increase to 3kg twice a day. About 90 days before a sale, I bring them up to 5kg twice a day. I don't use fancy munchies and I don't ad-lib feed. I feel ad-lib feed is too hard on the bull's stomach.*

**8. What advice would you give to new breeders who are just starting out on their journey breeding Charolais cattle?**

*My advice to a new breeder is to do some research into the blood lines. See what is breeding well and consistently and buy quality as the day you buy is the day you sell. Look at the star rating and if the animal looks good and the star rating is good then she should do well, but do not be solely guided by the stars alone.*

**9. What's the biggest change in farming you've seen over the nearly 50 years since the herd was established?**

*Breeding cattle has changed immensely, 0 years ago you look at an animal and if you liked the look of it, you bought it. Now you have to have stars and ease of calving and that seems to dictate the price and now we have myostatin's thrown into the mix as well, so breeding has got much more complex.*

**10. Where do you see the breed in 10 years-time?**

I'm not too sure, I just hope we don't lose the quality and the breed character of our cattle. The Charolais cattle have been tried and tested and have stood the test of time. Teagasc is trying to get us to reduce the size of our cows after us trying for years to get size into our cattle. If you have a good growth rate you will have better weight gain. So as farmer's we need to be careful not to lose our size.

**11. What is/was the best piece of advice you received re. Charolais?**

*One of the best pieces of advice I got was breed for the females and the bulls will follow. Meaning breed good females and they in turn will breed good bulls.*



*Skidoo Casimir after winning 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the RDS in 1989, beating off stiff competition from UK and French entries.*



**A son of Skidoo Casimir after winning Champion male at Naas Show/Sale**



**Laheens Idol after winning 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the National Show in Tullamore**



***Dereskit Playboy – Sold in Goffs Show/Sale in September 2000 for £3,600***



**Dereskit Ulanda – National Senior Heifer Calf Champion 2004.**



**Dereskit Fantastic – Reserve Junior Male Calf Champion at the National Charolais Show in 2010.**

**DERESKIT FERNANDO 2011 CHRISTMAS CRACKER  
OVERALL CHAMPION AT CARRICK-ON-SHANNON**



***Dereskit Fernando – Overall Champion at the Christmas Cracker 2011. He sold for €8,000.***