

Keijoasan Fold hosted CHCS 50th Anniversary AGM

By ROSEANN TRUDEAU
The Tweed News

Formally incorporated as a livestock breed association under the Livestock Pedigree Act in October, 1964, the Canadian Highland Cattle Society (CHCS) is celebrating their 50th Anniversary. Joan Wort of Keijoasan Fold in Tweed hosted their Annual General Meeting (AGM) from August 15 to 18.

A cheese and wine reception and registration was held on Friday, August 15.

Registration was again held on the morning of Saturday, August 16 followed by a visit to Keijoasan Fold. Members toured Joan's farm checking out her herd of cattle and prize bull, Keijoasan Carters Sir Prize 1 born July 9, 2006. His twin, Sir Prize 2 was sold to New York state. After the visit members went to Stirling Fair and toured Farmtown Park. Dinner was enjoyed at the River Inn.

The AGM was held on Sunday, August 17 at Trudeau's Event & Banquet Centre. A special evening banquet was organized by Joan complete with a bag piper.

On Monday morning, August 18, to complete the four-day event, members enjoyed a tour of Earth Haven Farm, a certified organic farm, owned by Aric and Mary Anne Aguonie of Thomasburg who also have Highland cattle.

Approximately 40 to 50 were

present hailing from Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Ontario. President, Bruce O'Brien from Pictou, Nova Scotia also attended.

Highland Cattle originated in the Highlands and west coastal islands of Scotland, areas severe in climate and lashed by the North Atlantic gales. Throughout the long recorded history of Highlands, breeders have taken great care to retain the original characteristics of these cattle. Originally, the breed was divided into two classes, the West Highlands or Kyloe, and the Highlander.

The Kyloes, raised on the western islands of Scotland, tended to be of a smaller size and had a higher percentage of black and brindled cattle than the mainland Highlanders. The size difference was probably due more to the severe climate and limited rations that the island cattle were subjected to than to any genetic variation between the classes. Today all members of the breed are called Highland.

The Highland Cattle Society of Scotland was established in 1884 and the first Herd Book published in 1885.

Lord Strathcona Highland Cattle were first imported into Canada from Scotland in the 1880s: one bull by the Hon. Donald A. Smith (Lord Strathcona), Winnipeg, and one bull by Robert Campbell, Strathclair, Manitoba, who later

also imported five females. History has also recorded the presence of Highland Cattle in Nova Scotia during these early years.

The late 1920s began the era significant to present day Canadian breeders, when importations were made from Scotland by breeders in Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Highland cattle are considered low maintenance because they stay outside all winter and produce leaner meat than other breeds.

Joan Wort and her husband Keith began their fold in 1982 with two cows with heifer calves at foot and a sire. Prior to 1990 Keijoasan was instrumental, along with assistance from other CHCS members, in mounting Highland Cattle exhibits at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. In 1991, for the time in the Royal's 65th history Highland Cattle were shown. Keijoasan and Swains Farm took the Grand Champion honours.

In 1995 when Keith fell ill the Worts had almost 90 head of cattle, but giving up was not an option for Joan. She reduced their herd to 57 and kept farming. Over the past 19 years she has gradually reduced her fold to approximately 14 and by 2015 her intention is to reduce to just five.