

## The Belted Galloway

The Belted Galloway or Belties are an old Scottish breed believed to have originated in the Galloway and Dumfries districts of Scotland. Though there are varying stories of their origin, they were most likely bred from Galloways and Dutch Belted (Lakenvelder) cattle. Belties occasionally are born in all black Galloway herds and also all black calves have been born in Beltie herds. There is mention of sheeted (belted) cattle as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century. There is recorded history that indicates they originated in the southern Scotland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Whatever the true timeline, we know they have been in Scotland for some time.

Miss Flora Stuart is credited with supporting the breed with establishment of its own breed book. She served as president of the Belted Galloway Cattle Society and bred Belties that were black, red, and dun with black being the most common. Being a Beltie enthusiast, she assisted in development of herds in many other countries. They were first imported into North America in the 1940s and the Belted Galloway Society in the United States was founded in 1951.

The Belted Galloway has a few unique features that set them apart from other cattle breeds other than just their appearance. In winter they grow a double layered shaggy hair coat to keep them warm rather than adding fat. This makes for much leaner beef. They are naturally polled meaning they do not grow horns. They also have the ability to thrive on rough forage making it much easier to maintain them.

Bonnie Lass of Faodail Farm, or as we call her Bon Bon, is my first cow. I wasn't in the market for a cow just yet when I first saw her. She was at a duck breeder's farm where I was picking up additions to my flock. They had bottle raised her for another farmer when her mother died shortly after she was born. She was now a year old. As beautiful and tame as she was, I left with only the ducks. After getting home I was curious about the breed and did some research. Once I discovered she was not only Scottish but, was from the district of Scotland where my ancestors were farmers for several generations I made the 70-mile trek back to the duck breeders to pick her up. Her puppy dog like personality has been bringing much joy to the farm ever since.

