



11-14-19

Devon Breeders and Enthusiasts:

I would like to thank all the members who helped make the 2019 National Red Devon USA event a big success. This year we wanted to promote the breed the best way possible and have an annual event that was income positive and I am pleased to say we accomplished both of those tasks and many more.

The education was great this year for the members that attended and a few people from the public. Dave Hartman, a successful grass fed producer, and Penn State Extension educator prepared a great presentation that involved research done at O'Neil's Quality Devons. Dave spoke on forage quality of grasses, legumes, and forges. In the trial we wanted to see how many days/weeks the forage would be of good enough quality to put weight on steers/heifers 800# - 1000# without any supplementation. Dave had previously been involved in research with another Penn State educator and Anibal Pordomingo. If anyone is interested in receiving his PowerPoint presentation please email me at ajoneil29@gmail.com. Dustin Heeter, who owns a cow calf operation, and a Penn State educator, also spoke at our event. Dustin's talk on "Creating the Ideal Cow" was a great session and helped many that attended, to think about some decisions they need to make on their farm. Dustin spoke about how the Red Devons have a great opportunity to control the genetics of our association in a positive way. The point he made was that since we are a smaller breed, in comparison to other British breeds, we need to make sure that we are culling cows that need to be culled. He spoke about being harsh with culling and not making excuses. He challenged producers to not register animals that are not better than the dam or sire you are trying to improve upon. I spoke to several producers after the meeting and many said they were going to make some changes and get rid of certain animals that weren't working in their environment.

This year the promotional committee decided to sponsor a booth at the KILE. We wanted to raise awareness of how we raise animals in an environment that is beneficial to the soils and animals. We had a LCD television that had a running slide show of many great looking Red Devons. We had catalogs, breeders list, and brochures present for interested public. We also had lots of merchandise on display that was available to purchase. Steve Rockcastle, who spent a lot of time at the booth, was happy to record that we had the highest merchandise sales at one event. I would like to give a big thanks to Steve who took care of our merchandise orders and inventory. Those numbers are available in our minutes.

Our youth that showed at KILE had a scholarship opportunity from the Pennsylvania Livestock Association. The Pennsylvania Livestock Association presents three \$1000.00 educational scholarships to

outstanding youth individuals on the basis of outstanding leadership skills, a keen interest in the livestock industry, and involvement at KILE. I am pleased to report that all of our youth participated in this and also did community service while attending the show.

The biggest highlight of the national show was the comradery shown by all the Red Devon USA members. Stacylyn Himelright, Hover Farms, helped to prepare our Devon's for the show ring. Stacylyn has years of experience in 4H and showing cattle. She showed us how to bath, groom, and show animals in the show ring. The day of the open show the Red Devon members had 15 animals at the wash rack by 5:00 am. Each member had their duty. Stacylyn taught some of the youth that were showing Red Devon's how to prepare animals for the show ring and exploit their best features. The Red Devon's were all staled together at a very busy entrance/exit, so many people got to see how we worked as a team. In an environment where it is traditionally every farm for itself, it really stood out that we have good relationships as a group and our vision is much bigger than just one show. Devin Cunningham, the Co-Superintendent at KILE, told me on several occasions that many people commented that they thought we were one big farm. A special thanks to all the exhibitors, Red Devon USA members, and family members that chipped in to help get animals to the show ring or help to show animals. We were able to get approval to take our animals to the arena where we got some great pictures as a group. It truly was a special event and helped members to see our love for Devon's is far greater then our financial success, but rather our passion for grass fed beef is out of a concern for a better quality of management of soil, human health, and animal welfare.

If anyone would like to take a booth display to a local event to promote Devon's please reach out to Christian Ramsburg (Chair of Promotional Committee) or I (Chair of Events Committee). I would like to comment that we are discussing doing educational webinars in 2020 so all the membership can benefit, not just the members that attend the show. This will also be a more economically way to get education, by not having to pay travel expenses for the speaker. Please open and read any emails from Red Devon USA. Our communication needs to be a two way street, so please feel free to contact any of the board members with any questions or concerns.

A.J. O'Neil

O'Neil's Quality Devons

Chairman of Events Committee