**PRESS RELEASE 24/22**

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**Beef group of five championship winners announced**

SPECTATORS gathered at the cattle lawn on Saturday afternoon at Balmoral Show for the highly anticipated beef group of five championship, sponsored by the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC).

First into the ring were the contenders for the native breed category. The superb line-up, hoping to find favour with the judge included, Irish Moiled, Beef Shorthorn, Dexter, Hereford and Angus cattle.

Remarking on the quality of cattle on show, judge William Smith from County Meath said, “There are five exceptional teams of cattle, but call me a traditionalist, I like a senior bull in a group of five and that will rule out two of the teams straightaway. My decision today is based on a balanced team which show very good characteristics of their breed.”

There was an air of expectancy as Mr Smith drew up a shortlist for the competition class before stepping forward to tap out the Hereford breed. Explaining his decision, Mr Smith added, “There’s a good bull dominating four exceptional females. The females are really well balanced. The group caught my eye from the minute they came in, they’re easy winners.”

Speaking on behalf of the winning group, Ivan Haire said, “We are pleased to follow on from last year where we won the group of five. As the judge said, it’s a feminine group. He wanted feminine females and they are that.”

Despite being pipped to the post by the Herefords, the Beef Shorthorn also celebrated success as the breed was selected as overall native group of five reserve champion.

Shortly after the conclusion of the native breed class, it was the turn of the continental class. Entering the cattle lawn was a tremendous show of Charolais, Limousin, Simmental, British Blonde, Salers and British Blue cattle.

Mr Smith took some time to contemplate which breed would take home the title in what was described as a “stiff competition”. In the end it proved a successful afternoon for the Limousin breed as they grabbed the judge’s eye. Taking overall reserve in the class was the Charolais line-up.

Providing an insight into his decision, Mr Smith said, “There was just a bit more maturity with the Limousin females and for that reason they had the edge but it was very very tight.”

Speaking on behalf of the Limousin group, James Alexander said, “Two of the five cattle are mine so I had quite a vested interest in getting us over the line for this win. There’s a lot of good cattle out and the Charolais were very good, but the Limousin’s just had a bit more flesh and a bit more power and that’s why we got there.”

Presenting the winners with rosettes, LMC board member Joe Stewart said, “On behalf of LMC I wish to extend congratulations to all those taking home well-deserved titles from this year’s beef group of five championship. The standard of entries was extremely high and this is testament to the year-round hard work and dedication of these exhibitors.”

LMC chief executive Ian Stevenson extended the Commission’s thanks to all those involved in planning and co-ordinating the event. He said, “LMC was delighted to provide sponsorship for this event. We wish to take this opportunity to thank the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) for facilitating this competition, Mr Smith, for giving of his time and expertise to judge the competition and finally, all exhibitors; events like this would not be possible without their unwavering passion and commitment to showcase the very best of our local livestock.”

**ENDS**

**Photo captions**

**Photos can be accessed here -** [Balmoral Show 2022](https://lmcni0-my.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/g/personal/lsurphlis_lmcni_com/ElNeTSmU9f9ArDzIdrdTt54BYKserGpYp5iHlcycGuVMSQ?e=qjBS0z)

**Native breed**

**001 – LMC board member Joe Stewart presents champion rosettes to the Hereford group.**

**002 - LMC board member Joe Stewart pictured with the reserve champion Beef Shorthorn group.**

**Continental breed**

**003 - LMC board member Joe Stewart presents champion rosettes to the Limousin group.**

**004 - LMC board member Joe Stewart pictured with the reserve champion Charolais group.**

**Notes to Editor**

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