

Limousins Suit Dutch Social Needs Perfectly and Are Part of the Climate Solution

For over fifty years, the Limousin breed has been a familiar sight in many Dutch nature reserves. Below are several characteristics that make Limousins well-suited to extensive nature management and responsive to societal demands regarding animal welfare and climate concerns.

Originally, Limousins were close to nature and used primarily in France to make poor grasslands productive through grazing. As a result, the breed thrives in large natural reserves or meadows. Their diet should preferably be modest and varied (grasses, herbs, shrubs), and their body structure allows for efficient digestion. Irish research shows Limousins have excellent feed efficiency and emit, on average, 20% less methane than other beef breeds with equivalent growth (source: ICBF, 2023).

Limousins are autonomous and resilient; illness or treatment is rare. Most cows calve without assistance, and C-sections are uncommon. Calves are vigorous and quickly protected and nurtured by their mothers. Calves stay with their mothers for about eight months, allowing ample room for natural behavior.

A growing proportion of Limousins are polled (naturally hornless) through the use of polled sires, removing the need for dehorning. This also means zero drug use.

Another trait greatly improved through breeding is temperament. For farmers, easy-to-handle animals are crucial for efficient and pleasant work. The breed has retained its typical rust-brown color, giving it an appealing look that complements the natural landscape.

In summary, the Limousin offers the following advantages:

- Natural calving, no C-sections
- Extremely low drug use
- Significantly lower methane emissions
- Preference for modest, diverse rations
- Beautiful animals that enhance the landscape

Members of Limousin Studbook Netherlands professionally breed and select Limousins that align with societal expectations and market conditions in the Netherlands. Their expertise and openness make them especially capable of managing nature reserves.

In the follow-up study "Large Grazers, Acceptable Risks" (Van den Herik & Verkaart, December 2017, commissioned by ARK Nature Development), 15 incidents were recorded in open nature reserves between 2005 and 2016, none involving Limousins.