

# English and Continental Beef Breeds

## English Beef Breeds

British breeds have found niches in both commercial and alternative agriculture due to their adaptability. Although they dominate the industry sale barns, they are also typically the breeds of choice for grass fed beef production. A few of the breeds, such as the Devon, can be used as all-around homestead cattle, providing beef, milk, and draft power for small farms.

While each breed is slightly different, most British breeds share the following characteristics:

- Small size.
- Hardiness in cold climates.
- Early maturity.
- Fertility.
- Calving ease.
- High percentage of waste at slaughter.
- Marbled beef.
- Meat tenderness

Examples of English breeds include:

- Angus
- Devon
- Galloway
- Herford
- Red Poll
- Shorthorn
- South Devon

## Continental Breeds

Although experiments were made with Continental breeds in the early 1900s, they did not become popular in the United States until the late 1960s and early 1970s, hence their other name—“exotic breeds.” These cattle were costly and difficult to obtain at first, so the process of establishing an American population was expedited by upgrading imports with British cattle already living on our shores. Most Continental breeds were considered purebred after four or five generations of upgrading. They left their mark on the beef industry by promoting the breeding of large-framed cattle, but this trend has abated somewhat in recent years along with the use of Continental genetics.

Examples of Continental breeds include:

- Belgian Blue
- Charolais
- Chianina
- Gelbvieh
- Limousin
- Maine Anjou
- Piedmontese
- Simmental
- Tarentaise