

Spence one-two at hottest calf show in years

South Craven dairy farmer Richard Spence excelled with two exceptional youngsters top see off strong opposition and secure both leading honours at Skipton Auction Mart's February rearing calf show and sale, which produced the hottest trade for many years. (Mon, Feb 20)

Mr Spence, of Low Jackfield Farm, Sutton-in-Craven, saw his five-and-a-half week-old first prize British Blue-cross bull calf progress to become supreme champion, while his red rosette-winning 33-day-old Limousin-sired bull calf was also chosen as reserve champion by judge Peter Bartley, of Garstang. Both are by Genus sires, out of home-bred British Friesian cows.

"It's some calf – the best I have seen in ages," said Mr Bartley of his chosen champion, The title winner justified his faith when selling for £470, second top call of the day, while the runner-up also performed well when making £440.

The champion and reserve fell to the same buyer, AG Thompson, of Kilham, Driffield, who returned home with a tally of eight top-class calves.

Mr Spence is no stranger to Skipton calf show success, having sent out a number of title winners and many prize winners over the years. He currently milks some 60 British Friesian cattle.

Top price in show at a heady £488 fell to Cowling's Andrew Ogden with another British Blue-cross bull calf, third prize winner in its class.

A total of 18 calves made in excess of £350, half of them selling for £400 and more. Black and white bull calves were in major demand among commercial buyers, with a pen of MRI bull calves from Lyndon Watson, Horton-in-Craven, particularly sought after and peaking at £255.

The selling average for British Blue bull calves was £413 and for heifers £337 - class prices here headed at £360 by Geoff Booth, Lothersdale. Limousin bull calves sold to a high of £402 for an entry from John Airey, Elslack, and averaged £302, with heifers averaging £262 and to a top of £345 from Stephen Hitchen, Luddendenfoot.

The overall rearing calves average at the BOCM Pauls-sponsored monthly show was £272, compared to £205 the previous month, clearly illustrating continuing high demand for well-bred quality youngsters.



Richard Spence, right, with his February show calf champion and reserve, joined by judge Peter Bartley, centre, and sponsor's representative Phil Coleman. Right: The February champion.