



Cray hill farmers reign supreme on Craven Champions Day

There were Craven winners on Craven Champions Day when the supreme champion title went to the Akrigg farming family at Manor Farm, Cray.

It was the third time that Chris Akrigg and his sons, Tom, John and Will, had reigned victorious at the annual show and sale of commercial store cattle with future show potential at Skipton Auction Mart, which saw 50 show animals sold at an overall average of £1,265 per head. (Wed, Feb 15).

The Akriggs lifted the title with their first prize British Blue-sired heifer and female champion, a home-bred all-black nine-month-old by the AI sire Eternal, out of a Limousin-x-British Blue cow, herself home-bred, who had also been responsible for a six-month-old calf sold by the Akriggs at Skipton for £1,600 three years ago.

Their highly promising 2012 youngster was chosen as champion by show judge Graeme Nutt, of Field House Farm, Thirtleby, Hull. The former Sproatley butcher now breeds and shows British Blues. He described his chosen champion as “an exceptionally good heifer who stood out hands above the rest.”

The Akriggs, who farm commercial British Blue and Limousin cattle, and pure-bred Swaledale sheep high in the Yorkshire Dales, saw their Champions Day title winner head the prices by a big margin – and the highest for many years - when selling for £2,550 to Clive Delamore, of Delamore Farms Ltd, Terrington St Clement, Norfolk.

Mr Delamore, who fattens 300 head of Continental-cross beef cattle and also has 800 acres of arable land, is better known as a breeder of pedigree British White cattle, one of the nation’s oldest breeds. His Leverington herd has won multiple show titles and British White Cattle Society accolades.

He was making his first-ever visit to Skipton on the recommendation of Skipton Auction Mart stockman and show steward Andrew Fisher, of Pateley Bridge, himself a British White enthusiast, who has bought two Delamore bulls. He too has achieved many shows successes with their progeny.

Mr Delamore has big aspirations for his new acquisition in the summer shows this year. If all goes according to plan, she will be lining up at the major county shows in East Anglia, possibly progressing to the Three Counties and Royal Welsh annual highlights.

Defending champions J C Walker & Son, of Brennand Farm, Dunsop Bridge, Clitheroe, four times Craven Champions Day title winners, were again prominent when presenting the male and reserve supreme champion, the first prize halter-led British Blue-sired bullock.

The 13-month-old is by the home-bred Brennand Viper, who was also responsible for their 2011 Skipton title winner, out of a home-bred British Blue-x-Limousin cow. He sold for £1,780, second highest call of the day, to Anthony Swales, who runs Knavesmire Butchers shop in Albermarle Road, York.

A regular buyer at Skipton, Mr Swales purchased the Walkers’ 2011 supreme champion. At this year’s renewal, he also paid £1,300 for the first prize non halter-led British Blue-x bullock and reserve male champion shown by Alan Woodhouse, of Watson House, Clapham.

The two acquisitions will be taking their place in the local shows this summer, hopefully progressing to bigger and better things at the 2012 Great Yorkshire Show. They will be shown by Anthony’s 16-year-old-son Luke, who is in his final year at York High School, and Luke’s grandparents, Stephen and Barbara Swales, of Melbourne.

The future plan is for both animals to return to Knavesmire Butchers to be sold as top quality prime beef to the shop's customers for this year's Christmas trade.

Brennand Viper, who performed well as stock bull for the Walkers until being sold on as an eight-year-old last June, also sired the family's young handlers class first prize winner, another British Blue-x-Limousin heifer shown by 17-year-old Rob Walker, which progressed to become reserve female champion, selling for £1,300 to Joe and Trevor Stoney, Pateley Bridge.

The Walkers made it a hat-trick of first prize successes when landing the unaltered heifer class with a British Blue youngster by Dragon Blues Champ, acquired by the family in May last year. He sold for £1,180 to John Summers, of Clayton, Bradford, another regular buyer at the fixture.

Mr Summers made three acquisitions in total, also paying £1,180 for the second prize non halter-led any breed heifer, a British Blue-x from Simon and Audrey Taylor, of Dearne House, Cumberworth, Huddersfield, and £1,160 for the third prize halter-led British Blue sired bullock shown by David and Linda Broadbent, of Greenhouse Farm, Midgley, Halifax.

All three prizewinners will be aimed at the Yorkshire show circuit in the hands of Mr Summer's brother Philip, before returning to the Druids Street butchers shop for sale to customers later in the year.

Further prize winners for the Walkers were the second and third prize Limousin-sired heifers, sold respectively at £1,100 to T Roberts, of Llanwrst in Snowdonia's Conwy Valley, and £1,150 to noted Limousin breeders Steven and Ruth Priestley, who were formerly based in Denholme, Bradford, until moving last year to pastures new in Kirkcambeck, near Brampton, in Cumbria.

The Priestleys also paid £1,100 for yet another Walker rosette winner, the third prize British Blue-sired heifer

Jonathan Townley, of E & M Townley & Son, Clapham, had two red rosette winners in the halter-led classes for Limousin-sired heifers and any other breed-sired heifer, a British Blonde, sold for £1,100 and £1,150 respectively to the same buyer, Neil Tattersall, of Ellerton, York.

David and Linda Broadbent, non halter-led champions last year, also exhibited the first prize any other sired bullock, a British Blonde, which sold at £1,230 to Malcolm Metcalfe, Topcliffe, the second prize halter-led any other breed-sired heifer, another British Blonde, knocked down for £1,100 to ringside regular Jeff Burrows, Kirkby Malham, and the third prize non halter-led any breed bullock, a British Blue-x, which joined Clive Mitchell, of Caldwell, Holmfirth, for £1,200.

The first-prize Limousin-sired bullock from Carl and Edward Fawcett, of Sandhutton, York, joined A Bentham, Bishop Auckland, for £1,300. The Fawcetts also presented the third prize any other breed-sired bullock, an Aberdeen Angus sold at £1,020 to Richard Critchley, of AA & E Critchley & Son, Hutton, Preston.

Clare Cropper and John Mellin, of Mill House Farm, Long Preston, supreme champions with a British Blue heifer at Skipton Auction Mart's high profile Christmas primestock show last November, returned to the fold with another quality British Blue-sired bullock, which won second prize in class and sold for £1,220 to Lancashire breeders JR & B Webster, Lathom.

Brian Lund, of Walshaw, Hebden Bridge, made £1,020 for his second prize British Blue-sired heifer, which joined FE Read & Son in Horncastle, while Adam Townley, second prize winner in the young handlers show class, saw his charge sell for £1,050 to Thompson Bros, Pickering.

Show sponsors were Laycocks Agricultural Chemists, Skipton, Jim Peet Agriculture, Penrith, Huddersfield-based agricultural agent Janet Sheard and The British Charolais Cattle Society.



The 2012 Craven Champions Day supreme title winner with Tom Akrigg and partner Emily Carr.



The Akriggs' supreme title winner with, from left, exhibitor Emily Carr, show judge Graeme Nutt and sponsors, agricultural agent Janet Sheard and Martin Ellis, of Jim Peet Agriculture.



Clive Demalore, buyer of the Akriggs' 2012 Craven Champions Day supreme champion.



Rob Walker with the family's reserve champion bullock on 2012 Craven Champions Day.