

The National Trust Reports Lovesick Cows Get New Mate For Valentine's



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The National Trust has revealed that an Irish Moiled bull is set to be in the 'moo-d' for love at Wimpole Home Farm after the romantic future of a rare breed cow herd was put to the vote.

The National Trust's online MyFarm community voted on which breed should get a mate for Valentine's Day.*

The farm team at the 1,450 acre farm in Cambridgeshire, home to 65 rare breed cows and four bulls, are on the hunt for a new bull, but can only afford one.

Setting a 'Moo Who?' challenge, [The National Trust MyFarm](#) community had six days to research and vote on which of the three (Gloucester, Irish Moiled or Shetland) rare breed cow herds living on the farm was the most deserving of a new mate.

After the 'battle of the cattle' the Irish Moiled herd took an 'udderly' overwhelming 51% of the vote. When a suitable beast is found it will mate with the 10 cows from the herd 'ready for the bull' to create pure breed offspring.

Cows from the other herds will be cross-bred with Juggernaut, a one tonne, Long Horn bull who already lives on the farm.

Farm Manager Richard Morris said: "Each breed has its own characteristics and is special for different reasons. All three herds are on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust's 'At Risk' register - meaning there are fewer than 750 breeding females in the UK.

"But, it's never as simple as just choosing the rarest, this had to be weighed up against bull prices, the number of cows in each herd, (more cows mean more calves); and the quality of the meat produced when the cows are ready for slaughter.

"This was truly one of those heart versus head votes and we'll now be buying a Irish Moiled bull. Hopefully he'll mate successfully with our 10 Irish Moiled cows."

Stockman Mark Field at Wimpole said: "Back in 2000 we only had three Irish Moiled cows on the farm. Since then we've been working hard to enlarge the herd, working with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust to extend the gene pool.

"Thanks to the MyFarm communities votes we can now continue that work. I'm looking forward to getting into the market to find a suitable Irish Moiled bull to introduce to our herd - and to MyFarmers."

The new Irish Moiled bull and the four other bulls will be expected to mate with all 65 breeding cows over the spring and summer at [Wimpole Estate](#) with calves expected in 2013.

To sign up and to get involved with everything related to farming, food and where it comes from, visit www.my-farm.org.uk

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Editor's notes:

* MyFarm is an on-line experiment launched by the Trust in 2011 which aims to connect people with farming, food and where their food comes from.

Based at the National Trust's own working farm, Wimpole Home Farm in Cambridgeshire, Farm Manager Richard Morris poses regular questions on major issues to subscribers to debate and vote upon each month. Subjects include crops, livestock and wider environmental impacts, such as [sustainable food](#).

About The National Trust:

The National Trust is one of the most important nature conservation organisations in Europe with over 1,000 sites covering 250,000 hectares, including coastal sites, countryside places, woodland and upland areas; many of which are rich in wildlife. All 17 species of UK bat have been recorded as roosting or breeding on National Trust land and 96 per cent of all resident UK butterflies can be found on National Trust land. The charity offers a number of [places to visit](#) and things to do, including countryside walks throughout locations across Britain. Those interested in volunteering with the National Trust can find out more at: www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

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