

30 Best Cow Breeds for Meat and Milk You'll Want to Know About

By [Jennifer Poindexter](#)

Are you in the market for some cows? They are a great animal to begin raising because they can be so versatile.

Some people like to raise their own beef. While others like to raise a cow for dairy. Whichever category you fall into, I thought you might want to know what breeds were actually out there so you could decide which breed would work best for your particular situation.

So if this has been something you've been considering lately, then allow us to do your research for you and you just browse through this article until you find the perfect fit for your situation.

Useful Cow Breeds for Your Homestead

Here are the different breeds of cattle:

1. Angus



via That's Farming

So many people in my area raise Angus cattle. The reason is that they produce quality beef, and a lot of people would rather raise their own beef than purchase it from the store.

So if you are wanting to raise cattle for meat, then you should definitely look into this breed.

2. Holstein Friesian



via Istock

Let's change gears for a moment. If you are looking to raise a cow because you'd like to produce your own milk for cheese, butter, and other things, then you'll want to consider this breed.

Actually, when most people think of a cow, this is probably the type of cow you think of because it is used in so many adverts because this breed is known to be the highest-production breed for dairy.

3. Hereford



via Gemstone Cattle Company

This breed of cow is another really popular breed. It is one used in many different parts of the world and in many different climates.

But this breed is mainly used for meat production and it is in 50 different countries across the world. So it should adapt and do quite well no matter what climate you live in.

4. Shorthorn



The Cattle Site

The shorthorn was developed to be a dual purpose breed. That way people could raise one breed and get both dairy and beef products.

However, it is said, that usually certain blood lines would come out stronger in one area than the other. Now, you can purchase either a beef shorthorn or a dairy shorthorn depending upon which purpose you'd like to have cattle for.

5. Charolais



via That's Farming

The Charolais is a breed of cattle that was developed in France. They are raised mainly for beef and are often crossed with another beef breed, like Angus.

But they are known for growing really well and producing quality meat and hides. So if you like to make leather from your cattle, this would be a good breed to consider.

6. Galloway



via Galloway Cattle Society

I love this breed of cow because of its fluffy coat. Looks aside, this is a great beef breed for someone interested in that purpose.

But this breed is also one of the oldest breeds as well. It is named after the area in Scotland it originated, but it became a popular breed around the world when they began exporting them in the mid 1800's.

7. Simmental



Photo via Dora Lee Genetics

This would be a great multipurpose breed. The Simmental breed is one of the oldest breeds. It is a Swiss breed but has been raised in the United States since around 1800.

Though it is raised in other parts of the world as a dairy cow, the United States usually produces them for beef. But they are known for being great dairy producers, large in size, and for growing quickly as well.

8. Brahman



via Moreno Ranches

This is the super cow when it comes to breeds. The Brahman breed is one of the oldest in the world. It has been able to adapt to the point that it can avoid falling ill due to most parasites, diseases, or other pests that cattle often come in contact with.

Also, they have a large hump and horns which helps keep them cool. They are known for being able to sweat and deter pests that way. But they can even survive in harsh climates and when there isn't adequate food. These cows are troopers!

9. Limousin



via That's Farming

So if you want an ancient cow, this breed could be what you are looking for. When historians have studied ancient paintings from France, they found cattle in the pictures that look eerily similar to this breed.

Though they originated in France, they can now be found all over the world. They are great animals to use for work, but they are mainly bred for beef.

10. Scottish Highland



via Wikipedia

This breed is pretty amazing. It began its time in the Highlands of Scotland (hence where they got their name.) During this time, they were able to build up resistance to many diseases that usually plague other breeds of cows.

Now that this breed is all over the world, they do well in colder climates because they have long hair vs. a layer of fat to keep warm. But they do well in southern climates as well. This breed isn't even picky about what it eats. You can put it out on pasture, and it is said to eat things most other breeds would turn their nose up at.

11. Brown Swiss



via David Clarke Livestock

If you are looking for a dairy cow, then this could be what you've been searching for. It is second in line with the Holstein as far as milk production goes.

So if you like the idea of being able to produce dairy right on your own land, then you should consider this breed.

12. Texas Longhorn



via TSHA

If you are looking for lean beef, then you'll like the Texas Longhorn breed. You will immediately recognize this breed because of the extremely long horns.

But what is so interesting about this breed is that they weren't actually set out to become a breed. The longhorns are a product of years of adaptation to their surroundings.

13. Brangus

via Oklahoma State University

This is an excellent choice of breed for a beef cow. It is actually a cross between the angus breed and a brahman.

So if you like both of those breeds, but can't decide on which type you'd like, then maybe you could meet in the middle with this breed.

14. Jersey

via Wide Open Pets

You hear people talk about Jersey cows a lot. My great grandfather actually raised them on his 11 acre farm. They are a smaller breed for a dairy cow, which makes them ideal for small farms.

But they are also known for having a higher fat content in their milk. So if you like more fat in your milk, then you should consider this breed for that reason as well.

15. Ayrshire

via Ayrshires Cattle Services Limited

This is a dairy cow that is larger in size. When I say larger, they usually weigh anywhere from 900 pounds to over 1300 pounds. That is a lot of animal.

So you'll definitely want to take their size into account because usually the larger the breed, the more maintenance they require because of the amount of food they need.

16. Chianina

via Agraria.org

We haven't covered any Italian breed of cows on this list, until now. This breed originated in Italy, but is now used as a beef breed all over the world.

But what makes this cow stand out so much is its size. This breed is one of the largest breeds of cows you can raise this day in age.

17. Beef Master



via The Cattle Site

This breed produces some seriously buff cows. It is actually a crossbreed that has been around since about 1930.

Now, it is used mainly as beef cattle because it is a cross between Hereford breed or a Shorthorn cow breed with a Brahman. No wonder the cows end up being so bulky and perfect for beef.

18. Gelbvieh



via Lost River Livestock

This cow was originally produced to be a three for one to anyone that owned this breed. The original purpose was to raise these animals to work the land, produce dairy, and also produce beef.

However, now, most cows in this breed are usually used strictly to produce beef. They are big and look to produce quite a bit of meat.

19. Dexter



via Jennifer Mackenzie

If you haven't noticed most breeds of cattle that are produced in Europe have been pretty large cows. This breed is actually one of the smallest of the European produced breeds.

In fact, the Dexter breed is about half the size of a Hereford and less than half the size of Friesian. So if you'd prefer a smaller breed cow, then you might want to check into this breed.

20. Piedmontese



via Paus

This is another Italian breed of cattle. They have an interesting back story. Many years ago a breed of cattle that originated in Pakistan began to migrate into Italy. Because of the mountainous terrain they weren't able to go any farther.

So they ended up breeding with the native cattle and from that this breed was formed. They are used in Italy to produce specialty cheeses and are considered a delicacy with meat as well.

21. Watusi



Oklahoma State University

I love the name and look of this cow. They have large horns that stick almost straight out of their heads which make them interesting in appearance.

However, these cows are great for multiple purposes. Because they produce smaller babies, the males are used to breed a heifer that has never had a baby before. Their milk is also about 10% fat so a lot of farmers like this for dairy production or to breed with another dairy breed for good milk production and content.

22. White Park



via Wikipedia

This is definitely a larger breed of cattle. The heifers usually weigh in around 1400 pounds. While the bulls can be up to 2200 pounds.

But this breed is obviously so treasured in the meat industry because of the high quality of meat they produce.

23. Santa Gertrudis



via Britannica

This was actually the first beef breed to be formed in the United States. It is a mixed breed that contains both Brahman and Shorthorn.

So if you are looking for an approved beef breed within the United States, this might be a good breed to check into.

24. Braford



via The Cattle Site

If you haven't already noticed, if you are going to have a beef breed of cow, then you will most likely end up with one that has both Brahman and Shorthorn or Hereford.

Well, this breed is a cross between a Brahman and a Hereford breed. It is used for beef and judging by the large stature, you should get plenty of meat.

25. English Longhorn



via Wikipedia

The English Longhorn is another breed of beef cattle. They are large cows that are known for producing lean beef.

But what makes this breed stand out is its long, curved horns. They curve around their face almost like pigtales.

26. Beefalo



via The Cattle Site

Do you like the way bison burger tastes? If so, then you might want to consider this breed of cattle. It is actually a cross breed between a domesticated cow and a bison.

So if you'd like meat that tastes a little different than your average beef, then you might want to consider raising this breed of cattle.

27. North Devon



via That's Farming

Though this cow is quite large, don't let it fool you. They are actually known for many wonderful characteristics, one of those being their docile nature.

Also, they are known for being quite fertile, birthing easily, great at foraging, and they are also hearty animals that can adapt to different temperatures.

28. Senepol



via Senepol Cattle Breeders Association

This breed has developed into a great choice for beef, but they did not get an easy start when they were first developed in St. Croix.

As a matter of fact, when these cows were originally produced it was for meat for those on the island. The cows that didn't meet the standard the farmers set, were quickly killed. The farmers only reproduced the genes that they knew would work in the, often harsh, St. Croix environment.

29. Maine-Anjou



via Maine-Anjou Verband

When this cow was first produced, again, people wanted an animal that could do more than one thing. At first, this breed was supposed to produce both dairy and beef.

Now, it still could do this today if you desire. But most people who raise this breed use it only for beef.

30. Red Poll