The Swiss Galloway Report: Part one

Overview over the last year

Picture Stöcklin Werner (Swiss Galloway Fotocompetition 2012)

Dear delegates to the world Galloway Conference

2015 as everywhere in Central Europe, Switzerland was experiencing an extraordinary hot summer and – for Swiss climate - a drought. Farmers and Galloway breeders, living close to the pulse of nature, observe these phenomena intensively and with great concern.
The Swiss Galloway Society is pleased with the fact that a farmer, Mr Guy Parmelin, has been elected to the Swiss government. We all hope that this is a good signal for our agricultural policy…
As Armin Kobel was retiring, the Swiss Galloway Society elected a new president, Patrik Schaller who took over in January 2015. Armin Kobel, has done lots for environmental

protection the context of Galloway breeding. The central activity of our new president will be the numerous marketing initiatives.

Swiss Galloway Highlights 2015:

A. Breeding:

Swissopen Faire 18.4.-19.4.2015 and Swiss Tier in Luzern: Fachschau mit 20.-22.11.2015

Exposition and Fare of Swiss breeders of all kind. Our Society is actively represented. All brands elect their Champion bulls - cows and - heifers in an intense competition.

Outing to the Burkhard Family: 22.8.2015: As every year the Society visits one of their members. This year the Burkhard Family, living in the hilly parts of the Swiss Emmental, (where the cheese comes from!) hosted the Club members. The Kids instructed other "junior farmers„ how to present Galloways at shows and auctions. We think it is extremely important that youngsters get the feeling of it real early in their lives. The pictures below speak for themselves!

A Swiss get together Photo B.v.Fischer

Junior instructor Photo B.v.Fischer

B. Marketing Galloway Products

Basler Feinmesse: 29.10.-1.11.2015: the big Market Show in Basel taking place in fall gives an excellent opportunity to present Galloway products to a broad public. The Weber Family was our Society's fabulous ambassador.

Christian Weber in Basel Foto 2014 B.v.Fischer

Slow Food Zürich:16./17.11.2015 Slow Food in Switzerland is spreading rapidly. The Swiss Galloway Society decided to join this foundation. We have now two big exhibitions, one in Berne and one in Zurich. Helene Keller and her coworkers represent our Society in these extremely important marketing events. Slow food and slow growth of the Galloway go together very well and the Galloway philosophy is much appreciated in this segment of clients.

Society's Problems

Organizing and paying for a new homepage. Sadly after a few years IT products are out of fashion, an expensive fashion….and everybody is in this crazy frenzy.
With restricted financial resources we have to decide carefully, which exhibitions and markets we should attend.
Breeding regulations concerning the different colors (black, belted, dun white and riggit) are of constant debate! This year we hope to have settled most of the issues with a new protocol. Most difficult are the discussions concerning white Galloways. Genetics will help us solve the problem of opposing opinions in the future. Color should not be the main issue, since we are producing high quality meat, were the skin of the animal is of little importance. Still the breeders pride is important and should be respected.
We have marketed the Galloway burger in a competition among Swiss cooks. The result was astonishing: great varieties of burger meals were created. One of the examples is shown below.

Picture: Beat Suter

This year we are celebrating the first twenty years of the Societies existence.
As Secretary of the first days let me give you a short summary of the Galloway history in Switzerland.

The Swiss Galloway Report: Part two

20 Years Swiss Galloway Society

1996 -2016

Since centuries Switzerland was proudly exporting Swiss cows into the whole world. Famous is the Simmental brand, which has its roots in the mountainous valleys of the canton of Berne. Conservative agricultural policy stated that nothing else than the Swiss Simmental cows were of any value. So, no import whatsoever. Overproduction of milk, butter and cheese made it desirable to produce beef instead of dairy products. Even though all attempts to import foreign cows were blocked until the WTO regulations had been changed in 1993. Having good connections to the ministry of agriculture of Switzerland I succeeded shortly after the Highland Cattle Society to get the permission to import three (!) Galloways into Switzerland. There was one restriction: no commercial use, for zoo and hobby purposes only! You should have seen the reaction of the proud Simmental breeders when the first three black Galloways were seen in the Bernese Oberland. They were not amused at all. Now the burden of proof was on our side. Many consumers got convinced, that the Swiss made high quality beef, rich in omega three, made more sense than the import of South American Beef.
Shortly after that Swiss beef production started fast, the ridiculous restrictions were abandoned and import of various species of beef cattle was permitted.
The Swiss Galloway Society was founded by a handful of pioneers and I am proud to have been one of them.
We were always convinced that beef production should be based exclusively on grass and hay. The prealpine environment of our Swiss landscape with rough pastures – similar in many ways to that of Scotland - is rich in grass. The rich content of omega three in grass is an advantage while starch (wheat and grain as used in North American feed lots) doesn't make sense. (See the table below!) So our philosophy and strategy was a grass based beef production: In German short and simple: *Fleisch aus Gras!*
This was the key to a story of success. Today Galloway Gourmet Beef -our main brand- sells extremely well. Our farmers sell it directly from their farm shops and we can still go around big distributers, who cut our profits. In densely populated Switzerland, with short to very

short distances between producer and consumer, this direct selling strategy works extremely well.

Selling Galloway Beef directly from the Farm Photo Bv.Fischer

We believe that we have to keep the main Galloway strain pure bred. Of course we try different F1 cross breeds as Galloway x Simmental, Galloway x Holstein. Mostly we use a Galloway bull because of the meat component and a Dairy cow with the inherent milk factor. In the pure bread beef we are convinced that omega 3 is a health factor, which sometimes is hard to prove. Our strategy is based on our research summarized in the table below:

Results	Omega 3	:	Omega 6
Ideal	1	:	1
Suggestions	1	:	5
Grass	1	:	0,25
Haylage	1	:	0,33
Hay	1	:	1,56
Galloway	1	:	1,71
Salmon	1	:	3,6
CH Beef	1	:	3,6
Starch	1	:	9,5
US Beef	1	:	17,0

compared to other nutrients grass has the far highest content of Omega 3 fatty acids

First slide of a presentation marketing the Omega 3 component

There is a constant debate about the bigger Canadian type or the Scottish type of Galloway cattle: Roughly we can conclude that in the flatter part of our country we prefer the heavier Canadian animals, whereas in the steep mountain sides we rely on the smaller and lighter Scottish type.
The relatively light Galloways with the large claws are favorable to pastures of steep mountain sides and protect the soil's erosion. The nonselective feeding habits promote a big variety of plant species. Galloways produce an excellent meat quality, even if they feed on plants growing under rough ecological conditions.
The genetic variety of different cattle breeds enriched Swiss agriculture on one hand and on the other hand has proofed to be a protective factor against the spread of many diseases.
A sound competition between breeders of different kinds of cattle is favorable for the market and at the end for the consumer himself. Thus beef farming grew in Switzerland on behalf of the overproducing milk butter and cheese farming. As a consequence many dairy farmers changed their production to beef farming. Quite a few to Galloway farming.
All these factors help us to promote the Galloway philosophy in Switzerland. **And at the end of the day our strategy combines the ecological needs of society with the economic interests of our Galloway Farmers.**
In the beginning the Swiss Galloway Society was faced with the problem of not being able to keep up with the fast increasing demand. Even under these conditions we stuck to the philosophy of marketing Galloway Gourmet Beef directly from the farm and in close relation to the clients, who were invited to see the production quality themselves. We were very strict about not letting the big distributers into our business and avoid the big quarrels of label cheating!
In the early years there was also a shortage of pedigree animals. The danger of low quality heifers being selected to be mother cows was a real danger for our quality management. Local conferences, teachings, rules and regulations and the Swiss open competition helped to set the necessary standards.
The Swiss Galloway Society has set three main goals for Galloway beef production:

- Pure bred Galloways in a closed herd book (5 Generations!)
- Production of ***Galloway Gourmet beef*** out of pure bred Galloways
- Possibility of Beef production in the F1 Segment if larger animals are desired

Agriculture in Switzerland as well as in Europe is a very difficult problem. Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T TIP) causes great concern. Small farming communities have to merge in order to survive. Mass production in industrial animal plants is not our philosophy. Is meat *once in a couple of days*, but in good quality vs meat *three times daily* the solution?
It is surely hard to find the right answers when we look at the world wide famine.
It is too bad that we cannot find solutions for all these issues.

In all this global change the Galloway properties remain an important constant factor:

- Very stable genetics
- Easy calving
- Low vet bills
- Robust health
- Friendly character
- Produces excellent meat on sparse food conditions
- The most beautiful cow of the world
- Genetic ability to store Omega 3 fatty acids in the intramuscular fat

If humans don’t make bigger mistakes Galloways will survive all T TIPS and all crazy fantasies of the politicians.
This is why I conclude my report from Switzerland with the optimistic slogan of the past for the future: **all the way with Galloway!**

Yours Berchtold von Fischer, Switzerland