

MURRAY GREY

Summary

A hardy breed, the Murray Grey is also believed to take a range of vegetation, including coarse species. Placid and easy to handle, it is suitable for consideration on sites with public access.

Hardiness – a hardy breed, well suited to grazing natural forage.

- *Hardy and adaptable* – able to live outdoors all year in many different climatic conditions; natural forms of shelter are sufficient in British conditions.
- *Supplementary feed* – maintain condition well on natural forage and do not need extra supplements even after calving. In winter, may require hay if natural forage is insufficient.

Physical Attributes & Husbandry – a docile, easy to keep breed.

- *Size* – medium sized.
- *Appearance* – dark pigmented skin; coat colour ranges from silver grey to brown. Naturally polled.
- *Handling* – a docile breed; can be easily trained to come to feed prior to any routine penning requirements.
- *Breeding* – considered to be one of the easiest calving breeds. Cows produce enough milk for their calf to grow well, but not in excess to cause mastitis. Bulls are docile in breeding situation.
- *Fencing* – easily contained; two strand barbed wire fence should suffice. Not great jumpers.
- *Character* – docile and not easily stressed.
- *Background* – developed from the Aberdeen Angus and Beef Shorthorn.



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Grazing Characteristics – believed to have catholic eating habits.

- *Grazing preferences* – will eat most types of grasses and coarse herbs, including Nettles, Thistles and young Docks.
- *Browsing ability* – no details available.
- *Physical impact on scrub* – break up scrub, thus aiding the restoration of neglected ground.

Interaction with the Public – a non-aggressive breed.

- *Reaction to people* – does not normally pose a threat to the walking public. Displays an even temperament and may be inquisitive, but not aggressive. Newly calved cows should be approached with caution.

Marketability – a commercial breed.

- *Breeding* – popular as single suckler cows.
- *Meat* – can be fattened off grass to produce a good quality product.

Sites where Murray Grey cattle are in use & contacts

SITE NAME	HABITAT	DETAILS AVAILABLE	CONTACT
Woodcombe Farm Devon Private (landowner) and RSPB	Cliff grassland with Gorse, Blackthorn and Bracken.	Murray Greys introduced in 1997 after 20 years of no management. A low maintenance breed, very suitable for beef production and able to outwinter and calve on the cliff. Very quiet, which has been essential as well-used footpaths cross the site. Scrub being broken up; more open areas of grassland developing.	Chris Browning Cath Jeffs (RSPB) Phil Page (NT)
Other contacts:		Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society	Peter Harris 01827 880840

References

JEFFS C, PAGE P, ROBERTS E & BROWNING C (1999) *Chris Browning – A Farmer's View* RSPB Newsletter on the Cirl Bunting Project.