



Eric and Sherri Little raise a new breed of miniature cattle called Kingshire. A well-defined belt goes completely around the middle of each animal.



Kingshires are a cross between miniature Angus, Herefords and Scottish Highlanders.

Miniature Kingshire Cattle Ideal For Small Farms

When you have a small farm of only 10 acres, it only makes sense to raise miniature cattle, says Eric Little. Though there are many breeds to choose from, he and his wife, Sherri, found themselves attracted to a new breed called Kingshire® that was named after King County, Wash., where they were developed by Richard and Arlene Gradwohl.

By an unexpected stroke of genetics the miniature Angus and Hereford and mid-size Scottish Highlanders cross also developed a well-defined belt that goes completely around its middle.

"They are so darn cute," admits Little, citing that as one reason for choosing the breed. He also appreciates that they are docile and polled. But what really sold the couple was tasting grilled Kingshire beef burgers.

"One bite and both of us said it was the best burger we've ever tasted," Little explains.

"They aren't a toy breed; they are just a small cow," Little adds. That means they are 42 in. or less to the top of the rear hipbone at 3 years old.

Jim Haack, who sold the Littles a pair of Kingshires last fall, describes the ideal shape as "a whiskey barrel on legs".

Heifers gain up to 700 lbs. and bulls about 1,000 lbs. Typically, Kingshires are butchered at 700 lbs. at 18 mos. and dress out to 500 lbs. hanging weight. They flourish on pasture/hay and have short muscle fibers so the meat is

tender and flavorful.

Kingshires have the same characteristics as other miniature breeds: easier to manage and easier on equipment and fencing; they eat about a third the feed of regular size cattle; and you can have a higher capacity beef production with only one acre required for two miniatures. A higher percent of body mass converts to beef because of lower fat and bone mass.

In restoring the small family farm on Whidbey Island, Wash., where Little's parents live, the miniature breed fits in well. Little's father, 84, can easily feed and care for them, and once the land is fully fenced in, it should support two cows, a bull and yearling calves.

"They are very feed efficient," Little says. "Bart is 450 lbs. and Bonnie is 80 lbs. less, and I've only gone through 20 bales in 2 1/2 months."

Little feeds them two 60-lb. bales a week plus treats such as mangel beets, apples and beet pulp and alfalfa pellets. Though

Kingshire are hearty in most climates, Little built them a barn where they can go for shelter – especially during the rains common on the island.

The Littles made the \$6,500 investment in the breeding pair with the intent of raising Kingshire cattle for meat. They purchased them from K-T Cattle Company, and owners Katie and Jim Haack delivered them to the Littles' island farm.

Kingshire is a registered miniature cow breed. For more information, Little suggests contacting the Haacks (www.ktcattlecompany.com) or the International Miniature Cattle Breeder's Society and Registry (www.minicattle.com), founded by Gradwohl, who developed the breed.

Check out a video of the breed at www.FARMSHOW.com

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Eric Little, 1971 Amanda Ln., Freeland, Wash. 98249 (ph 360 730-4799; ericwane@gmail.com).

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Harold M. Johnson
Founder

Editor/Publisher

Mark Newhall (mark@farmshow.com)

Senior Editor

Bill Gergen (bill@farmshow.com)

Contributing Editors

Jim Ruen (edegcom@acegroup.cc)

Dee Goerge (dee_goerge@yahoo.com)

Lorn Manthey (redoakridge@mac.com)

Office Manager

Anne Lash (anne@farmshow.com)

Circulation (circulation@farmshow.com)

Shelly Mende, Mary Lunde, Kim

Trapp

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Rotating Deer Stand Made From Pickup Cab

Austin Roney of Oakes, N. Dak., converted an old GM 3/4-ton pickup cab into a nifty deer stand that rotates 360 degrees.

"All the windows and the steering wheel and dashboard are still in place, but I removed everything else including the engine and transmission. I just turn the steering wheel to rotate the cab," says Roney.

The cab mounts on a welded-together, rectangle-shaped frame made from 2 3/8-in. well pipe and 3/4-in. sucker rod. The legs at the base of the frame are about 7 ft. apart, and the base of the cab is 10 ft. off the ground. A metal stairway leads to an expanded metal platform that's welded to the top of the frame, next to one of the cab's doors. Roney welded the other cab door shut.

"I built it last summer at my dad's business in town and then hauled it 10 miles home on a flatbed trailer. It has fork slots at the bottom so I can lift it into position with a tractor loader."

The end drive gearbox off an old center pivot irrigator serves as a turntable mechanism for the cab. One end of a 4-ft. long pipe is welded to the pickup's frame under the radiator, and the other end is welded to the gearbox. The gearbox shaft-drives a pulley that belt-drives another pulley attached to the pickup's steering shaft. "I just turn the steering wheel to turn the cab in either direction," says Roney.

He says that next fall he plans to put a battery inside the cab and use it to operate the pickup's heater. "I think the same battery could also be used to operate the pickup's windshield wipers, headlights and radio," notes Roney.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Austin Roney, Oakes, N. Dak. 58474 (ph 701 408-9077; austin.roney@k12.nd.us).



Austin Roney made a rotating deer stand by mounting a pickup cab on top of a metal stand. Cab rotates 360 degrees on a turntable mechanism.



Up to 3 people can sit on the roomy, full-size pickup seat. The end drive gearbox off an old center pivot irrigator serves as the turntable mechanism for the cab.