

Beat: Lifestyle

HERENS NATIONAL COW FIGHTING , A Fever Taking A Hold On VALAIS (Switzerland)

To Establish Hierarchy Within The Herd

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USPA NEWS - The HERENS National Cow Fighting Championships select the Queen of Valais Fighting Queens. The Final has developed into an Authentic Swiss Tradition attracting new fans from all over the world. The Valais HERENS Cows fight because it is part of their natural behaviour...

The HERENS National Cow Fighting Championships select the Queen of Valais Fighting Queens. The Final has developed into an Authentic Swiss Tradition attracting new fans from all over the world. The Valais HERENS Cows fight because it is part of their natural behaviour. The HERENS is a breed of Cattle named after the Val d'Hérens Region of Switzerland. These Horned Alpine Cattle are coloured black or brown.... Each year in Spring, Horned HERENS Cows battle it out in the Swiss Alpine Village of Aproz. They lock their wicked looking Horns to determine who takes the lead in the pack as soon as they are released from the Barn where they spend long winter months.

The winning 'Queen' becomes the leader of the Herd for the Summer. Each Cow selects her opponent, ending the fight as soon as the defeated opponent turns away. Injuries are extremely rare. At the end of the day, the undefeated Cow is crowned 'Queen of the Queens'. HERENS Cows are Herd animals who fight it out amongst themselves to determine their rank. It can get pretty serious between them but it's entirely natural behaviour for them. Each Spring though the Fever of Cow Fighting not only grabs a hold of the beasts but Farmers & Spectators alike (+ National & International Journalists, TV teams - national & international) flock to the Events. All loving the battle for the prestigious title "Queen of Queens" in the 'Fight of the Queens'.

The Cows are brought into the Ring in different categories (according to weight and age) where they choose their opponent themselves. The tournaments take place in various villages following a specific timetable and in the end, the winner will be crowned 'Queen of the Queens'. The prize is not only a humongous ornate cowbell, the offspring fetches whooping prices at auctions....In fact, the Winner of a Duel is the Cow who does not back off. Fortunately, there usually is no bloodshed in Swiss Cow combats. During the combat, the Cows push forehead against forehead. The one Cow remaining undefeated after all duels is the Queen.

Young Breeder Déborah METRAILLER has some particularly successful Fighting Cows. Her recipe for success is to go jogging with the cows before the fights. According to Deborah, these are Valais Cows and they can't be sweet-talked that easily. Maybe because it was reportedly the Romans who brought this breed to Valais. And while other domesticated animals eventually lost their original qualities, looking at a Herens Cow is like looking back in time at a Community of Man and Beast determined to survive despite harsh conditions and extreme altitudes.

Breeding Herens cattle is a Family matter, the Cows from the Métraiquer stable typically rank near the top at the Regional cow Fights, and at the National Championship in Aproz. The Family has a long breeding tradition, Déborah is continuing this tradition with success. For all of them, "Herens Cattle are a passion, not a job." It's a lot of work, and expensive too. Every now and then the Métraiquers sell a Cow, their stable enjoys an excellent reputation among breeders. The tournaments don't offer any cash prizes, and Herens cattle are not particularly lucrative when it comes to producing milk and beef. According to Deborah, it is about Honour, Pride and Tradition, and above all it gives you Joy.

Source : Testimony of Breeder Déborah METRAILLER - The Crowning of the Queen at the National Final Cow Fighting in Aproz (three categories fighting + the Queen of the Queens) on Sunday May 7, 2017.

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