

## Silver Maple Dexters on the Chondrodysplasia Mutation

Silver Maple Dexters maintains a fully tested herd that is obligate non-chondro. We do not breed or sell animals carrying chondrodysplasia. This has been the policy of our breeding program from the beginning.

Our position is grounded in the science and art of livestock breeding. A serious breeding program cannot be built on, or meaningfully advanced through, genetic distortion.

Chondrodysplasia is a dwarfing mutation that shortens bone growth and alters proportion. When present, it distorts an animal's true genetic size, structure, and capacity. Breeding within that distortion obscures the herd's underlying reality and prevents effective selection. The breeder cannot fully evaluate an animal carrying the mutation because it alters the phenotype.

Remove the mutation, and the breeder must face what remains: real stature, real structure, real productive capacity. Only then can a program measure progress and improve a breed with intent rather than illusion.

Earlier generations of Dexter breeders often spoke more plainly about the dwarf gene and the distortions it introduced. Over time, that candor diminished in parts of the breed community. At Silver Maple Dexters, we retain that earlier clarity. A homozygous-lethal mutation is not a legitimate breeding tool.

Across the cattle industry more broadly, lethal recessive defects are treated as defects. Breed associations typically monitor them, publish test results, and encourage breeders to reduce or eliminate their frequency. Some exclude genetically affected animals from registration or require at-risk animals to test free before registration. More commonly, associations manage carriers as a risk to be controlled, not as a breed characteristic to be preserved. We are aware of no other cattle breed association that treats a homozygous-lethal defect as something to be preserved for breed character. Dexters are an outlier in this respect, and Silver Maple Dexters does not accept that model of stewardship.

Dexters are a naturally small, functional dual-purpose breed. A dwarfing mutation is not required to achieve proper breed character or sound breed type.

The cattle we breed at Silver Maple Dexters demonstrate that plainly. Our herd expresses strong traditional Dexter character and type, structural integrity, and functional scale without reliance on the chondrodysplasia mutation. In fact, proper breed type is better preserved when the underlying genetics are allowed to

express honestly. Animals whose appearance depends on a dwarfing mutation are not a clearer representation of the breed. They are a genetic distortion of it.

The same principle applies to other fashionable shortcuts. Structural quality and productive function define a Dexter, not a single trait or convenience gene.

At Silver Maple Dexters, our policy is straightforward. We do not build a breeding program on distortions. We breed forward on truth: sound structure, functional utility, and measurable inheritance across generations.