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INTEGRATING HIGHLAND CATTLE INTO ORGANIC AND AGRITOURISM
FARMS FOR LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT

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The Highland Cattle breed originates from Scotland. The breed description was established in 1885, and it developed in the mountainous regions of northern Scotland and surrounding islands. It is one of the oldest documented cattle breeds in modern history. The characteristic features of this breed include resilience to harsh environmental conditions and high-quality meat. The contemporary expansion of this breed in various countries, including Poland, is also associated with its use in landscape management, as well as in organic and agritourism farms [1]. In the conditions of continental Europe, Highland cattle are mainly utilized in extensive farms and those with challenging management conditions. Kept in natural environments, they exhibit excellent health and longevity. Studies analyzing and evaluating calving ease found no cases of difficult births – all observed calvings were classified as easy and did not require human assistance [1, 2]. Research findings indicate that in agritourism farms, the Highland breed serves as an attraction, accounting for 28% of beef cattle. It has low housing and feeding requirements, and the animals can be kept on pasture year-round while maintaining excellent condition and health. Their meat is lean, marbled, juicy, and low in cholesterol. Additionally, the breed's striking appearance – with its long, multicolored hair and impressive horns – adds to its appeal. Highland cattle are among the most popular miniature cattle breeds. They are particularly well-suited for agritourism farms, where direct contact with animals kept in harmony with their natural environment provides significant educational and developmental benefits for children, youth, and urban residents. Other studies have shown that tourists eagerly photographed Highland cattle, enjoyed observing them, engaged in homemade dairy product production, and believed that the presence of cattle positively influenced the landscape [3, 4].

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