

# PRIZED PAIR ARE THE B\$LL@CKS...

# YOU CAN'T BEAT A BIT OF GOOLIE

## Race to salvage dead bull's DNA



Owners . . . John and dad John snr

By **CHRISTINE LAVELLE**

**A FARMER made a frantic dash to a lab with his dead bull's testicles in a cool box — so he could save the beast's prized semen.**

John Elliot, 36, drove 220 miles through the night with the precious cargo from Linton Gilbertines Rocco, who was castrated before he was put down.

Experts then used a pioneering procedure to extract 180 "straws" of the animal's superior DNA, each containing half a millilitre and worth around £70.

Now Rocco has fathered two calves following his death with more planned — and any males produced could be sold for around £12,000 each.

Yesterday John told how he seized the bull by the horns after Rocco broke a leg at 20 months running into a fence — and vets warned he would have to be destroyed. It came weeks after he bought Rocco for £12,600.

His mission took him from the family farm in Kelso, Roxburghshire, which he runs with dad John snr, 67, to Stallion AI labs in Whitchurch, Shropshire.

He said: "The Royal Dick Vets School in Edinburgh suggested we try to get his sperm extracted after castration — meaning we could still save his fantastic genetics."

### Breeding

"It's a process that is usually only carried out on racehorses or endangered animals

"The only place that does it is in Shropshire — and I had just 12 hours to get Rocco's testicles there.

"I put them in a cool box and drove through the night. I got to the lab the following morning.

"It took the team five hours to complete the process but we ended up with 180 straws, which is great. I'm thrilled."

Rocco's semen has now fathered Erica and Ellen — and John hopes to impregnate 30 cows later this year.

He said: "I would rather have Rocco — he was such a gentle giant. But this means we can still have a happy ending. We don't plan on selling the straws but each one would probably be worth between £50 and £70.

"Our female offspring will probably be kept within our pedigree herd.

"But any males would be sold for breeding. We'd expect to get a similar amount to what we paid for Rocco."

Last night Stallion AI owner Tullis Matson said: "We developed a specialised technique for horses but we had never used it on a bull's testicles before.

"When Mr Elliot got in touch with us we decided to give it a go. It's great to see that it has worked."

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## Loads of cash in genes plan



**SCOTT DONALDSON**  
Livestock expert

I'VE never heard of this happening with cattle before, only horses, but it could potentially be a lucrative idea.

They've retained the genetics of a bull that was going to be euthanised, effectively ending that bloodline forever.

If proven to be successful, each semen straw could be worth up to £200. So if they're managed to extract 180 straws then you could be looking at £26,000 — they'd still get a return on the £12,600 price they paid on the bull.

They're worth their weight in gold bull-ion

What this 0.5ml straw of Rocco's semen would get you...

0.1 oz gold

1.05 oz caviar

0.3 oz saffron

0.1 oz platinum

7.3 oz silver

24 Viagra pills

## HOW ROCCO'S SEMEN WAS SAVED



### DASH AFTER BEAST DIES

ROCCO was put down leaving 12 hours to take balls 220 miles to Shropshire lab.

Check . . . vet with bull



### 180 STRAWS FOR SPERM

SCIENTISTS extract 180 straws with half a millilitre of the prize bull's sperm in each.

Experts . . . Stallion lab



Frozen . . . sperm straws

### THE £24K PRODUCE

CALVES Erica and Ellen — worth up to £12,000 each — are born.



Success . . . newborn calf