

Whispering grass ain't arf big mum!

IF someone told you that the animal in our picture weighed well over a ton, you might think it was a load of old bull.

You would be forgiven for thinking that, but the fact is, according to the man who bred this hefty bullock, Mr. Roland Hodges, of Home Farm, Twyford, it weighs about 24cwt.

Mr. Hodges' beast, which bears the unlikely name of "Whispering Grass," is a cross-bred Charolais Friesian.

Mr. Hodges was not keen to reveal the age of the bullock, but after a little persuasion from our reporter, he said that it was, in fact, nearly five years old.

"I have not told anyone how old 'Whisper' is until now. I used to allow people to think he was considerably younger than that.

How big?

"The fact is I should really have sold him about two years ago, but I put it off and off until it got to the stage that I wanted to find out just how big he would get," admitted Mr. Hodges.

The average bullocks sold at market weigh in the region of 10cwt, but, of course, they are younger than "Whisper."

Mr. Hodges has another reason for hanging on to see how big his bullock will get.

He told our reporter that the biggest bullock sold at a British market last year — also a Charolais Friesian cross — weighed exactly 24cwt.

Record?

And the Twyford farmer has a desire to see one of his animals take the record this year.

Mr. Hodges, who breeds beef cattle and keeps sheep, said that he recently sold another monster bullock weighing about 17cwt.

Apart from leaving them to get that little bit older, Mr. Hodges has no other explanation as to why his beasts should become so large.

"Mind you Charolais always grow a little bit bigger than most anyway. No, I only feed them on hay and beet pulp, adding some protein concentrates," he explained.

When asked whether he would keep the animal until it died of old age, or if he would sell it, Mr. Hodges explained that he intended to take the bullock to Banbury Market within two or three weeks.

Low profit

sold to a foreign buyer. "Simply because there is just not the money here," he said.

Mr. Hodges explained, however, that his profit margin would be quite small.

"As I say, I should have sold him two years ago. I kept him longer out of interest, and I would not say it was the most profitable way of going about things."

Mr. Hodges told our reporter that one day "Whisper" was left out in the yard, and the gate to his front garden was left open.

"He decided that the grass was greener on the other side, and started tramping across the lawn," he said.

With the recent rain the ground was fairly soft and the animal's giant footprints can now be clearly seen — about



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