

Presenting the 2021

# STAR OF THE BREED



Photo courtesy of The Bullvine

## **BLONDIN GOLDWYN SUBLIMINAL-ETS • EX-97 4E**

11-01 • 2X • 365D • 44,740M • 4.3%F • 1,921F • 3.1%P • 1,366P

**1st 150,000 Pound Cow and Grand Champion - 2021 Midwest Spring National Holstein Show**

**2nd 150,000 Pound Cow - 2021 International National Holstein Show**

**OWNED BY:** Budjon Farms and Peter & Lyn Vail, Lomira, Wisconsin

### **ABOUT THE AWARD**

The Star of the Breed recognition is given annually to one Registered Holstein® cow that exemplifies outstanding production combined with exceptional type. To be eligible for the Star of the Breed award, a cow must place in the top five in her class at a National Show, be in a herd enrolled in the TriStar<sup>SM</sup> program and have an official classification score.

Once the eligible cows are determined, the following calculation is used to determine the award recipient: Combined Mature Equivalent (ME) Fat and Protein + Age Adjusted Classification Score X (Breed Average ME CFP/Breed Average Age Adjusted Score.)



# A CHAMPION SPIRIT

Subliminal overcomes the odds to achieve high performance and longevity.

**T**he 2021 Star of the Breed has achieved a rockstar status only a small percentage of cows will reach in their lifetime. With just the mention of her name, this year's honoree is recognized by dairy enthusiasts around the world.

Holstein Association USA is pleased to recognize Blondin Goldwyn Subliminal-ETS as the 2021 Star of the Breed. The highest honor presented to a Registered Holstein®, the award recognizes a cow that balances exceptional production and high type.

Subliminal embodies the Star of the Breed with a classification score of EX-97 4E and lifetime production record of 310,707 pounds of milk; 12,360 pounds of fat (4.0%); and 9,869 pounds of protein (3.2%). At 13 years old, she is the oldest recipient in the award's 14-year history.

Subliminal is owned by Tom and Kelli Cull and Peter and Lyn Vail and was bred by Ferme Blondin in St. Placide, Quebec. Her owners say she has many strengths, making her an ideal cow to have in the barn.

"For the type of cow we want, she's as close to the total package as you can get," Tom Cull says. "She has extreme type, extreme reproductive power, and extreme production."

## PEDIGREE POTENTIAL

In August 2012, Tom was working with Gen-Com Holsteins at the Quebec Summer Show in Canada when a recently fresh junior three-year-old cow caught his eye. Tom thought she fit the mold of cows he and Peter had been purchasing at the time — ones with extreme type and prolific pedigrees.

"Subliminal was a young cow that had great potential," Tom says. "Not only from a type perspective, but also from a breeding and development perspective."

Subliminal's pedigree piqued Tom's interest. He had already been impressed by several other cows from the illustrious Supra family, which helped solidify his decision to purchase her with the Vails. Subliminal is out of Blondin Red-Marker Sublime EX-93, and her grandam is Blondin James Supra-ET EX-90, who is out of Blondin Skychief Supra EX-93 3E.

"Part of the reason I saw potential in her was from seeing all the other family members on herd visits to Blondin that had great promise and had gone on to do good things for them," Tom explains.

Simon Lalande and Kim Côté of Ferme Blondin say they will always remember the day Tom expressed his interest in buying Subliminal. "She was a very fresh junior three-year-old, and we were in love with her. She was still green and not ready to show, but we couldn't leave her home," Kim recalls, adding "We were very pleased that she was going to such a great home with passionate people."



Trevor Tuman leads Subliminal at World Dairy Expo in 2015. Photo courtesy of The Bullvine.

After settling into her new home at Budjon Farms in Lomira, Wisconsin, Subliminal made her World Dairy Expo debut with a seventh-place finish in the Junior Three-Year-Old Class. She topped off the year by being named Honorable Mention All-American Junior Three-Year-Old Cow and Reserve All-Canadian Junior Three-Year-Old.

## ROAD TO RECOVERY

Subliminal's story took an unexpected twist in the winter of 2013 when she slipped in the cow yard while in heat and dislocated her hip. Tom didn't waste any time calling Dr. Sheila McGuirk at the University of Wisconsin – Madison School of Veterinary Medicine.

Subliminal was taken to the UW-Madison Vet Hospital where Dr. McGuirk and her colleagues successfully performed surgery to put her hip back in place. Subliminal spent the next 90 days on the mend in a sling before graduating to hobbles.

She returned home in the late spring of 2013 and was kept in an individual sand-bedded pen made specifically for her. Subliminal was a moderately sized cow at the time, something Tom says played a significant role in her recovery. While recuperating, Subliminal made quite the impression on those caring for her.

"She's been an absolute pleasure to work with not only from a performance perspective, but also because she lets us care for her and takes care of herself," Tom says. "She's just one of those cool cows to work with because she responds so well to care and management."

Each new step in the recovery process brought the risk of slipping again, but Subliminal continued to be smart about how she carried herself. Once healed, she was bred back and calved in April 2014. It took a team of people, special care, and Subliminal's own cooperation for her to heal completely.

## THE STORY IS FAR FROM OVER

In 2014, just one year after her tumultuous fall and dislocated hip, Subliminal returned to the colored shavings and earned a respectable ninth place finish in the Five-Year-Old class. She was bred back and due to calve in 2015. This is the year she came into her own and received





Photo courtesy of Nick Sarbacker, CattleClub.com.



Subliminal was named Grand Champion of the Midwest Spring National Holstein Show in 2021. Photo courtesy of Coswmpopolitan.

an unthinkable honor - the nod for Supreme Champion of the World Dairy Expo Junior Show.

This was an emotional win, mentions Kelli, "seeing her out there as if nothing had ever happened, her mobility unquestioned and watching my nephew Trevor and her glide around the ring, it was a magical moment for all involved in her journey thus far. Subliminal definitely beat all odds."

This amazing showing accolade was only the beginning of her triumph back to the tanbark trail. Throughout the next several years, she kept up a pace in the showing many cows only dream of. She was named Junior All-American Aged Cow and Honorable Mention All-American Aged Cow in 2015, All-Canadian Mature Cow in 2016, and won the Lifetime Production class at World Dairy Expo and garnered All-American honors in 2017.

After taking a year off in 2018, she came back strong in 2019. Although she suffered from a tremendous bout of illness the week of World Dairy Expo and had to be hooked up to IV's all week, she pulled off an honorable third place finish in the 150,000 Pound Production Cow Class.

"She's a very smart, very clean, very ladylike kind of an individual to work with," comments Tom. "She's a cow that is always very aware of herself, and her surroundings. We believe those characteristics are what have given her the ability to take care of herself for eight lactations and eight natural calvings."

With no World Dairy Expo in 2020, Subliminal traveled to Circleville, Ohio to compete in the North American Open Show. Here, she battled with Butz-Butler Goldwyn Barbara in the Lifetime Production class and finished with a strong second place and Reserve All-American honor.

With over 70 daughters to date, by an array of sires, Subliminal's chapter of leaving her reproductive stamp on the industry is a continued work in progress. She has been successfully conventional flushed and IVF'ed multiple times over the years. Numerous embryos have been sold all over Europe, along with a multitude of other countries including Australia, the Netherlands, the U.K., and Japan.

## THE ULTIMATE HONOR

In May 2021, Subliminal received a distinction not many cows in the Holstein breed can boast. She was classified

EX-97. The honor came shortly after Subliminal was named Grand Champion of the Midwest Spring National show, and her owners thought it was the pinnacle of her success story.

Although hesitant at first, her owners decided to take Subliminal out to compete one more time. She took second place in the 150,000 Pound Production Cow Class at World Dairy Expo last October. Subliminal was 18 months fresh, last calving in April 2020, and in her eighth lactation — making her placing even more impressive.

Each milestone Subliminal has accomplished is made sweeter because of the challenges she overcame along the way. Tom says Subliminal's 2021 Star of the Breed award is the culmination of everything she has achieved over the years.

"After she went 97, we didn't know if we would show her again," Tom says. "After she placed second at World Dairy Expo, I thought that was her last exclamation point. Now, being named Star of the Breed is another exclamation point that never even crossed my mind."

Subliminal's story has resonated with many people over the years, and she's gathered a fan base around the globe. From those who cared for her at UW – Madison, to the team at Budjon, to those who watch her parade around the showing, Subliminal has a special place in many people's hearts.

Their cow's incredible journey is something the Culls and Vails are happy to share with others. "When we get visitors to the farm, the cow has somewhat of a 'rockstar' status. Subliminal, along with our other EX-97, Rosiers Goldwyn Blexy, live together in the same gigantic pack pen, and are always up for photo opportunities," Tom says. "It's truly neat to see people's reactions when they view not one, but two 97-point cows in one pen, happy and healthy, and mobile, at the same farm."

Subliminal's classification score, showing accolades, and milk production records speak for themselves. However, her story consists of more than ribbons on the wall or milk in the tank. Her journey demonstrates perseverance and her personality shines through in every chapter along the way.

"Subliminal can be an inspiration to other cows, theoretically," Tom says. "The Star of the Breed award isn't just about the cows that are champions, it's about the cows that are well rounded, and I think she exemplifies that as well as any cow in the Holstein breed."