

THE PULSE

Spring 2020 • Holstein Association USA, Inc.



U.S. REGISTERED HOLSTEINS

THE WORLD'S PERFECT COW

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HOLSTEIN GENETICS HAVE MADE BIG STRIDES

In early March, I received an email from a Chinese colleague, “We heard that the Holstein Association USA will update the TPI® formula in April 2020. Could you help us interpret those changes?”

This question gave me pause as I not only considered the recent updates to the Total Performance Index (TPI) but the significant genetic progress that the Holstein breed has made over the past five years. Of course, that progress was formally documented this April in conjunction with the five-year base change. Since 1980, the “genetic base” has been adjusted every five years. Beginning in April 2020, all dairy cattle will be compared to the average cow born in 2015.

When looking at recent genetic progress as measured by the base change, Holsteins led the pack among the six major U.S. dairy breeds.

Production: While all breeds made genetic progress, gains for the Holsteins were particularly impressive as the base PTA (Predicted Transmitting Ability) for milk shifted by 492 pounds. The adjustment for fat was 24 pounds and protein was 18 pounds.

Milk quality: Changes for somatic cell score (SCS) were small for all breeds except Holsteins, which rose by 0.08 due to progress in lowering SCSs.

Longevity: Holsteins made chart-topping progress on Productive Life (PL) with an improvement of 1.9 months in just five years.

Livability: Does a cow stay alive? That’s measured by Cow Livability (CA). Launched in August 2016, the trait improved in three of the six breeds with Holsteins on top at 0.74.

Health: Up until this year, only the Holsteins had evaluations for six major diseases. Jerseys join the calculations in April 2020. Of those six traits — displaced abomasum, ketosis, mastitis, metritis, milk fever, and retained placenta — Holsteins made progress in all areas excluding milk fever.

Reproduction: When considering the three main fertility traits across all six breeds, 13 of the 18 estimates showed unfavorable changes — only the Holsteins improved in all three traits. Those traits are Daughter Pregnancy Rate (DPR), Heifer Conception Rate (HCR), and Cow Conception Rate (CCR).

Conformation: Nearly every trait improved with some holding steady. The “holding steady” part is a good thing because intermediate is the optimum for traits such as legs side view and rump angle. Two stubborn conformation trends involve teats that have become shorter and closer together. These trends impact “milk-ability”. When it comes to conformation, beauty sometimes can be in the eyes of the beholder. Tall, deep, and dairy did trend upward. While some breeders strive for those traits, the combination has been associated with elevated mortality risk.

Back to the TPI formula

The TPI formula has a constant.

For the past five years that number had been 2,187. In April it changed to 2,370.

That constant, which could be considered an adjustor, was added a number of decades ago and allows Holstein breeders to directly compare bulls all the way back to 1980 when the very first base change took place.

Utilizing quality genetics is one of the best ways to lower the cost of production and achieve profitability, and the new April 2020 TPI formula will help breeders meet that goal. Based on USDA economic values, an average daughter of a Top 100 TPI bull will generate \$486 more net profit over her lifetime versus a typical daughter from an average available A.I. bull. Over half of those gains come from milk, fat, and protein production. Next in line is Productive Life.

Milk pricing has shifted a great deal in recent years. After being beaten down for generations, saturated fats, which have been found to raise high density cholesterol (HDL), the good cholesterol, came back into vogue. That sent consumer demand for butter, whole fat milk, and all animal fats for that matter, into overdrive. As a result, milkfat began a 48-month run in 2016 where it outpaced protein in U.S. milk checks. More recently, milk protein overtook butterfat.

What does the future hold?

Milkfat and milk protein may be more equal or more often flip-flop values moving forward. With that in mind, PTA Protein and PTA Fat now have equal ranking in the April 2020 TPI formula, each accounting for 19% of the weighting, respectively. Previously, PTA Protein had a 21% weight.

Additional TPI changes include:

- Feed efficiency, which measures a cow’s ability to convert feed to milk, was updated to match USDA’s economic assumptions.
- A Health Trait index, which includes the six major diseases, was added to the TPI formula at a 2% weighting.
- The Feet & Leg composite was adjusted slightly to add Rear Legs — Side View as a two-way trait having an intermediate optimum. This adjustment reflects the notion that rear legs may be getting too straight.
- Early First Calving has been added to the Fertility Index. However, the total weighting on all fertility traits remains unchanged at 13% of the TPI formula.
- The weighting on Productive Life moved from 4 to 5% with the negative weighting on Dairy Form being removed from TPI.





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IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2 President Geiger applauds the incredible genetic progress of the Holstein breed, which places the black-and-white cow at the lead of other dairy breeds. Corey takes a fresh look at the positive, predicted impact of changes to the TPI® formula on Holstein genetics.

FOCUS ON GENETICS

4 In this feature, Lindsey Worden examines the cow of the future, the Holstein beauty whose genetics have improved in both fertility and calving ease. The increasingly durable black-and-white cow continues to do all we want her to do to help feed the world nature's most perfect food – milk.

CEO'S MESSAGE

5 CEO Meyer honors the resiliency of our dairy farmer members and our readers who are struggling in an unprecedented coronavirus pandemic and talks about what our staff is doing to continue services. Remaining optimistic about America's future, John inspires us to keep dreaming.

STAR OF THE BREED

6 Congratulations to Daryl and Pam Nunes on their "2019 Star of the Breed!" Ocean-View Sterling Silver, EX-94 2E is owned by Daryl and Pam of Ocean View Genetics in Deerfield, Wis. We know you'll appreciate learning about this latest star, the remarkable Silver, as well as the impressive generations of her family tree!

HERDS OF EXCELLENCE

8 We're delighted to present eleven dairy farm families and their Herds of Excellence. Most have received the sought-after award multiple years, and one couple is a first-time honoree. We think you'll enjoy reading how each family differs in their breeding philosophies and herd management, yet all have accomplished truly impressive results.

2020 ANNUAL MEETING AND NATIONAL HOLSTEIN CONVENTION

14 President Geiger addresses the decision to cancel the 2020 National Holstein Convention in Pennsylvania, as we look forward to traveling to the Keystone State on June 19-24, 2021. The President plans to appoint a committee to study conducting the 135th annual meeting later this year.

Dam of MeritSM, Elite PerformerTM, Gold Medal DamSM, Holstein COMPLETE[®], Official Holstein PedigreeTM, Progressive Breeders RegistrySM, Progressive Genetics HerdSM, Red Book Plus/MultiMateTM, Registered Holsteins[®], TPI[®] and all variations, and TriStarSM are all servicemarks of Holstein Association USA, Inc.

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Cover photo of Ocean-View Sterling Silver courtesy of Ocean View Genetics.

U.S. REGISTERED HOLSTEINS

The Breed for Today, the Breed for Tomorrow

Lindsey Worden, Executive Director, Holstein Genetic Services

U.S. Holstein breeders have a story worth telling. In recent years, there has been much talk of the United States and our ability to feed the world, supplying high-quality protein to all who want it – with dairy products and beef being two major sources of that protein.

Just in the past several weeks, as our nation has found itself in the throes of a global pandemic, we have seen our grocery shelves picked over and depleted as consumers stock their home pantries and refrigerators with supplies to last their families for several days, or even weeks. It has become as obvious now as it has ever been that our neighbors rely on dairy farmers to ensure there is an abundant supply of fresh milk and other dairy products, something our nation’s farmers have become extremely efficient at producing.

As we look to the future, it is clear the effort U.S. Registered Holstein breeders have been putting in for decades is paying off and setting our breed up to be the “cow of the future.”

Holsteins are still the top breed to put the most pounds of high-quality milk, fat and protein into your bulk tank. If you sell to a market that places higher value on percentages of components, there is a vast selection of bulls you can use in your herd to breed for higher percentages to meet that goal.

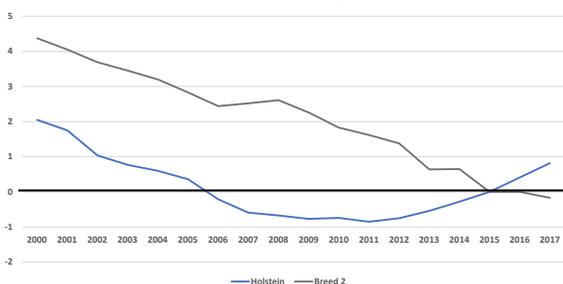
Comparison between Breeds, Herds on DHIA Test Plans

Breed	# Records	Milk Lbs	Fat %	Fat lbs	Protein %	Protein lbs	SCS 2016 Birth Year
Holstein	2,307,090	27,405	3.86	1,058	3.11	852	2.32
Jersey	361,747	20,583	4.83	994	3.68	757	2.90
Brown Swiss	15,485	22,497	4.09	919	3.35	754	2.50

Source: CDCB, State and national standardized lactation averages by breed for cows calving in 2018

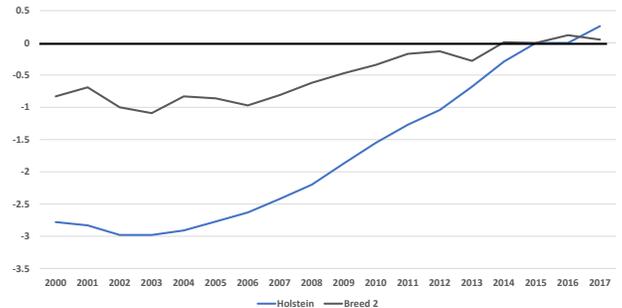
Now let’s turn our attention to some traits that haven’t always been a hallmark of our breed. Fertility was long considered the Achilles’ heel of the Holstein cow, due at least in part to its negative correlation with high milk production. That trend has reversed in recent years, and we can be proud of the progress made in fertility over time.

Genetic Trend: Cow Conception Rate



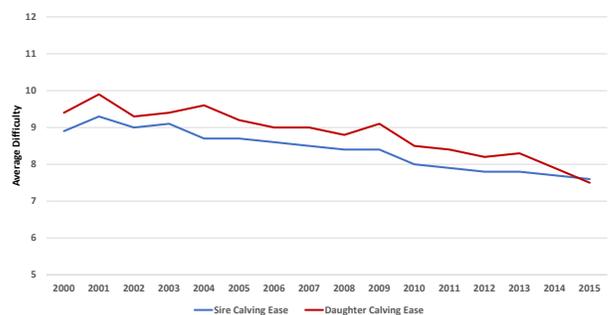
Similarly, durability was something the Holstein cow could have been criticized for at one time. Looking at recent trends, it is easy to see that significant progress has been made to improve cow livability.

Genetic Trend: Cow Livability



No dairy farmer likes to walk into the barn and find a cow that needs help giving birth. The Holstein breed has seen a desirable trend in both sire and daughter calving ease over the past several years.

Holstein Calving Ease



The bottom line is that Holstein cattle are being bred to perform in all segments of the dairy industry. As other breeds try to catch up to the Holstein’s unmatched production qualities, they are losing ground in their core strengths – while Holsteins continue to surge forward.

Aside from the genetic aspect of things, there is an increasing demand for what we do as a breed association in providing official identification services. Looking just at registration activity, we have seen a 14 percent increase in annual registrations over the past

continued on page 14

2019

Star of the Breed



SILVER

Ocean-View Sterling Silver EX-94 2E

5-07 2X 365D 58,330M 4.1%F 2,419F 2.8%P 1,640P

4th 150,000 Lb. Lifetime Milk Production Cow - 2019 Midwest Spring National Show

Bred and Owned by: Ocean View Genetics, Deerfield, Wis.

2019 Star of the Breed

The 2019 Star of the Breed combines two world renowned cows whose impact on the Registered Holstein® breed can be felt globally. Ocean-View Sterling Silver EX-94 2E, who resides at the beautiful Ocean View Genetics owned by Daryl and Pam Nunes in Deerfield, Wisc., truly is carrying on the legacy of household names “Sheen” and “Zandra”.

Silver herself traces back to one of the foundation cows of Ocean View, Ideograph Burkgov Steps, a cow that was purchased by Daryl’s dad, the late Marvin Nunes, in the 1968 Utah National Holstein Convention Sale. Many of the success stories at Ocean View trace back to this \$2,400 purchase.

“My dad went to the sale intent on spending \$2,000. While this Burkgov daughter exceeded that price, she also exceeded our expectations,” says Daryl. “Steps not only was the foundation for Ocean View, she also ends up as the foundation for many herds around the world through her grandson Sexation. Silver herself traces back to Steps at least five times through her maternal and paternal lines!”

This Braxton daughter completes 13 generations of Excellent and Very Good dams with her nearest three dams being Ocean-View Zenith Sassy EX-90, Ocean-View Starlet Sassy EX-93 3E and Ocean-View Benefit Sassy EX-91 2E.

The Choice of Lifetime

Silver’s story began when Daryl was young. “As a bonus, I was able to pick a baby calf each year to add to my own herd,” he recalls. “I picked Silver’s second dam, Ocean-View Starlet Sassy as a calf. She was black and so wide and correct even as a calf and from a cow family close to my heart.”

Daryl adds that Starlet Sassy went on to develop into a 93-point cow and using Ocean-View Zenith-TW-ET on her was a natural choice allowing them to combine two of their favorite cow families. Daryl and Pam then chose Regancrest S Braxton-ET as a mating for Zenith Sassy. Braxton came into the herd as a mating sire early after their friend Tony DeMello told them how impressive the Braxton daughters were that he was seeing in California.

Pam says that Silver is part of a high-packed sister act from the ‘Sassys’. “Silver is the youngest of the superstar sister quartet,” she says. “Her oldest sister Ocean-View Dundee Sassy EX-93-3E, is recently fresh at 13 years old and will hopefully turn over 300,000 pounds this lactation. Next is Ocean-View Damion Sassy EX-95-3E, with over 211,320 pounds of milk and 4.3% fat Lifetime. Rounding out this group is Ocean-View Sanchez Sassy EX-94-2E, who is a breed production leader at number 3 for butterfat with over 248,000 lifetime and a 4.5% fat test and a National Elite Performer.”

A Herd Favorite

Silver is a herd favorite for many of the individuals who have worked with her at Ocean View. One of their former interns, Hayden Hauschildt purchased Silver’s Damion daughter, Ocean-View Made to Shine in their 2017 herd dispersal. That same year, they made a deal with their summer/sale intern, Mary Scott from Scottmore Holsteins in Iowa. She and her sister Naomi put their work hours towards a lease and embryos from Silver.

“In Mary’s last year of Junior eligibility, Silver was first Junior in the 150,000-pound Cow Class at the Midwest National Spring Show and third in the International Junior Holstein Show, which earned her an Honorable Mention Junior All-American Recognition,” Pam states.

Along with the above accolades, Silver was named Grand Champion of the District 6 Holstein Show as a Four-Year-Old in 2016 and she has three 365-day records over 55,000 pounds of milk. These records have earned her numerous awards including the number 2 national leader spot as a Junior 3 for milk and she is currently number one for milk in Wisconsin. She has also received the National Elite Performer designation.

Balanced Breeding

According to Daryl and Pam, Silver represents and pays tribute to the breeding philosophy that Marvin started at Ocean View. Namely, silky dairy cows that work hard and possess outstanding individuality with depth of pedigree. To further develop that philosophy, they chose Damion and Corvette for her natural calves and they flushed her to Diamondback. Ocean-View Silver Lining, is her Corvette Spring Yearling who placed 10th in the 2019 International Junior Holstein Show. Silver is bred to Awesome and due again in June.

They are truly honored that Silver is the 2019 Star of the Breed. “We feel that today the art of breeding is getting lost in our industry and it’s easy to forget about the balanced cow. We don’t look at proof numbers, we look at what a bull is making for daughters, what his cow family did and what a cow is doing in our herd,” they say. “When you’ve worked with cow families over the generations (this one for over 50 years), you gain an insight as to how they breed. Balanced cows are our goal – cows that milk, last and look great doing it!”

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 TriStarSM 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).

Herds of Excellence

Holstein Association USA is proud to present our 2019 Herds of Excellence award recipients. These eleven herds have all achieved the rigorous criteria to qualify for this honor.

The award is broken into three herd size divisions based on the number of cows included in production averages. The categories are as follows:

- Division 1: 500+ cows
- Division 2: 100-499 cows
- Division 3: 10-99 cows

Herds receiving the award must:

- Have classified within the last year and have an age adjusted classification score of 83 points or higher;
- Have at least 70 percent of the herd homebred;
- Be enrolled in the Association's TriStarSM program

Additionally, qualifying herds must meet the following production criteria:

- 500+ cows – 15 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent for milk, fat and protein
- 100 to 499 cows – 20 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent for milk, fat and protein
- 10 to 99 cows – 25 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent for milk, fat and protein

**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE
FOLLOWING HERDS!**



The Zwald Family: Steve holding Abby, Annette holding Katelyn, Bob, Kay, Tom holding Hannah, and Ashley holding Noah

DIVISION 1 • 500+ COWS

The Zwald Family • Hammond, WI

Three-Year Honoree • 98.7% Homebred

Milk: 31,870 Fat: 1,310 Protein: 1,026

Average Classification Score – 85.1

Bob and Kay Zwald, Bomaz Inc. near Hammond, Wis., have grown their Registered Holstein operation throughout two generations to be a herd that excels in both production and type.

The couple's two youngest children and their spouses all work on the farm. Bob's proudest moment, he says, is being able to work alongside his family.

"I think faith and family are the biggest things, and beyond that, success will come," Bob says.

As the operation has grown, they've placed a larger emphasis on the herd's genetic potential. The Zwald family stresses high production, good udders and sound feet and legs when making breeding decisions.

Technology is aiding in the process, too. Bomaz Inc. is able to identify and implement genetic progress faster than ever before with the adoption of genomics. They test every animal born on the farm, Bob says.

Using that information, they flush the top five percent of their cows to seize genetic progress for both the female and male sides of pedigrees. This allows for greater improvements with each generation.

"We don't have a goal to necessarily have the highest classifying cow or the best show cow," Bob says. "We breed for the working ladies with the goal that they can give 100 pounds of milk every day."

The Zwald family's first cow to have a big genetic impact was Bomaz Valiant Daphne VG-88 GMD DOM. Her offspring are trouble-free and produce high levels of milk, Bob says.

Staying rooted in their quality focus will ensure the next generation can continue the family's dairy farming legacy.

DINOMI HOLSTEINS



Dino and Dante Migliazzo

DIVISION 1 • 500+ COWS

The Migliazzo Family • Atwater, CA

Three-Year Honoree • 97.8% Homebred

Milk: 32,194 Fat: 1,221 Protein: 1,031

Average Classification Score – 83.2

Brothers Dino and Dante Migliazzo started farming in 1967 when their father bought a dairy with 100 cows on 100 acres.

Registered Holsteins were part of that original herd, an added advantage that gave them their start with the breed. Dino says the value of the registered cows has only grown through the years.

“We immediately understood and put value on genetics,” Dino says. “I think the Registered Holstein kept that on the front burner for us, so we were able to use our knowledge to breed a better cow to be more profitable.”

Their primary focus is on cow comfort, nutrition, and animal health. Their father engrained in them that the more production you get per cow, the more profitable you will be. They strive to make each individual animal perform to its highest potential.

They select for high components because their fluid milk is sold for cheese production, and emphasize health traits, daughter pregnancy rate and somatic cell count, without forfeiting production.

“We see value in cows that stay healthy,” Dante adds. “Daughter pregnancy rate, feed efficiency — all of those are going to get more attention moving forward, as well as components and high production.”

The farm has been honored with the Progressive Genetics Herd award for 14 years.

Dino and Dante believe in order to make progress, the breeding program should incorporate high genetic bulls — and they keep a laser-focus on the breeding goals they are trying to achieve in order to stay on track for the future.

SIEMERS HOLSTEIN FARMS INC.



Dan and Paul Siemers holding Siemers Gsun Haya-Dream-ET

DIVISION 1 • 500+ COWS

The Siemers Family • Newton, WI

Four-Year Honoree • 98.3% Homebred

Milk: 36,888 Fat: 1,508 Protein: 1,098

Average Classification Score – 85.1

The Siemers family strives for excellence with unwavering focus on being good cow people, with a keen eye for genetics and management.

Currently the family’s fourth, fifth and sixth generation are working alongside each other on the farm — fully committed to excellence. Their mission is simple: to make every generation better than the last.

Established in 1908 with only a handful of cows, Registered Holsteins have been the cornerstone of the Siemers’ herd and key to their success, both in and out of the showring. Dan Siemers says working with the right people has been instrumental to their efforts to get cows to milk to their maximum potential.

The Siemers have bred more than 1,000 Very Good and Excellent cows; and have achieved 28 Progressive Genetic Herd honors.

“We enjoy the genomic side of the business,” Dan says. “My advice to other breeders is to find the type of cow that you like and make sure she can be profitable. Figure out what niche you want to shoot for, and make sure that it’s going to make the right kind of cows that can do the right things for you.”

The Siemers breed for a wide spectrum of categories: high index cattle, show cattle, outstanding registered commercial cows, and red and white Holsteins.

They may focus on different avenues when making breeding decisions, but Dan says their best cows are also their best production cows. They look for strength in the cow’s conformation, so their herd will give more milk for longer periods of time. Cows are bred almost exclusively to high genomic bulls.

Dan says building a balanced cow will create problem-free cattle that will pay dairymen dividends for years to come.

KOEPKE FARMS INC.



Dave Koepke

DIVISION 2 • 100-499 COWS

The Koepke Family • Oconomowoc, WI

Three-Year Honoree • 100% Homebred

Milk: 34,021 Fat: 1,391 Protein: 1,012

Average Classification Score – 84.4

Established in 1875, Koepke Farms Inc. believes strongly in telling the story of their 350-cow farm, which is rooted in being stewards of the land. The dairy was one of the area's first to adopt a completely no-till cultivation system on their 1,250 acres where they grow soybeans, corn and alfalfa.

Dave Koepke says the key to the farm's longevity is having new generations interested in carrying on the dairy tradition.

The ideal cow at Koepke Farms is medium height, powerful enough to withstand stress, has a good appetite and breeds back quickly, Dave says. The ideal cow is one that you don't know she's there.

"I love breeding, selecting bulls and all that," Dave says. "That's my forte. My philosophy has changed over the years — it's grown."

The number one breeding priority for Dave is Cheese Merit Dollars (CM\$). Ten percent of their milk is bottled, while the rest is used for cheese or other dairy products. He then pays attention to health traits — low somatic cell, daughter pregnancy rate and calving stillbirth percentage.

This commitment to genetic excellence has paid off.

Koepke Farms has had five cows with more than 300,000 pounds of lifetime milk and 16 Excellent cows, 110 Very Good cows and 140 Good Plus cows. The herd runs an average of four percent fat, which works well for the family's growing cheese business.

The Koepke family introduced LaBelle, their farmhouse smoked cheese crafted only with the premium milk from their farm. They believe it is important that urban consumers connect with where their food comes from, and that dairy farmers have a positive story to share with them.

KOESTER DAIRY INC.



The Koester Family: Cindy, Kyle, Brent, Bria, Lance, Cynthia; seated: Dan and Amber

DIVISION 2 • 100-499 COWS

The Koester Family • Dakota, IL

Four-Year Honoree • 97.2% Homebred

Milk: 33,634 Fat: 1,358 Protein: 1,056

Average Classification Score – 85.1

Through forward thinking and steady decisions, the Koester family maintains a tradition of top-notch milk production. Koester Dairy Inc. leads their home state of Illinois in DHIA production.

Dan Koester has grown the family operation using improved genetics and management. His parents, LaVerne and Clarice Koester, established the dairy in 1956. Starting as a herd of 28 grade Holsteins, steady expansion and consistent improvement has allowed their herd to grow to more than 330 Registered Holstein cows today.

"We stress cow comfort, watch nutrition really closely and, of course, genetics," Dan says. "We're pretty aggressive about improving genetics."

As the herd grew, the family focused on breeding functional, high-producing cows. They currently use bulls with good type and strong pedigrees. As they mate their herd they especially watch DPR, somatic cell count and components.

The Koesters employ genetic data to make significant improvements, and all heifer calves are genomic tested.

Dan says Registered Holsteins provide them the advantage to increase and accelerate herd genetics by studying pedigrees. Having data instantly accessible allows them to build on the herd's overall production and functionality, he says.

Each family member has a role in making Koester Dairy run smoothly, Dan says, and being able to work alongside them is something he doesn't take for granted.

Building on progress, with powerful genetic data at their fingertips, Koester Dairy has made significant improvements in overall production and functionality of the herd — and is poised for the future.

B-LONG HOLSTEINS



Brenda, Bruce and Bret Long

DIVISION 3 • 10-99 COWS

Bruce, Brenda & Bret Long • New London, WI

Nine-Year Honoree • 100% Homebred

Milk: 36,330 Fat: 1,407 Protein: 1,136

Average Classification Score – 87.7

For B-Long Holsteins, building deep-pedigreed cow families is a goal and strategy for continuous improvement with each generation.

Bruce and Brenda Long started dairying near New London, Wisconsin, about 30 years ago. After working on their parents' farms following their graduation from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, they decided to venture out on their own.

Cow families are what drive herd decisions at B-Long Holsteins. Many of the herd's foundation animals originated from Bruce's childhood herd. Their current herd can be traced back to two calves Bruce purchased when he was young — Belleview L-H Mars Happy VG-82 GMD and Belleview Barrett Ibis VG-82.

They place a lot of breeding emphasis on cow longevity, high-volume production and the ability to transmit to their offspring. They look for bulls that sire large, powerful animals with big frames, plenty of strength and good components.

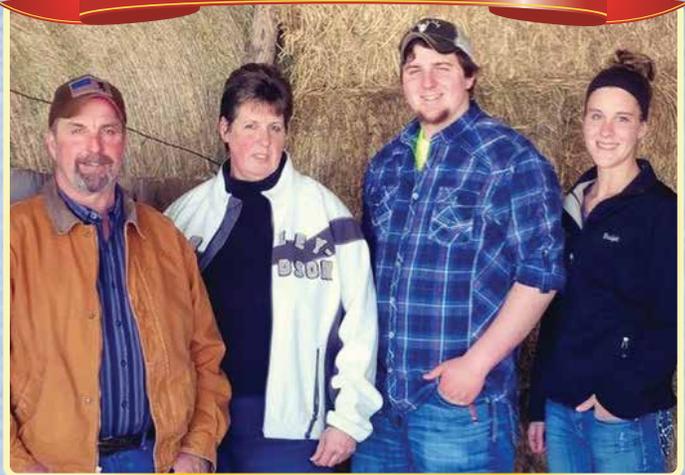
"We believe in cows that have a lot of strength, depth and width throughout, emphasizing the udders and legs," Bruce says. "As component prices improved, we decided we needed to improve our components a little more. As time went on, we put more emphasis on type."

The decision to focus more on components and type was driven by economics, Bruce says. That shift in breeding emphasis was successful. When they first started, their rolling herd average (RHA) was 18,000 pounds of milk and they had a BAA of 102.

"Our cows average 100 pounds of milk per cow per day," Bruce says. "Genetics has really improved a lot with udders compared to what it was 30 or 40 years ago. It's amazing."

Bruce and Brenda have passed on their passion for Registered Holsteins to their sons, Bret, Bryant and Brandon. Bret continues to work alongside his parents on the dairy farm.

DOORCO HOLSTEINS



The Vandertie Family: Dan, Julie, Austin and Bridget

DIVISION 3 • 10-99 COWS

Dan & Julie Vandertie • Brussels, WI

Four-Year Honoree • 100% Homebred

Milk: 34,525 Fat: 1,377 Protein: 1,055

Average Classification Score – 88.8

Fifth-generation farmer Dan Vandertie says that as a child, he remembers anxiously awaiting the Red Book from Holstein Association USA to arrive on his doorstep.

His enthusiasm for raising and breeding top-quality Registered Holstein genetics has stayed with him his entire life. Today, he and his wife, Julie, operate Doorco Holsteins in Door County, Wisconsin. They purchased the dairy farm from his parents in 1987.

"Our family believes that registering our Holsteins and building on the pedigrees adds value," Dan says. "We are always trying to improve the herd, not just in milk production, but every aspect."

When making breeding decisions, Dan says he uses genomics as a base point. Red Book Plus remains his program of choice when it comes to researching genetic information. It gives him a clearer picture of how the sires will perform, Dan says, leading to greater consistency within the herd.

Dan says he likes building cow families. He looks for long-lasting animals, cows that have a will to milk and strong frames, including wide front ends, when making breeding decisions.

In addition to assessing pedigrees, Dan selects cows with wide fronts, because those animals can consume greater amounts of feed. He attributes their herd's unwavering performance to good feed and cow comfort.

An offspring of those strong cow families is Doorco Buckeye Hailey. Now 12 years old, Hailey was classified in 2019 as EX-94 4E.

Their commitment to excellence and quality genetics has been well recognized.

Doorco Holsteins has been honored for 45 years by Holstein Association USA's Progressive Breeders' Registry. The family looks forward to what's on the horizon for their Registered Holstein herd.

EVER-GREEN-VIEW HOLSTEINS, LLC



The Kestell Family: Chris, Gin, Jennifer and Tom

DIVISION 3 • 10-99 COWS

The Kestell Family • Waldo, WI

Ten-Year Honoree • 96.8% Homebred

Milk: 38,924 Fat: 1,516 Protein: 1,175

Average Classification Score – 88.2

Tom and Gin Kestell started farming with little more than a dream back in 1971. Today, Ever-Green-View Holsteins has grown into one of the world's highest producing herds.

Acknowledged internationally for their superior Registered Holstein genetics, this ten-year Herd of Excellence honoree has dedicated more than 45 years to breeding excellent dairy cattle.

Staying in tune with the world market and using genomic young sires has allowed them to be successful around the globe. Three-quarters of the farm's income comes from exporting genetics, Tom says.

"There are always opportunities in exporting genetics," Tom says. "But you have to be invested — you have to go and meet the people you're selling to. You have to see their situation and help them out."

Since the farm's inception, they have exported more than 8,900 embryos to countries including Russia, China, Germany, Brazil, Japan, India and the Netherlands. Embryos and live cattle from Ever-Green-View Farms have been sold to 40 countries.

"We create quality genetics so we always have a product to sell," Tom says. "We try to teach them the skills it takes to translate good genetics into production."

The Kestell family earned the 2018 Elite Breeder Award from Holstein Association USA.

Many of their cows have been recognized with state and national records for milk, fat, and protein. Ever-Green-View Farms is also home to the first dam and daughter duo to receive national milk production record status — Ever-Green-View My 1326-ET EX-92 2E GMD and Ever-Green-View My Gold-ET EX-93.

Tom and Gin are in partnership with their youngest son, Chris, and his wife, Jennifer.

HILL-TON HOLSTEINS



Evie, John and Charlie Hamilton

DIVISION 3 • 10-99 COWS

The Hamilton Family • Cuba City, WI

Three-Year Honoree • 95.8% Homebred

Milk: 36,229 Fat: 1,361 Protein: 1,101

Average Classification Score – 87.0

At Hill-Ton Holsteins near Cuba City, Wis., commitment to detail has brought much success to the family dairy.

Owned by John and Evie Hamilton, and their son, Charlie, Hill-Ton Holsteins has received the Progressive Breeders' Registry award for 26 consecutive years.

They believe one of the most important aspects of Registered Holsteins is the database where they access performance information and trace back pedigrees.

When making breeding decisions, John says they pay close attention to all the fine details. They use classification data and a cow's linear breakdown to make sire selections. Low somatic cell count is a priority, while choosing for type first and production second.

The Hamilton family raises all their own replacement heifers and sells bull calves. John says that in the tough dairy economy, raising Registered Holsteins is a benefit. They offer an added advantage and market for selling genetics.

Hill-Ton Holsteins boasts a Breed Age Average of 109 percent, with six Excellent cows residing in the herd, and they've bred more than 70 Excellent cows.

"I think what makes the Registered Holstein cow the perfect cow is that we, as breeders, can decide what we want to work with and then choose how we manage with her," Charlie says. "Find a niche that I want to work in and develop that to bring more value to my operation."

The Hamilton family motto has always been, "live to dream, work to succeed." Now John and Evie are looking forward to passing Hill-Ton Holsteins onto the next generation.

HILROSE HOLSTEINS



Andy, Jeff and Joe Brantmeier with Hilrose Advent Anna-Red-ET

DIVISION 3 • 10-99 COWS

Joseph A. Brantmeier • Sherwood, WI

Nine-Year Honoree • 100% Homebred

Milk: 35,186 Fat: 1,349 Protein: 1,062

Average Classification Score – 89.3

Lifelong dairyman Joe Brantmeier has a passion for developing genetics and high-performing cows.

His parents, Hilard and Rose Mary, established Hilrose Dairy near Sherwood, Wis., and later purchased the first Registered Holstein calf in 1956. Since then, they've aspired to improve with each calf crop and generation.

Today, the operation is a partnership between Joe and his wife, Chris, and their sons, Andy and Jeff. The fourth, fifth and sixth generations work alongside each other and continue the family tradition.

"For us, quality outweighs quantity and that is how we built our herd," Joe says.

The Brantmeier family has concentrated on high-type animals with high components and longevity. Their perfect cow would be high scoring with more than four percent fat and three percent protein, in addition to great legs, excellent udders and a strong ability to transmit.

They focus on a new calf's potential with each mating, with the hope that each animal could become a future foundation cow.

"To me, that's still the most exciting part of the dairy, seeing new calves being born," Joe says. "You have to be optimistic to be a farmer."

A transformational cow for their family was Hilrose Advent Anna-Red EX-94, the 2018 Wisconsin Cow of the Year.

A commitment to quality has been key for their family, Joe explains.

"You need to focus on the best, work with the best, and market from the best," he says. "Besides selling high-quality milk, we focus on the niche markets, such as selling embryos, show calves or fresh two-year-olds throughout the year."

SPRUCE-HILL HOLSTEINS



Margaret and Mike Raleigh

DIVISION 3 • 10-99 COWS

Mike & Margaret Raleigh • Elmwood, WI

First-Year Honoree • 75% Homebred

Milk: 34,544 Fat: 1,379 Protein: 1,092

Average Classification Score – 84.5

Like many dairy farmers, Mike Raleigh says there's no place he would rather be than in the barn with the cows. He's a fourth-generation dairy farmer and manages Spruce-Hill Holsteins in western Wisconsin.

Mike purchased the family farm after his father's passing in 1993. Since then, he and his wife, Margaret, have continued the tradition of excellent cow care and high production.

"My Dad always said to keep the cows comfortable and well-fed, have quality genetics and make good business decisions," Mike says. "That's what I try to do."

When he was in high school, Mike started purchasing Registered Holsteins to build up his own herd. At Spruce-Hill Holsteins today, they take advantage of performance information and data to make solid breeding decisions. They classify once per year and use the TriStar production records system.

"The perfect cow is moderately sized, feed efficient, produces well, breeds back in 60 days and never sees the vet," Mike says. "She's the invisible cow — what we all like."

Feed efficiency is a top priority within the herd, Mike says. He doesn't feed a TMR so he can closely track how much each cow eats. Cows that can produce more pounds of milk using fewer feed resources are an important profit-driver for their operation. They grow all their own forage and corn on about 250 acres.

With a smaller herd, Mike says he is able to have a closer connection with each animal and provide the best possible care.

"With the Holstein breed, there's something for whatever you are selecting for," Mike says. "There's so many genetic tools coming, it's going to be fun to see what happens in the future."

2020 NATIONAL HOLSTEIN CONVENTION

Genetics matter

When it comes to breeding Holsteins, there is no doubt that the TPI formula is the most recognized index around the globe. It represents Holstein Association USA's vision for improvement of the domestic and international Holstein population. That improvement helped propel domestic semen sales to 21.8 million units in 2018. Even more impressive, U.S. semen sales to international trading partners reached 24.6 million units. That's not only a new record, but the very first time semen exports topped domestic sales.

It's no wonder why my Chinese friend inquired about the what, why, and how involving the TPI formula. The fact that genetics matter so much also is the reason that The People's Republic of China did not place any retaliatory tariffs on U.S. semen during the recent trade tussle.

Indeed, the TPI formula and the U.S. Holstein is the world's gold standard.

**Corey Geiger, President,
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**

“These are certainly unprecedented times. Canceling the June 2020 National Holstein Convention, set to take place in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was not a matter we took lightly,” said Holstein Association USA President Corey Geiger.

“We are grateful to the Pennsylvania Holstein Association’s leaders who were able to work out details to host the 2021 convention at the same site next year. As last year’s national convention co-chair, I truly appreciate the time, talent, and treasure that our friends from the Keystone State have placed into hosting their fellow Holstein breeders,” he continued. “I personally look forward to being in Pennsylvania next year.”

“At this time in which the majority of Americans are conducting only necessary functions to limit the spread of the COVID-19 and protect public health, we also must plan for the time when we focus on restoring our damaged economic health,” continued the 65th president of the association. “For that reason, I am appointing a special committee to immediately study conducting the 135th Annual Meeting of the Holstein Association USA at a later date this year. This committee will focus on critical elements for both juniors and adults. The meeting will be planned and guided by the staff and directors of Holstein Association USA,” continued the Mukwonago, Wis., president.

“History can be our guide on these matters. Ironically, W.S. Moscrip called the 59th Annual Convention of the Holstein-Friesian Association of America to order on June 6, 1944. That was the same day Allied Troops stormed the beaches of Normandy and began liberating Europe,” recalled Geiger of the Association’s history. “Dairy farmers have always been essential to our nation’s health. If 98-plus-percent of delegates could gather in 1944, we can plan for a day this year that we can safely meet and conduct a no-frills, in-person annual meeting. If it is determined an in-person meeting would not be feasible under specific state and national guidelines regarding the coronavirus situation, a virtual electronic-based annual meeting will be considered,” he continued. “More details will be shared at a later day as we comply with all the standards of the Association’s bylaws.”

Focus on Genetics continued from page 4

15 years. That’s during a time when we have seen the number of dairy farms decline by a staggering 49 percent. The “family tree” records you have maintained on your herd for decades, the foundation of our Holstein herdbook, tie in naturally with the farm-to-table story that consumers demand to know about their food these days.



Your association continues to innovate and provide a robust suite of tools to help you breed the cow that is most profitable for your operation. From our core conformation evaluation and production records programs, to our genomic testing services and software like Enlight®, Red Book Plus™ and MultiMate™, the choice is yours. Our breed’s unmatched production, coupled with Holstein Association USA’s vast genetic and performance database, allows for greater progress – and profit – for your dairy.

Despite all the turmoil in our world right now, we can be assured that brighter days are ahead. The Holstein cow is part of the bedrock our society needs to supply wholesome, nutritious products; and you, our members and Holstein breeders, play a pivotal role in that chain.

Holstein Association USA is here to stand by you and support you every step of the way in your pursuit to breed a profitable herd of cows and provide food for our nation.

Footnote: All the genetic trend information in this article was sourced from the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding (CDCB) website, accessed April 2020.

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