

# Herds of Excellence

**H**olstein Association USA is pleased to present five herds as 2014 Herd of Excellence<sup>SM</sup> honorees. This elite group of breeders has met the strict criteria outlined below. They have bred a herd of Registered Holsteins, which excels not only in production, but type as well. The following are profiles for each herd awarded this year's honor.

## HERDS OF EXCELLENCE CRITERIA

Herds receiving the award must:

- Be 25 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent (ME) for milk, fat and protein;
- Have classified within the last year and have an actual average classification score of 83 points or higher;
- Have at least 70 percent of the herd homebred;
- Be enrolled in the Association's TriStar production records program.

### JEFFREY-WAY HOLSTEINS

**Jeffrey and Kate Hendrickson**  
*Belleville, Wisconsin*



**Jeff & Kate**

**2-YEAR  
HONOREE**

96.9% Homebred  
Average Classification Score: 86.5  
ME Averages: 33,854M 1,243F 1,054P

Jeff and Kate milk 90 Registered Holsteins just outside of Belleville, Wis. They house 60 cows in a tiestall barn, while the others are housed in a freestall and rotated into the tiestalls for milking twice a day. They started farming on their own in 1986, then moved to their current location in 1991. They have raised five children on the two farms in Wisconsin.

Inwood Farm in Argyle, Wis., gave Jeff his start in the Registered Holstein business, working as their herd-manager. In 1983, Inwood Farm held a dispersal sale, and here, Jeff bought Inwood Taffy Apollo. Today, over 90 percent of the Jeffrey-Way herd can be traced back to this cow. Apollo's great-great-granddaughter, Jeffrey-Way Mascot Tina-ET 3E-91 GMD DOM, was the cow to kick-start the marketing program at Jeffrey-Way, with 22 sons sold to AI companies and over 100 embryos sold.

Hendrickson's sire choices have always focused on type. Jeff says, "if you have good feed, they will milk for you," therefore production traits are not the focus of his breeding program. He looks for high TPI bulls, and breeds with the goal of having the offspring score Excellent as a mature cow. He currently has a total of 116 cows carrying the Jeffrey-Way prefix with an Excellent classification score. Right now, a few of Jeff's choice bulls include Maple-Downs-I G W Atwood-ET, MS Atlees Sht Aftershock-ET, Lirr Drew Dempsey, and Domicole Chelios-ET along with a few of the top genomic young sires.

The Hendricksons genomic test select animals in their herd, including flush cows, and a few other hand-picked animals. Jeff describes his use of genomic information as "another tool in the tool belt." High genomic results on a heifer may convince the Hendrickson family to breed her to a higher quality bull than they would have, had they not known her GTPI. The farm takes advantage of Holstein COMPLETE, they classify at least every seven months, and register their animals using EASY ID. They recently started ordering RFID tags for use on all of the animals in their herd.



## EVER-GREEN-VIEW FARMS

**Thomas J. Kestell**  
Waldo, Wisconsin



**Jen, Chris, Gin and Tom Kestell**

**4-YEAR  
HONOREE**

73.7% Homebred  
Average Classification Score: 83.8  
ME Averages: 36,256M 1,442F 1,099F

Tom Kestell has been working with Registered Holsteins his entire life. He began farming on his own after he graduated from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. He chose to milk Registered Holsteins for their marketability and accuracy in parentage verification. The Kestell family is now milking 100 Registered Holsteins, in a tiestall barn, three times a day. Tom and his wife, Gin, have two sons, Joel and Chris. Chris and his wife, Jen, work with Tom and Gin day-to-day on the farm. The Kestell herd has been recognized as a Progressive Genetics Herd for the past 22 years.

In their breeding program, Ever-Green-View Farms places an emphasis on a strong pedigree, solid components, and good production for multiple generations. Ever-Green-View Elsie-ET 2E-92 GMD DOM has had a large impact on the herd. Tom has been working with this cow family for almost 30 years, with several notable animals tracing back to Elsie. Including a granddaughter, Ever-Green-View My 1326-ET, who is the current national milk production record holder at 60,950 pounds of milk in 305 days, and a great-grandson, Flevo Genetics Snowman-ET, who was the number one TPI international bull in 2011.

Every animal born on the Ever-Green-View farm is genomic tested. Tom was an early adopter of genomic testing, and he has been increasing the number of animals tested in his herd over the years. While genomic results are not the final deciding factor, they are used as a tool for marketing, or choosing a bull to breed a heifer to, by selecting a bull to improve traits that heifer has the lowest numbers in.

Citing “good feed, good help, and taking good care of the cows,” Tom is excited to share that production has recently reached an all-time high for the herd. At this point, his goal is to maintain the level of production they have been able to achieve. Tom advises, “Set goals, make them realistic, and have a laser focus on them. Have a reason to accomplish the goals and stay on that trail. Don’t jump around, have a path and stick to it.”

## DIRT-ROAD HOLSTEINS

**Steve and Amanda Killian**  
Blair, Wisconsin



Top row: **Christian & Sam**  
Front row: **Bo, Steve, Amanda, Jack & Olivia**

**4-YEAR  
HONOREE**

93.1% Homebred  
Average Classification Score: 84.0  
ME Averages: 33,179M 1,354F 1,106F

“I always loved having the ability to be with the kids on the farm, it is fun to see the kid’s interest. The fun of registered cows is knowing family lines and seeing kids know the cow families and ask ‘Who will we breed this one to?’” explains Amanda Killian. She and her husband, Steve, operate Dirt-Road Holsteins, along with their five children, and a hired milker, Sloan. The Killians are currently milking 80 cows, half of which are Registered Holsteins. The herd is milked twice a day in a tiestall barn, and put out on pasture at least eight hours a day, when the weather permits.

Steve and Amanda started farming together in 2000; they began with “a vision of breeding quality, registered cows, and had a goal of marketing their genetics,” says Amanda. In 2004, they took a chance on purchasing a late lactation, open cow, Castleholm T Carlo-ET. She was sired by Olmo Prelude Tugolo and backed by several generations of Very Good and Excellent cows. When they got her home, they flushed her to Braedale Goldwyn, a decision that would shape their herd’s future. Carlo went on to classify 4E-91, receiving her fourth Excellent score at 12-years of age, and Gold Medal Dam and Dam of Merit recognition at nine years-old.

Today, a large part of the herd can be traced back to Carlo. A prominent daughter from Carlo’s first flush to Goldwyn is Dirt-Road Goldwyn Cami-ET. Cami classified VG-86 and had a lactation record over 32,000 pounds of milk as a two-year-old, with a GTPI of +1977. The Killian family has exported more than 100 embryos from Cami, and sold sons from her into AI. Cami currently has 34 registered offspring, many of which have classified Good or Very Good as two-year-olds. A grand-daughter of Cami’s, Dirt-Road GRD Cleopatra-ET, recently became the sixth highest GTPI cow of the breed.

The breeding program at Dirt-Road Holsteins focuses on type and components. They are using many of the top genomic sires, including De-Su 521 Bookem-ET, Clear-Echo Lexor Racer, and Morningview Mcc Kingboy-ET. The top cows in the herd are flushed, while the others are recipients, and every animal born on the Killian’s farm is genomic tested. They participate in Holstein COMPLETE, classify every seven months and register using EASY ID and the Holstein Tag ID program. The farm has been recognized in the Holstein Association USA Progressive Breeders’ Registry and as a Progressive Genetics Herd every year since 2011.



## LEXVOLD HOLSTEINS

**Larry Lexvold**  
Goodhue, Minnesota



**Larry with Lexvold Cashcoin Claus**

**1-YEAR  
HONOREE**

80.0% Homebred  
Average Classification Score: 83.7  
ME Averages: 32,763M 1,225F 1,041P

Larry Lexvold started milking Holsteins at his parents' farm as a boy, then in 1976 he built a 60-cow tiestall barn where he houses his cows today. Soon after starting his own herd of cattle, Larry became a member of Holstein Association USA and began buying Registered Holsteins to fill his barn. He is currently milking 50 Registered Holsteins twice daily, with automatic takeoff on his milking machines, and a cross-ventilation design in the barn. The cows are kept in the barn and fed a TMR through the winter, once the weather permits, they are allowed out on pasture to graze.

"I like milking fancy uddered cows with excellent feet," says Larry, who places a strong emphasis on functional traits in his breeding program. Lexvold Holsteins focuses on production, udder composite, health traits, and daughter pregnancy rate when selecting sires to fill the nitrogen tank. Larry uses many young, pre-release sires with high genomic numbers. With a goal of marketing genetics, he genomic tests every calf born on his farm and flushes the top females, flushing six to ten cows per year, while the rest of the herd are recipients.

Lexvold Luke Hershel-ET was one of the highlights for Larry in his breeding program. Hershel ranked as the number one bull for PTA Milk in August of 2000, and received Gold Medal Sire recognition in 2004. "It is rewarding to see your prefix in major pedigrees," says Larry, in discussing the success he saw with Hershel. Currently, Larry is proud of Lexvold Cashcoin Claus-ET, with a GTPI of 2513, she has made her way onto the National Genomic Locator List. Claus is the daughter of Larcrest Cagney-ET, who Larry bought at the National Holstein Convention Sale in 2012.

Lexvold Holsteins has been honored as a Progressive Genetics herd since the award started 23 years ago, and they have also been recognized on the Progressive Breeders' Registry for the past 21 years. Larry's wife, Barb, takes care of registering all the animals on the farm through the EASY ID program. They are enrolled in Holstein COMPLETE, and classify every seven months, or more often as needed.

Larry and Barb have six children and twelve grandchildren.

## LONG-HAVEN FARMS

**Scott and Doug Long**  
Clayton, Michigan



**Scott, Beverly and Doug Long**

**1-YEAR  
HONOREE**

88.2% Homebred  
Average Classification Score: 86.5  
ME Averages: 33,608M 1,221F 1,055P

Long-Haven Farms is a family operation, run by Scott Long in partnership with his father Doug Long. The barns of Long-Haven have been filled with Registered Holsteins since Scott's grandfather started the farm. Currently, they are milking 60 cows twice daily in a tiestall barn. The herd is fed hay and haylage along with grain, and allowed out on pasture to graze. They have received PBR recognition for the past two years, and have bred 33 Gold Medal Dams and 35 Dam of Merit honorees. The family is enrolled in Holstein COMPLETE, uses EASY ID to register their calves, and order RFID tags through Holstein Association USA.

The breeding goal at Long-Haven Farms is to develop productive, long-lived cows, with an emphasis on overall type. "We breed a cow we enjoy looking at," says Scott. Proven bulls and a few genomic young bulls are used as service sires, but they are selective in using young sires, choosing bulls from good cow families, with high type. A few of the sires currently being used include MS Atlees Sht Aftershock-ET, MR Chassity Gold Chip-ET, Gen-Mark Stmatic Sanchez, Maple-Downs-I G W Atwood-ET, and MR Atwood Brokaw-ET.

Certain cows have made their mark in the Long-Haven legacy. Long-Haven Wayne Stephanie GMD DOM was the cow to put them on the map, born in 1977 she had a lifetime production record over 156,000 pounds of milk and 97 offspring registered with Holstein USA. More recently, Long-Haven Gold Rochelle-ET has made her mark in the showing, both in the United States and Canada. Rochelle has been honored as the All-American Spring Yearling Heifer in 2008, All-American Junior 2-Year-Old in 2009, first Spring Yearling Heifer and Junior Champion at World Dairy Expo in 2008, and first Junior 2-Year-Old at World Dairy Expo in 2009. In Canada, she was awarded first Junior 2-Year-Old at the Royal Winter Agricultural Fair and All-Canadian Junior 2-Year-Old in 2009.

Scott is fast to credit his father and grandfather's success in running the farm and establishing a high quality herd of Registered Holsteins. Scott also credits the success of the farm to "Getting up early, hard work, using the right bulls and some luck."