

THE PULSE

Summer 2020 • Holstein Association USA, Inc.



**Honoring our
2020 Award Recipients**



U.S. REGISTERED HOLSTEINS

THE WORLD'S PERFECT COW

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HONORING OUR AWARD WINNERS



Patsy Gifford Receives Holstein Association USA's 2020 Distinguished Leadership Award

The 2020 Distinguished Leadership Award honoree is Patricia Gifford of Groton, N.Y. Patsy's unselfish leadership has motivated young Holstein enthusiasts to set goals, achieve them, and work to create new ones. Simply put, she inspires

others to be good human beings.

Patsy's intrinsic love and support for the Registered Holstein® cow and the dairy industry are evident to those who know her. Patsy became the first woman to classify cattle for the Holstein Association USA.

For Patsy, classifying cattle was a natural and deep-seated talent. She was on the road for nearly two decades scoring thousands of cattle, all the while explaining her decisions with great satisfaction from those whose cattle she was evaluating.

This Holstein enthusiast is a role model to many young

people who are finding their way in the dairy industry. She has a knack for putting the right people together and encourages them to stay engaged.

After her career of classifying cattle for the Holstein Association USA, Patsy became the Executive Director of the New York Holstein Association. She had the vision for, secured, and executed the creation of the New York Holstein Reserve Fund. Since its inception, the fund has helped to ensure the long-term success of the New York Holstein Association.

Whether working on a dairy farm classifying cattle, or working in the office, Gifford always approached her career with enthusiasm and commitment. Farm families with whom she worked over the years consider Patsy their cheerleader, confidant, and trusted advisor.

About the Award

This award recognizes an individual who has made a career of providing outstanding and unselfish leadership for the betterment of the dairy industry.

Holstein Association USA Presents James and Nina Burdette the 2020 Elite Breeder Award

The 2020 Holstein Association USA Elite Breeder award winners are James and Nina Burdette of Windy Knoll View Farm in Mercersburg, Pa. The Windy Knoll View prefix is synonymous with Registered Holsteins with outstanding conformation. For the past 44 years, breeding upstanding, strong cattle, with deep maternal and paternal lines, has been the focus of Registered Holsteins for the Burdettes.

The path the Burdettes chose to develop their outstanding herd of Holsteins was very unique. They started with a group of cows with nondescript pedigrees and bred them to develop several great cow families that are internationally known.

Their farm has always been a smaller breeder herd, 50 cows for the first 35 years, cared for by their own family labor, with minimal part time outside help. With careful breeding, they developed several notable cow families that transmitted generation to generation.

Windy-Knoll-View Ultimate Pala was a tremendous brood cow for the Burdette family and the "P family" is known around the world. Tracing down to her great-granddaughter, Panini, through daughter Promis and granddaughter Pledge, you will find classification scores of Excellent-94, then three generations in a row of Excellent-95. The latest three generations were all nominated All-American in milking form. Among



Pala, Promis and Pledge, you will find a combined 54 Excellent daughters.

The Burdettes certainly accomplished their plan to breed high type, balanced cows, with high production and they never wavered from that goal. As a result, Windy Knoll View cattle have been in demand as bull mothers as well as elite show cattle and have had a positive impact on Holstein genetics around the globe.

About the Award

The award recognizes a Holstein breeder who bred outstanding animals, making a notable contribution to the advancement of the Holstein breed in the United States.



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ON THE COVER:

The Loehr family with Bella-Ridge Beauty Queen VG-88, 2019 Junior All-American Junior Two-Year-Old. Owned by Adella and Ainsley Loehr and Jacob, Logan and Madison Harbaugh. *Read more about this year's Distinguished Young Holstein Breeders beginning on page 8.*

Cover and story photos: Amy Ryan



Forest Ridge
Milking Barn

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President Corey Geiger discusses the Association's adjustment to the ever-evolving environment of Zoom conference calls, virtual meetings, as well as canceled Holstein shows and other dairy events. While navigating these new waters, President Geiger foresees a bright future for your Association, our members, and your increasingly popular Holstein breed.

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CEO John Meyer praises the outstanding production increases in the Holstein breed. In this column, your CEO presents two new features on the website which honor outstanding Registered Holstein cows and their breeders. Contemplating recent events, John pauses to appreciate this caring, committed, and devoted dairy community.

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WE CONTINUE TO ADJUST

Since COVID-19 entered our lexicon, our dairy world has been turned upside down and inside out.

Shelter in place orders had consumers huddling in their homes.

Saleable milk was being dumped.

Many Holstein Association employees were temporarily furloughed.

Classification schedules froze.

Spot Cheddar cheese on the CME crashed to \$1 per pound in late April and soared to over \$2.80 per pound by mid-June.

As the COVID-19 pandemic settled in, Holstein CEO John Meyer, Vice President Lamb, and I conversed literally on a daily basis. Our goal was to keep the business of this Association moving forward. Due to health orders issued in Vermont, two-thirds of the Holstein staff was furloughed. By mid-June, 80 percent were back at work.

During that time, were there delays in getting paper work and electronic files back to members?

Yes.

In the same breath, was Holstein staff doing their very best with the available tools and staff power?

You bet they were.

We want to thank every member for their patience during these challenging times.



Coordinating our classifiers' schedule is Amy Fletcher, Manager Classification Services. We are pleased to report our Classifiers, as well as our Regional Sales Representatives, are once again working in the field.

As a way to help our members during these difficult days, we placed a coupon in the Spring issue of *The Pulse* with an offer for up to 10 free registrations. Members returned 1,034 of those coupons by the end of May.

Association updates

While some of our plans for 2020 have been sidetracked, we are working diligently to keep initiatives moving forward. Let's highlight some of our recent work.

Convention of the Future. Beginning in 2024, Holstein Association USA will take the lead planning conventions and handling fundraising. The four-day convention will be bookended by two high-attendance events — Host Day and the National Sale. The entire plan received unanimous support from the Holstein USA Board of Directors at the November 2019 board meeting and was detailed in the Winter issue of *The Pulse*.

As an update, Pennsylvania will host the 2021 National Convention after this year's event was canceled. In 2022, Minnesota will host the national gathering in South Dakota and the very next year Kentucky will welcome Holstein enthusiasts. Ohio had been on the docket for 2021 but gave up their position to Pennsylvania and has since decided to take a pass on hosting the event.

Calving ease. After a healthy discussion this spring at the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, the August 2020 Calving Ease evaluations will reflect lower breed averages and improved calving ability.

Let's look at the improvement for Holsteins:

- When first released in 1977 by Iowa State University, 28% of heifers and 15% of cows needed help calving.
- In recent decades, calving ease had centered on phenotypic bases of 8% for Holsteins.
- Even though calving difficulty had been steadily dropping, many Holstein breeders were surprised to see higher PTAs for many familiar bulls this April after the five-year base change. Some bulls had PTAs of 8% to 10%, but only averaged 2% to 3% calving difficulty on the farm.



With safety protocols in place, signs remind staff to social distance.

- To remedy this situation, Holstein PTAs published this August will average 2.2% for sire calving ease (SCE). Most Holstein bulls will range from 1% to 4% for SCE.

Legislative Affairs. The Holstein USA National Board of Directors met in Washington D.C. this February just prior to COVID-19 locking everything down. As part of that trip, we met with over two dozen Senators, Representatives, and staff members to talk over dairy issues. Since then, there has been follow-ups to those discussions and even an invitation to be a witness before a Senate Committee.

Show Committee. We know that National Shows are important to the economic livelihoods for many of our members. The cancelation of the 54th World Dairy Expo, the All-American Dairy Show, the Midwest Fall National in St. Paul, all the Spring shows, and the 98th Royal Winter Fair has left a cavernous void. Holstein USA will continue to work and support those national shows that plan to make a go of it this year.

Also, we have fielded requests from two groups that would like to try to establish replacement national shows this year. The board of directors approved fall shows in both Iowa and Oklahoma at the June 26 board meeting.

I want to leave everyone with one piece of advice should we be able to hold some shows — please leave the “Monday morning quarterbacking” at the entrance gate. Most show organizers are volunteers, and they will be doing their best to juggle guidelines that change daily. Our dedicated volunteers do not need to be hit by “friendly fire” from the very people they are intending to help.

Association Governance. In May, Holstein Association USA leadership sent a letter outlining our proposal for governance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes rolling elections and all leadership terms — Directors, Vice President and President — to 2021 and picking up with what would have been this year’s election cycle at that time. This will help us maintain director rotation and keep intact its all important transfer of knowledge system. It also will help us better conduct business during the pandemic when online meetings have become the norm and rapport between all leaders is so important.

When the board met virtually in late June, Vermont required anyone returning to the state to self-quarantine for two weeks before returning to an office environment. Nearby New York had similar rules. That being said, we have no idea when we will be able to hold a face-to-face meeting and this situation could very well persist into 2021 as people are reluctant to board planes.

All that being said, we are pleased to report that the delegates approved this measure, via paper ballot, by a 98.6% margin.

Thank you, delegates for this resounding vote of confidence.

With this resounding approval, I have also made the decision to hold the grand majority of Adult Committee appointments in place for the June 2020 to June 2021



Jenna Bisnett, Customer Service Manager, along with the rest of our Customer Service team, is now back at 1 Holstein Place to help you with all your Association needs.

term. Again, this continuity will help keep initiatives moving forward in this era of phone and video conferences.

A bright future

The June 2020 issue of *Successful Farming* declared “All about the Cow — Rolling Lawns Farm Honors the Legacy of Purebred Holsteins” on its front cover and dedicated five full pages to the Turley Family, its Registered Holstein herd, and its dairy processing facility in that issue.

In the July issue of *Hoard’s Dairyman*, Andrea Stoltzfus highlights Mack Drees and his trip earlier this year to Hokkaido, Japan. On that journey, this young Wisconsin Holstein breeder spent a week on a Japanese television show promoting dairy products and Holstein cows. The show included seven 20-something dairymen and dairywomen from seven countries and four continents.


There is good reason for the world-wide interest in the Holstein cow. She is the world’s most complete dairy cow.

I’ll leave you with some final statistics for your consideration:

- In 2019, 83.8% of all U.S. dairy semen sales were Holsteins
- In 2019, 93.7% of all export dairy semen sales were Holsteins
- Since the inception of genomic testing, 86.4% of all genomic tests were carried out on Holsteins.

Despite our current COVID-19 obstacles, Holstein Association USA, its members, and the Holstein cow do have a very bright future. That bright future definitely includes our Juniors. I look forward to meeting with them at our 2021 Convention in Pennsylvania.

On behalf of the Holstein USA Board of Directors and the entire staff, thank you for your support through these trying times.


Corey Geiger, President
Holstein Association USA, Inc.

CONSTANT, NEVER-ENDING IMPROVEMENT

Thank you to those of you who were able to watch our 2020 Virtual Member Update Meeting online June 25th. If you weren't able to tune in then, you can find the update on the Holstein Association's website by following the YouTube link from the homepage, select the "Videos" tab, and click on the 2020 Virtual Member Update meeting.

At this juncture, I'm happy to report the majority of our personnel is now either working in the office or remotely. Our classification and regional sales representative teams are working in the field as well.

Employee Health and Safety Committee

Our employee Health and Safety Committee is doing an excellent job instituting the guidelines and recommendations coming from the Vermont Department of Health and the CDC. A number of new protocols have been implemented at 1 Holstein Place in order to try to do everything possible to ensure the health and safety of those who work here.

We've made some internal operational modifications that we hope will enable us to be of greater service to you than ever before. We're currently running as close to full throttle as possible, even though some state restrictions remain. We're open and here to assist you! Many thanks to all of you for your patience during this cumbersome time.

**Once again,
your Holsteins
led all breeds
in milk, fat,
and protein
production
increases.**

Free registrations

It's gratifying to tell you that the 10 Free Holstein Registrations program we made available to you in the Spring issue of *The Pulse*, was extremely well received! You sent in a total of 1,034 coupons. We're happy that this was able to take a little burden off you during these trying times.

Holsteins lead the way

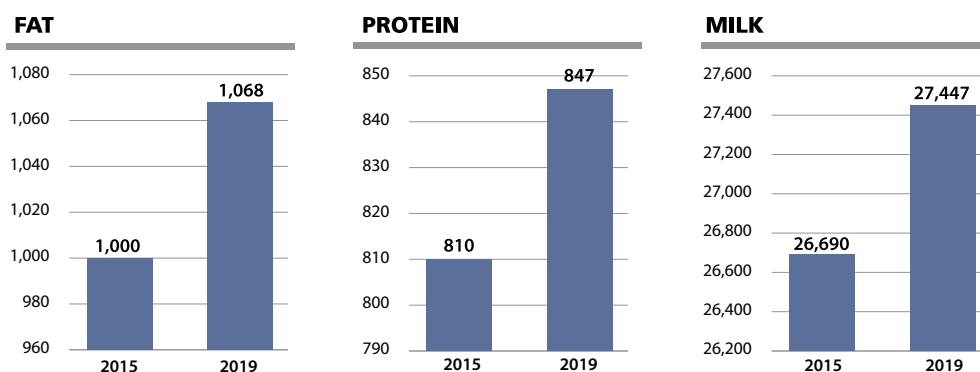
It's a pleasure to be able to report and compliment you, the breeders of Holstein cattle on the outstanding production increases of your Registered Holsteins in 2019. Once again, your Holsteins led all breeds in milk, fat, and protein production increases.

In 2019, the TriStar 305-day ME lactation average for milk was 27,447 pounds, 1,068 pounds of fat, and 847 pounds of protein. Each of those categories represent good improvements on 2018 numbers.

In the last five years, your Holsteins have achieved a 7% increase in pounds of fat production, 4% increase in pounds of protein produced, and an overall milk production increase of 3%. No other dairy breed can match these increases. As a matter of fact, while Holsteins keep producing more, some other breeds are seeing declines in their production of milk, fat, and protein.



Holstein Increases in Fat, Protein, and Milk Production – 2015 – 2019





Kudos to our Health and Safety Committee who play a key role in implementing procedures at 1 Holstein Place allowing our employees to safely return to the office. Social distancing are: Diane Klepadlo, Pam Barrale, Bob Gale, Kelli Dunklee and Sam Comstock.

Right: Sam Comstock uses a touchless thermometer to check Kathy Rogers' temperature as she arrives at work. Pam Barrale asks fellow employee, Sandy Rancourt, the questions prescribed by the CDC.

New classification and production recognitions

Speaking of the great cattle you continue to breed and develop, I'm excited to let you know that we've added two new features on your Association's website to help recognize outstanding Registered Holstein cows, and those of you who breed them. New links have been added under the Popular Lists section on the Holstein Association USA homepage for Monthly Classification Summaries and the 40,000+ Pound Production Records.

The Monthly Classification Summaries page features lists by month of any cow that classified Very Good-85 or higher in that month, and includes cows which received a Multiple E designation, regardless of age. This nifty report lists the animals' names, age at time of classification, final score, sire name, the owner's name and state where they reside, and the report is sortable and searchable.

The 40,000+ Pound Production Records page is similar but includes all cows that have a completed lactation record of at least 40,000 pounds of milk, which the Association received in the given month. The report lists the animals' names, age at the start of lactation, milk, fat and protein information, sire name, the owner's name and state where they reside. Here too, the report is sortable and searchable.

These reports contain data beginning in January of this year, and are updated each month after classification and production record files are received and processed for the month. To view these reports, simply go to www.holsteinusa.com, find the Popular Lists section at the lower left of the homepage, and you will find both

listed in that menu. You will be amazed at the number of cows in the Holstein breed that have exceptional type and production!

The Monthly Classification Summaries list shows that in May, there were 35 cows which scored 94 points, five went 95, and Rosiers Blexy Goldwyn-ET became just the 32nd cow in United States Holstein history that received a final score of 97 points.

Again referencing the May 2020 list, the Monthly Production Records list shows 580 cows qualifying for the 40,000+ Production Record Club in that month! This list includes 55 head that completed a lactation of over 50,000 pounds of milk. Number one on the list is Siemers Montross Bombi-Gal, with a record of 71,750 pounds of milk, 2,259 pounds of fat, and 2,027 pounds of protein.

Hearty congratulations go out to all of you who have accomplished so much with your Registered Holstein herds! These popular new lists provide good examples of why Holsteins continue to be the breed for every need!

You're the best

Thanks to all of you for not only what you do, but the way you work, and conduct your life. Please accept my most sincere best wishes to each of you. Keep thinking positive thoughts and stay well!

**John M. Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**



SHARING PASSION WITH THE NEXT GENERATION

Adella holding Forest-Ridge Tat Minnesota, descendant of Michelle. Ainsley holding Forest-Ridge JJ Daisy-Red, descendant of one of Kurt's original purchases in 2003.

by Amy Ryan

Nestled in the beautiful rolling hills of eastern Fond du Lac County, Wis., Forest Ridge Holsteins is owned by Kurt and Sarah Loehr and their two daughters Adella, 7, and Ainsley, 5. On any given day, those who stop at this picturesque Registered Holstein farm, will see this year's Holstein Association USA's Distinguished Young Holstein Breeders and their adorable girls performing the day-to-day operations of their herd.

While Kurt and Sarah's journeys to their current positions at Forest Ridge Holsteins were uniquely different, they both possess a passion for the industry. A passion that they share daily with their girls and those around them. Sarah grew up with a strong Registered Holstein background showing cattle and attending events from a young age. Her accolades included Wisconsin Junior Holstein Association Outstanding Holstein Girl and a National Distinguished Junior Member Semifinalist. On the other hand, Kurt's interest in Registered Holsteins was spurred by several people whom he met in his Dairy Herd Management class at a local technical college.

In 2003, that interest peaked and he purchased one of the most influential cows in the Forest Ridge herd, Stelbro Michelle Rubens-Red-ET. While only GP-82 at the time of the sale, that purchase would truly pay off for Kurt. In fact, this special purchase led to his first trip to the Midwest National Spring Show (where Michelle was named Reserve Grand Champion), his first classification, his first Excellent cow, his first Red and White All-American nomination and his first trip to World Dairy Expo in 2004. Coincidentally, this trip to WDE was also where he met Sarah and their story blossomed from there.

Kurt decided to return to the home farm in 2003 and at that time, he took over making management decisions related

to nutrition, mating and breeding. This later progressed to include crops, harvesting and manure management. Two years later, Sarah moved to the farm and took over calf and heifer barn management along with animal record keeping and farm accounting. In 2010, they were married and Kurt and Sarah took over all management aspects of the farm and made some significant facility upgrades.

Improvements for the Future

Both Kurt and Sarah are strong believers that nutrition, housing, herd health, milk quality and reproductive management all work hand in hand. "We upgraded most of our facilities in the past 15 years, starting with remodeling our tie-stall barn to add tunnel ventilation, Kraiburg mattresses and alley mats," says Sarah. "We then enclosed an open front barn connected to our tie-stall barn to update it for calving, special needs and show cows. Finally, we built a calf barn for newborns through yearlings and a solar barn for breeding age heifers. We feel that these improvements on their own have enriched our bottom line by providing excellent housing for our cattle."

On the nutrition front, they work with a nutritionist to amino acid balance their diets. One change they implemented is selling their standing alfalfa to a nearby dairy and purchasing dry western hay from Montana to supplement their TMR. "We are able to purchase a consistent product while minimizing the stress and labor of harvest, maintaining equipment and the weather."

They also changed calf nutrition by incorporating a milk pasteurizer in 2012. Since then, they have upgraded to a Milk Taxi and achieved a death loss of less than 1% in the past six years.

For overall herd management, they use AgSource DM and utilize EnLight® to manage inventory and genomic information. They also use Tag ID submitted through EASY ID, are enrolled in Holstein COMPLETE® and are a Premier TriStarSM herd. Their current Rolling Herd Average on 92 cows is 23,289 pounds of milk, with 3.9% fat (929 pounds) and 3.2% protein (738 pounds).

Building the Herd with Balanced Breeding

When Kurt took over the breeding and mating decisions from his father, Randy, the Forest-Ridge prefix was established. Kurt describes the breeding philosophy in the beginning as the “learn as you go” approach to Registered Holstein genetics. After the farm was purchased from Kurt’s parents in 2011, that approach progressed to use more embryo transfer and in vitro fertilization (IVF) to genetically advance their herd.

“Decisions are based on high type results, whether that is attempting to breed the next generation of high producing Excellent cows or breeding the heifer that will represent the farm in the showing,” Kurt says. “We want our genetics to excel for others whether it is a youth show calf or milk cow sold to a repeat buyer. So, high type, along with good feet and legs, excellent udders, dairy strength and wide rumps are what you will see as principal traits in our herd.”

Specifically, Kurt states they use selection criteria of +3.5 PTAT, +2.00 Foot and Leg Composite, +2.5 Udder Composite and positive values for milk, fat and protein along with genomic health traits like Daughter Pregnancy Rate, Productive Life and Somatic Cell Score to help them successfully breed balanced cows that last. That breeding philosophy has proven profitable for the Loehrs as it has led to the sale of over 100 Registered Holstein replacement animals in the past three years. In addition, they have been participating in classification since 2004 to monitor their breeding program. In December 2018, they earned their highest ever BAA of 111.2%.

Stelbro Michelle Rubens-Red-ET 3E-93 is a good example of how this breeding philosophy has worked for Forest Ridge. She is truly a matriarch of the herd with over 100 descendents or 45% of the herd tracing back to her. As the first cow to be flushed at Forest Ridge, she was most notable for passing on her type traits and her highest scoring daughters including Forest-Ridge Minnie-Red 3E-94 and Forest-Ridge Miracle-ET EX-92.

Another great opportunity arose for the Loehrs in 2010 when they were approached by Lynn and Sara Harbaugh of Bella-View Holsteins about potentially boarding two heifers due to calve that fall. Rosedale Go for Gin-ET and Rosedale Lap of Luxury-ET arrived at Forest Ridge in August 2010 and were the first to inhabit the newly remodeled special needs barn.

“On that day in August, the partnership of Bella-Ridge was formed, a partnership that has been mutually beneficially for both parties, but most importantly has led to life-long friendships with many of the breed’s greatest individuals,” states Kurt. “Gin calved that September and scored VG-88 as a Two-Year-Old. We flushed Go for Gin both conventionally and through IVF and have daughters by 15 different sires.”

To date, Gin has 17 milking daughters and 25 young heifers. Like Kurt’s first cow Michelle, Gin is well known for

her type transmitting ability, and her two highest daughters, both by Braxton scored EX-94 2E and EX-93 2E.

The Loehrs pursued a more aggressive approach to developing their herd through IVF procedures on Go for Gin, Michelle’s daughter, Minnie, and Kingsmill Ashlyns Ashore-ET EX-94 (also owned with Bella-View). “For nearly three years, 75% of our heifer calves resulted from IVF,” Kurt says. “Once we established that base we backed off on IVF, did some conventional flushing and began using more sexed semen. In establishing our base, we continue to stay true to our goals.”

This aggressive approach has not only helped develop their genetic base, but also led to many notable awards. These include three All-American nominations, four Junior All-American nominations, five All-American Red and White nominations and six Junior Red and White All-American Nominations. The most recent of these were the 2019 Junior All-American Junior Two-Year-Old, the 2019 Honorable Mention Junior All-American Spring Calf and the 2019 Reserve Junior All-American Red and White Aged Cow.



“We want our genetics to excel for others whether it is a youth show calf or milk cow sold to a repeat buyer.”

Sharing their Passion

Both Kurt and Sarah are very thankful for all the opportunities that the Registered Holstein has brought to them and are paying it forward in many ways. Within Fond du Lac County, they have both served as Junior Holstein Advisors, while Sarah is Chairperson of the Fond du Lac County Dairy Committee, Dairy Superintendent of the Fond du Lac County Fair and county chaperone for the Wisconsin State Fair dairy exhibitors. They have both served on the local county Holstein board and Kurt is now serving on the Wisconsin Holstein Association Board of Directors. Over the past 15 years, they have also provided six local families the opportunity to show their cattle at the county and state fair. Sarah says it provides a twofold learning experience for the local family and for their family.

In closing, the Loehrs say they are most thankful to raise their girls as part of the dairy community. “We now have this amazing opportunity to raise our kids with the extended family that is part of the Holstein industry,” concludes Sarah. “Our daughters are just starting their journey with Registered Holsteins and love it already. We hope to offer them the same opportunities for networking, life lessons and friendships that being active in the Holstein Association has brought us.”

AUGUST 2020 CALVING TRAITS WILL REFLECT LOWER BREED AVERAGES

By: John B. Cole, Sophie A.E. Eaglen, Thomas J. Lawlor, and Ezequiel L. Nicolazzi

Below are key excerpts from this article; the complete version can be found at www.holsteinusa.com.

Takeaways

- Calving traits that previously were problematic for many U.S. dairy farmers have been successfully improved through better genetics and management.
- In August, Holstein PTAs will average 2.2% for sire calving ease (SCE) and 2.7% for daughter calving ease (DCE)
- The range of all calving traits will significantly decrease. In August, most Holstein bulls will range from 1% to 4% SCE, while in April most Holstein bulls fell between 4% and 12% SCE.
- Selection thresholds such as “no bull over 8” are no longer necessary.

Introduction

Historically, the PTA calculations for calving ease have been centered on a breed average phenotypic base of 8.0% for Holsteins. In April 2020, the calving traits, along with all other traits, were adjusted to a new genetic base to account for the genetic improvement over the last five years. As calving difficulty has been steadily decreasing, dairy producers were surprised to see higher PTAs for calving ease for some familiar bulls. Some bulls had PTAs of 8% to 10%, yet producers saw only 2% to 3% difficulty after many calvings on their own farms. The word quickly spread after the April evaluations that there was a mismatch between the calving trait PTAs and the actual rate of dystocia and stillbirth on most farms.

Improvement in Calving Ease

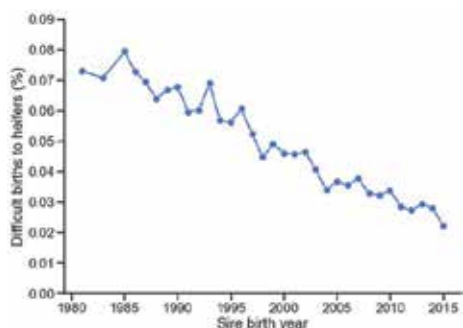


Figure 1. Difficult births to Holstein heifers.

We can see in Figure 1 that the rate of difficult births to Holstein heifers has decreased substantially over time. This is exciting news – selection for better genetics and improvements in calving management

practices have resulted in less dystocia and fewer stillbirths! Cows and calves are healthier, and producers obtain more realized income from investing in better genetics.

Calving ease PTAs continued to increase despite the decreasing incidence of difficult births, because in April we updated the genetic base, but not the phenotypic base. The phenotypic base has been kept constant for several years as the result of an industry-wide strategy to focus on

genetics. After the latest genetic base update, this strategy proved to be confusing and had the potential to mislead breeding decisions. As a result, the industry agreed to adjust the phenotypic base to match the observed incidence rates. For the August evaluations, we will adjust the phenotypic base to match the observed incidence rates. In future base changes, both the genetic and the phenotypic bases will be updated.

New phenotypic base in August

The phenotypic bases will change in August 2020, from the current values to the new values shown in Table 1. This will cause the average PTA for calving ease and stillbirth to decrease.

The spread (variation) in the data will decrease, too. In April most Holstein bulls fell between 4% and 12%

for SCE. Come August, most Holstein bulls will range from 1% to 4% SCE. The range of all calving traits will decrease, and there will be fewer bulls with extreme PTAs. Changes to the genomic PTAs will be very similar.

An adjustment to Net Merit (NM\$) and other indices, such as TPI®, must also be made to account for the lower spread amongst the PTAs.

Does this mean the calving traits are a solved problem?

No, not at all! These results mean we have successfully worked together for many years to get control of a situation that was problematic for many dairy farmers, but it does not mean we can be complacent. The genetic control of calving traits is fairly small (heritability of 3% to 8%), which means that sire selection as well as proper staff training and care in the maternity pen are important to keep dystocia and stillbirth rates low. The stillbirth rate has decreased, so the phenotypic bases will decrease from 8.0% for both sire and daughter stillbirth to 5.7% and 6.6%, respectively. It is unlikely that any of us consider a stillbirth rate of 6% to be acceptable, so it remains important that we select for animals with favorable PTAs for calving traits. Rest assured that selection on indices such as NM\$ or TPI will ensure that the calving traits are properly accounted for.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. John Cole is the Acting Research Leader of USDA's Animal Genomics and Improvement Laboratory; Dr. Sophie Eaglen is the International Program Director at the National Association of Animal Breeders; Dr. Tom Lawlor is the Executive Director for Research and Development at Holstein Association USA; and Dr. Ezequiel Nicolazzi is the Technical Director of the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding.

BEST OF THE BEST: OUR FUTURE LEADERS!

Congratulations to our 2020 Distinguished Junior Member (DJM) Finalists



Todd Allen hails from Jefferson, Md., and is the 20-year-old son of Jim and Lisa Allen. He is proud to call Glen-Toctin Farm home, which was established over 65 years ago. The farm milks 120 Registered Holsteins, raises 100 replacement heifers and crops 720 acres of land. Growing up, Todd has gradually gained more responsibilities

on the farm. While home from college he is responsible for milking, transferring cows to and from the parlor and cleaning the box stalls and freestalls. Currently a senior at Virginia Tech majoring in dairy science with a minor in agricultural and applied economics, Todd plans to combine his love for math and the dairy industry and work as a consultant for a precision dairy company.

Matthew Boop is the 20-year-old son of Douglas and Jennifer Boop from Millmont, Pa. Matt's family operates Heart & Soul Holsteins where they milk 40 Registered Holsteins, raise 50 replacement heifers, and grow crops on 200 acres of land. Recognizing the importance of diversification in today's volatile agricultural markets, the family added a 40,000-hen high-rise layer house to the dairy. Upon high school graduation Matt took a position as a sales representative for Pioneer Hi-Bred International to support himself while remaining heavily involved in the home operation, a role he still maintains. Currently, Matt is responsible for mixing and feeding the TMR to the milking herd and the show cows. He is also very involved in the daily duties of the chicken house operation.



Kristen Burkhardt is the 20-year-old daughter of Conan and Sheila Burkhardt from Fowlerville, Mich. Her family farm, Tumbleweed Dairy, consists of 110 Registered Holsteins along with 150 acres for corn silage and 30 acres of pastureland. Although she is located an hour and a half from the family dairy,

her regular roles include helping feed calves, moving heifers, dehorning, milking, registering calves, and record keeping. This summer she is interning with Helena Agri-Enterprises as an agronomy sales intern in Indiana. In the fall, she will be a senior at Michigan State University majoring in agribusiness management.



Connor Erbsen from Lanark, Ill. is the 20-year-old son of John and Anjie Erbsen. Erbacres Holsteins is a family farm consisting of 50 head of Registered Holsteins and 700 acres of cropland. Connor is involved in the daily activities of the tie stall operation helping with milking and feeding as

well as any task at hand. In addition to work on the home farm, he has gained a lot of experience through internships. He is currently a junior at Iowa State majoring in agronomy and minoring in ag systems technology and animal science. In the future, he looks forward to growing his Holstein herd, mentoring youth, and expanding his grain operation.

Mason Jauquet is the 20-year-old son of Jay and Heather Jauquet from Pulaski, Wis. His parents always yearned to raise their young family on a farm. That desire led to a partnership with his parents and grandparents forming Synergy Dairy when he was five years old. Often Mason can be found studying genetic proofs and making mating decisions for his herd. He also enjoys using the Inbreeding Calculator and Enlight program offered by Holstein Association USA. Mason is currently attending the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay studying business administration and Spanish. In the future he plans to seek employment off the farm before returning to the home dairy.



Emily Mikel is the 20-year-old daughter of John and Sue Mikel from Stafford, N.Y. Her family farm, Mikelholm Holsteins focuses on high type cows where they milk 40 Registered Holsteins. Her favorite farm responsibility is milking with her parents. Since her father works off the

farm, there are many days where she is responsible for doing chores and making management decisions with her mother. This summer she is working at Lamb Farms in their flushing and IVF facility. She is currently a senior at SUNY Morrisville majoring in dairy management. Her career aspiration is to become an embryologist.

Congratulations to our 2020 Young Distinguished Junior Member (YDJM) Finalists



Colton Brandel
Lake Mills, Wis.



Rachel Craun
Mt. Crawford, Va.



Nevin Erbsen
Lanark, Ill.



Natalie Fredericks
Little Falls, N.Y.



Jacob Harbaugh
Marion, Wis.



Jacob Raber
Gridley, Ill.



Naomi Scott
Westgate, Iowa



Gabriella Taylor
Newark, N.Y.



GENERATIONS OF QUALITY

How the Fiscalini family developed an award-winning cheese brand that's recognized around the world.

History and heritage run deep for Fiscalini Farms near Modesto, Calif.

In the early 1900s, John Baptiste Fiscalini rode from Wisconsin in a railcar alongside his recently purchased 30 Registered Holstein cows. Along the way, he cared for them to ensure they'd make it safe and sound to their 160 acres in California's productive central valley.

Four generations — and more than a century — later, the dairy operation continues to thrive. Today the family milks 1,500 cows, three times a day, and produces high-quality artisan cheese under the Fiscalini brand.

"In 2000, my father John decided to start the cheese business," says Brian Fiscalini, John Baptiste Fiscalini's great grandson. "He wanted to know exactly where our milk or cheese was on the shelf at the grocery store. Now that we have a branded product, we know that the milk from our cows was the only milk that went into that product. And that's all done right here at the farm."

The decision to move into cheesemaking was also a nod to their family history.

Brian's father traveled to Switzerland to trace back their lineage in the Alps, and during his journey discovered that their ancestors were cheesemakers — dating all the way back to the early 1700s.

Committed to the best

Registered Holsteins remain at the heart of the dairy, providing the large volumes of quality milk they need to

produce the brand's signature and specialty cheeses.

"One of the important things about the Holstein breed is the variety of the genetics," Brian says. "Through genetics, our Holsteins have very high butterfat production, solid protein production, and they produce a volume of milk that no other breed can do."

Plus, the cows are milked only 30 feet from the cheesemaking facility, promising a cheese that is both fresh as it is tasty.

"When we get the milk, it's less than 24 hours. So it's the freshest milk possible," says Fiscalini Cheesemaker, Alex Borgo. "With the highest quality milk, you get highest quality cheese."

Alex is a fifth-generation cheesemaker who got his start at 10 years old, making ricotta and all kinds of Italian cheeses.

"Cheesemaking is not an easy job. You've got to really love what you're doing, and if you get to create something with your hands and people enjoy what you've made, that's the passion that drives me to make a good product," Alex says.

Since the dairy farm and cheese plant are located so closely together, it allows them to make adjustments as needed to achieve production goals.

"Our nutritionist works with us closely in balancing the diet, so that we can make a high component milk, so that our cheese yield is going to be as high as it can be,"



Brian says. “And we also have a clean source of milk, so that the starter cultures that we use to make cheese react the right way, and that we have the best quality cheese that we can.”

Over the years, Fiscalini Cheese Company has been recognized around the globe. In 2002, they had a Bandage Wrapped Cheddar recognized as the “Best Farmhouse Cheese in America.”

Additional accolades include honors from the World Cheese Awards, California State Fair and the American Cheese Society.

The Fiscalini brand today can be found in grocery stores across the U.S., and is a great tribute to the family’s longstanding commitment to dairy farming and marketing dairy products.

“What a lot of people forget about is, dairy products are delicious,” Brian says. “Cheese, butter, ice cream, and a cold glass of milk on a warm day. It’s really hard to beat the products dairy producers provide.”

A larger mission

“We’re a Holstein family. We’ve been working with Holstein breed for over a hundred years,” Brian says. “Every single animal in our herd is Registered. It’s really important to know the bloodlines of the cattle that we

have. It lets us know where we came from, and it also lets us know where we’re going.”

Since John Baptiste Fiscalini purchased his first Registered cows, the Fiscalini family has experienced great value and production from U.S. Registered Holsteins. She’s an animal that’s stood the test of time, and evolved to meet new market opportunities.

“The Holstein is the best dairy cow because of the variety and the history that we have,” Brian says. “The variety of the genetics, the different cow families and the excellent dairy farmers that have raised the Holstein breed — all of them have led to the Holstein breed being the best breed in the world.”

Into a bright future, Registered Holsteins will continue being the breed of choice, serving the Fiscalini’s, their 30 employee families, and consumers near and far.

“We’re able to produce more food now, with less resources, than we ever have in the history of the world,” Brian says. “There’s a lot of distance, not only geographically but also conceptually, between agriculture and consumers these days. So what we like to do is try to bridge that gap. Show them what we do, let them see the cows, so they can have faith in dairy farmers — and that they can have faith that the products we’re producing are healthy, nutritious and safe.”



**“Through genetics,
our Holsteins have very
high butterfat production,
solid protein production,
and they produce
a volume of milk that
no other breed can do.”**

— Brian Fiscalini



TRUE PARTNERS ARE MORE VALUABLE THAN EVER.

Glenn Fischer, President, Allflex USA, Inc.

‘May you live in interesting times...’ likely we have all come across this English expression, which, on the surface, comes across as a blessing, but can certainly be taken as a bit ironic, considering the ‘interesting times’ we are living in today. Doing a little internet search, the phrase actually has a bit of a cloudy history, but is widely believed to come from a Chinese curse (a couple resources mention this, including Wikipedia) – another bit of irony, for sure...

Curse or blessing, there is no doubt that we are indeed living in interesting times. First and foremost, we hope this edition of *The Pulse* finds you and yours in good health and in good spirits. So many people have been affected by the Coronavirus, by Civil Unrest and by Economic Uncertainty, and we sincerely offer our wish to all of you that you remain well in all regards through these challenging times.

Aside from the true personal element, it also has been a challenging time to run a business – a Dairy, a Co-op, an Animal Identification Business and, of course, the world’s leading Dairy Breed Association. Like our business at Allflex, we have seen your Holstein Association team rise to the challenge and rapidly learn how to serve our customers and constituents using remote working tools, following strict (and ever-evolving) health and safety protocols

and find a way to continue – nearly uninterrupted – in the business of supporting the best Dairy producers in the world. As a business partner, we’ve never ‘missed a beat’ with your team in Brattleboro, as we quickly moved to virtual meetings that actually brought us closer through technology than we ever thought possible.

**First and foremost,
we hope this
edition of *The Pulse*
finds you and yours
in good health
and in good spirits**

For our team at Allflex, we began 2020 believing that we were entering a time of amazing growth and evolution. We foresaw a unique environment where we could focus our energy on identification, genomics, monitoring and animal health in ways that we never could before, and, in doing so, become more and more focused on achieving our long-term goals together with our key partners – and the committed team at Holstein – and each of you – remain

central to all that we will accomplish. Now that we are halfway through this most unique year, our goals remain clear and unchanged – but it also has become crystal clear that we cannot go at this alone... and frankly, none of us can. Partners – those you can trust, those that you can work together with to achieve common goals, dream of better times to come and those that you know will always be there for you – those true Partners are more valuable than ever. We continue to be both proud and humbled by our partnership with Holstein, and simply want you all to know our unwavering commitment to support you and your outstanding organization – The Holstein Association USA.



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712HO01005 OUR-FAVORITE CHARISMA-ET

Bred & Owned by Our-Favorite Holsteins, Fall Creek, WI

GTPI +2536 NM\$ +307 aAa: 234165

KING DOC x HANG TIME x ATWOOD

DAM: **OUR-FAVORITE COMPELLING-ET** VG-88
1-11 2x 365d 27,580 5.0%F 1,389 3.7%P 1,019

2ND DAM: **OUR-FAVORITE UNLIMITED** EX-94 2E
5-03 2x 365d 33,640 4.3%F 1,437 3.5%P 1,182
LIFE 1,499d 121,790 4.6%F 5,621 3.6%P 4,330

- 10 generations of VG & EX dams with an average classification of 91.2 points
- 3.07 PTAT, 1.91 UDC, 1.81 FLC
- A2/A2 and Kappa Casein BB



712HO01006 RASBERRY CRSBL RIP CITY-ET

Owned by Karl & Donna Hale, Cloverdale, OR

GTPI +2384 NM\$ +169 aAa: 234165

CRUSHABULL x MONTEREY x EPIC

DAM: **GDR-KINGS MONTEREY 181-ET** VG-85
1-11 2x 365d 20,350 3.8%F 766 3.3%P 670

2ND DAM: **GOLDEN-ROSE RASBERRY-ET** EX-91
2-02 2x 365d 25,290 4.8%F 1,216 3.7%P 934

- Dam VG-85 @ 2-09 (+VVVV), then 18 generations of EX dams
- +3.21 PTAT, +2.54 UDC, +1.58 FLC
- Positive components and Fertility Index, 8.2% SCE



712HO01007 TERRA-LINDA RYNO-ET

Bred & Owned by Terra Linda Dairy, Tulare, CA

GTPI +2769 NM\$ +648 aAa: 345126

TAHITI x MODESTY x MONTROSS

DAM: **MS TERRA-LINDA MODESTY 197** VG-86
2-00 3x 365d 28,790 4.4%F 1,258 3.2%P 914

2ND DAM: **TTM MONTROSS 7046-ET** EX-90
3-03 3x 358d 35,320 4.3%F 1,509 3.0%P 1,068
LIFE 1,018d 108,180 4.0%F 4,378 3.0%P 3,248

- 1,208 milk with 124 pounds of combined Fat and Protein (+.12% F, +.02% P)
- 7.1 SCE, +1.41 UDC and A2/A2
- Deep maternal line



712HO01008 OCD KENOBI FOGHAT-ET

Bred & Owned by Oakfield Corners Dairy, Oakfield, NY

GTPI +2851 NM\$ +711 aAa: 423651

KENOBI x BURLEY x DELTA

DAM: **OCD BURLEY FRANCES 41330-ET** VG-87
2-03 3x 305d 25,540 4.6%F 1,165 3.4%P 875

2ND DAM: **OCD DELTA FRANCES 34899-ET** EX-90 DOM
3-08 3x 355d 32,270 4.4%F 1,415 3.3%P 1,054

- 11 generations VG & EX dams
- High component percentages (+.14%F, +.07%P) with 119 pounds combined Fat and Protein
- +5.5 Productive Life, +1.9 Cow Livability, +2.7 Fertility Index

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