

## CHANGE AND ENGAGEMENT NECESSARY FOR A STRONG FUTURE

Thank you to the Delegates and Holstein Association USA members for entrusting me as your President! As I think about what it will take for a successful future at Holstein USA, one word immediately comes to mind.... change. I like to think as I have matured, I accept change more readily. In my younger years, change could sometimes cause me anxiety. I've learned that while change is occasionally uncomfortable, I can look back and realize in many times, change has made things better.

The changing dynamics of the dairy industry, while sometimes unsettling, can't be denied. Farms continue to grow and expand, and with it our membership. The needs of the members of the past are undoubtedly different from the needs of the future. One aspect that doesn't seem to waiver is the importance of records and information. Pedigree data and phenotypic information are as important as ever in the era of genomics. It is this foundation that will not only keep us relevant, but vital for the future of the dairy industry.

### **Grassroots involvement**

You, our Holstein Association USA members, are important in helping us to forge change. We need you to be involved on your local and state Holstein organizations, on a committee, by providing feedback to Holstein staff or Board of Directors, or by serving as a delegate. Our diverse membership continues to have diverse needs, and you can help us to deliver on these needs.

I would like to provide a brief review of our delegate structure. Our delegate system is the foundation of our governance. The process is robust, expensive, and time consuming, but necessary to help us govern. In August of every year, petitions for nominations are mailed out. Frankly, the response for nominations to the delegate body is disappointing. In November, the ballots are mailed, and the response rate is much more vigorous. If you have never run as a delegate, I encourage you to self-nominate next August.

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I have asked immediate past President Corey Geiger to review the delegate process to determine if the size of the delegate body is appropriate as well as the boundaries by which your board is elected from. One suggestion that has come forth as we review the delegate process is to let any member nominate from any state – at this time you can only nominate from the state in which you reside.



If changes are voted forward by the Board, they will be brought to the delegate body for their consideration as a bylaw change. As always, the most important function of the delegate body is to elect the Holstein USA President, Vice President, and Board of Directors.

Beginning with the 2024 National Holstein Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, our national Holstein Association USA staff will be hosting our annual meeting. The anxiety was palpable with some delegates and members with this change. I have asked Darrel Rennich, who chaired a very successful 2022 National Holstein Convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to lead a Convention Ad Hoc committee.

Darrel will gather input from his committee and give recommendations to your board about National Holstein Conventions moving forward. As a membership organization, it is critical our delegates feel comfortable they have the information and meeting structure necessary to help us govern.

The passion of our Holstein USA membership cannot be denied. On many occasions, I have listened to members' opinions on different matters, with individuals fiercely defending their position with enthusiasm, only to have another member pleading their case with similar intensity. At the end of the day, we operate as a democracy and the majority will win out. It is important to understand this with kindness and compassion.

Your board of directors and CEO Meyer are dedicated to helping guide change at Holstein USA, but also responsive to suggestions. Please feel to reach out to myself, CEO Meyer, or your Holstein Association USA Board members to discuss your needs or how we can improve for the future.

Respectfully.

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Jonathan Lamb, President Holstein Association USA, Inc.



As Holstein breeders, you have a lot to smile about!
Recently, Lynn Olthof and Barry Bradford of the
Michigan State University Extension have come out with
new information to answer the question, "Are Holstein or
Jersey cows more profitable?"

In their recent report, Lynn and Barry wrote, among other things, "It seems like a debate that never ends: are Holstein or Jersey cows the better choice for profitable dairy production? The question of breed profitability and efficiency has again come to the forefront as producers face increasing feed costs and volatile milk prices."

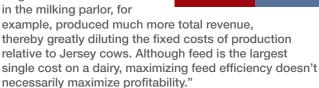
They went on to say, "A recent Michigan State University study evaluated costs and revenues of Jersey and Holstein cows managed in the same manner and location on three dairy farms in or near Michigan. Partial budgets were constructed to assess breed differences in milk revenue, milk bonuses and discounts, feed costs, costs of herd replacements, and value of cull animals and non-replacement calves."

Here's the information you should trumpet near and far every time you get the chance, "The study found that Holstein cows were, on average, \$456 more profitable per cow annually than Jersey cows, with 77% of the revenue advantage for Holsteins came from producing about 810 additional pounds of components annually." Yes, as I've said many times before, it's pounds of components that count.

There's more good news. Quoting from the Michigan State University report, "The financial advantage for Holsteins was similar across all three dairies, increasing confidence in the findings."

As you know, for years another breed has tried to use components and efficiency as their calling cards. The Michigan State study clearly answers the components and the efficiency claims.

Olthof and Bradford went on to report, "Each Holstein cow, occupying the same single freestall and time in the milking parlor, for



This report is absolutely awesome, and we need to promote it at every opportunity! This may be the best study I've seen comparing the profitability differences between Holstein and Jersey cows.

The Michigan State University study concludes that transitioning from Holstein to Jersey cows "does not appear to be a profitable decision for most dairy farms". While we've known this for a long time, it's nice to have the facts presented in black and white by a highly respected Big 10 University like Michigan State – hallelujah!



### We're on a good roll!

The Holstein breed's increases in production over the last 20 years is simply fantastic! During that time frame, Holsteins have increased their production of milk by 13%, fat by 24% and protein by 19%. All of you deserve praise for these tremendous production increases!

These numbers for milk, fat and protein clearly show the advantage and dominance of the Holstein breed in all three categories compared to any other breed, or combination of breeds, which is a true credit to all of you Holstein breeders.

### More reasons to smile

We've just gone public with our Holstein Association USA study that shows the clear relationship between desirable functional conformation and economically important traits. We call this new campaign, "A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters."

HAUSA's Dairy Analytics and Innovation Scientist, Dr. Jeffrey Bewley, led this project that addressed what a dairy cow should look like, and how physical conformation in today's dairy industry relates to economically important traits.

Dr. Bewley answered these questions by using a large dataset with matching data from official linear classification evaluations and DHIA production records. The dataset covered almost 20 years of data over one million cows.

Here are some of the highlights:

- When comparing the top quartile to the bottom quartile, the highest scored cows produced 13,389 more pounds of energy-corrected milk (ECM) across their lifetimes than the cows in the bottom quartile.
- Using a long-term milk price of \$20/cwt., this difference represents \$2,678 more in lifetime gross revenue per cow. Quite simply, cows with better physical conformation provide more lifetime revenue to a dairy.
- When looking at first lactation data only, cows in the top quartile for final score produced 1,537 pounds more energy-corrected milk in 305-days than those in the bottom quartile. Using a long-term milk price of \$20/cwt., this difference represents \$307 more in gross revenue in the first lactation.

The data tells us that part of this difference in lifetime ECM is because those cows in the highest quartile based on first lactation classification score simply stayed in the herd longer.

Additionally, cows in the top quartile had 142 more lifetime days-in-milk (DIM) than cows in the bottom quartile, almost five extra months. As you know, several extra months of lactation out of cows helps spread the fixed costs of raising each heifer over more time, reducing the effective costs of raising heifers.

In summary, the data clearly shows that cows with more correct, functional conformation live longer and make more milk!

### Dairy consumption is on the rise!

According to USDA's Annual Report on Per Capita U.S. Dairy Consumption which was released in September, domestic dairy demand increased from 655 pounds per person in 2020 to 667 pounds per person in 2021. That's the highest level of dairy consumption in the United States since 1959!

According to the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), both butter and cheese consumption hit new records in 2021! Cheese consumption increased to 39.1 pounds per person for 2021, which is 2.3% higher than 2020 consumption. Butter consumption increased to 6.4 pounds per person, up 2% from 2020.

### **Happy Thanksgiving!**

There's a lot going right in the dairy community today, and a lot of that has to do with you and your beloved Registered Holstein cows!

We all have much to be thankful for during this Thanksgiving season, and one of the things I'm most thankful for is you – the wonderful members of the Holstein Association USA.

Thank you.

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





## REGISTERED HOLSTEINS PROVIDE VALUE ALONG THE I-29 CORRIDOR

he Gross family's Registered Holstein® roots run deep, with Randy K. being a fifth generation Registered Holstein breeder. Randy's great-great-grandfather homesteaded in South Dakota in 1885 and began a dairy shortly after establishing his homestead.

Today, Randy K. farms at Ash Grove Dairy, named after his great-great-grandfather's original farm. Ash Grove Dairy is a partnership between the Gross family and local entrepreneur Michael Crinion. They have been at their Lake Benton, Minnesota, location for six years.

The dairy milks 1,150 Registered Holsteins three times a day in a double 20 parallel parlor that's expandable to a double 30. Dry cows and springing heifers are also kept onsite. All cattle are kept in cross-ventilated freestall barns.

The Gross family uses programs from the Holstein Association USA regularly, including Holstein COMPLETE and classification. "I just love trying to breed a better cow," says Randy K.

Randy E., Randy K.'s father and past Holstein Association USA president, shares multiple generations have loved the Holstein cow. Their love for dairying started at an early age.

"When Randy K. was in junior high, we had 40 head of heifers up at the barn. He would get up and go do chores, which my dad also wanted to do. When I asked Randy K. about it, he said to me, 'Doesn't Grandpa know? I want to do the chores.'"

Now, Randy E. enjoys watching his grandsons, Emerson and Nolan, become involved on the farm, just as the generations before them. The boys spend time showing and on the farm with their parents, Randy K. and Jennifer.

Jennifer agrees Registered Holsteins are the most beautiful dairy cattle breed. "The other breeds are wonderful, but Holsteins — you can't hold a candle to them," she says.

Ash Grove Dairy focuses on genetic traits for type and health when making their breeding decisions, according to Jennifer.

"The health traits, especially, mean a lot," she says. "They just grow better, thrive, take less attention, there are fewer sick animals, and they turn into better, higher-producing cows for our herd."

All the milk produced at Ash Grove Dairy ships to a cheese market, so components and cheese merit are also important numbers for them.

## **Economics make Holsteins more valuable**

Randy K. says that from an economic standpoint, better cows make more money, and Registered Holsteins are the best breed to accomplish that.

"With the genetics, the population and the diversity, I think that, whatever you want to do, you can do it with Registered Holsteins," he says. His father, Randy E., agrees.

"Beyond the tradition, which I think is important emotionally, there's economic value. When you've got a huge population base, you can provide whatever anybody wants. That, to me, is the economic beauty of the breed," Randy E. says.

"Holstein Association USA has a tremendous repository of information and data that provides a lot of value to dairy producers who want to use that."

### **Dairy Boom in the I-29 Corridor**

The I-29 corridor is a great place to dairy, according to Randy K. The climate is just right for cows, and there is ample feed nearby.

"Ag infrastructure is strongly supported, and the community appreciates the value of agriculture—not just dairy, but other segments like row crops, hogs, sheep, alfalfa, or whatever you have," he says.

Randy E. points out that the local dairy industry contributes valuable nutrients to crop growers in the area.

"Those producers generate the forages we need on our dairies," he says. "We rely on environmental resources to put out a successful product. There's lots of wins with having a well-managed dairy in the community."

Just over the state line in South Dakota, agriculture is the top industry. When Randy and Jennifer moved to the state in 2004, there were only 81,000 dairy cows. In 2022, the number has grown to 187,000.

"A lot of the farms that have come in have been larger farms," notes Randy K. "Infrastructure has also grown, including parlor services, nutritionists, feed dealers, etc. It's been a real economic driver for the area."

### **Future for Ash Grove Dairy**

Ash Grove Dairy is expanding this fall, adding 700 more Registered Holsteins.

Another major change coming to the dairy is an anaerobic digester, built by Dynamic Renewables. There are several anaerobic digesters in the area, so the Gross family feels they are still at the forefront of the renewable natural gas scene.

"We're pretty excited about what's happening throughout the region," says Randy K.

"They will take the manure and put it in an above-ground, complete mix tank and the gas that comes off it will be captured and cleaned to 99.5% methane," says business partner Michael Crinion. "It's just another way of harvesting the energy off dairy farms. It's just a good circular economy."

The gas will go into the local gas pipeline that's used for heating homes in Brookings, South Dakota, running an ethanol plant in Aurora, South Dakota, and running a soybean plant in Volga, South Dakota.

Changing
Dairy Industry

Dairy herd sizes have continued to increase, and that trend appears to be continuing. Randy K. notes that genomics have caused the Holstein breed to accelerate faster than ever before.

"We need good data to make good decisions," he says. "The more information we can have on our cows from a performance standpoint, from a genetics standpoint, the better decision we can make on our herd as far as how we want to move forward."

Randy E. has seen tremendous changes in the dairy industry since he first started, especially when it comes to increasing herd sizes.

"The industry will continue to consolidate, but there's still tremendous opportunities for people to be involved in the industry in a number of roles, such as an owner/operator, herdspeople, or other affiliated careers like the Holstein Association USA," he says. "I think the need for Holstein products and services will continue to evolve and grow."

"With the genetics, the population and the diversity, I think that, whatever you want to do, you can do it with Registered Holsteins."

- Randy K. Gross





Ash Grove Dairy was featured in the September 2022 Holstein America episode. Scan the QR code with your phone, find Holstein USA on YouTube, or visit www.holsteinusa.com to watch the episode!

# A MILLION REASONS WHY CONFORMATION MATTERS

Holstein Association USA study results reinforce the value of classification and physical conformation.

### FINAL SCORE MAJOR BREAKDOWNS

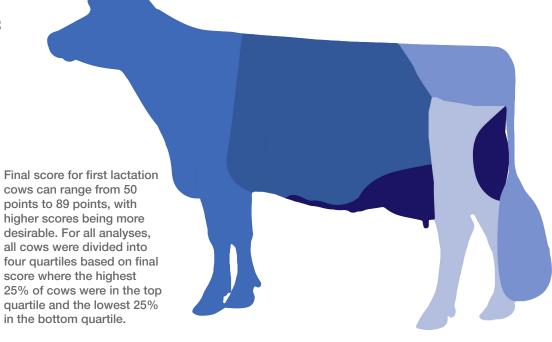
Udder 40%

Dairy Strength 20%

Feet & Legs 20%

Front End/ Capacity 15%

Rump 5%



Thave been infatuated with the Holstein cow since I was six years old. Growing up, I spent many days helping my grandfather on his dairy in Kentucky. While his cows weren't registered, my grandfather took pride in using artificial insemination and making genetic progress in the herd during his 38-year dairy farming career.

In high school, I was introduced to dairy judging through involvement in FFA and 4H. I was fortunate to be mentored by Dr. George Heersche from the University of Kentucky, and he fueled a passion for looking at the cow in a different way. After my experience with dairy judging, I started paying more attention to cows' physical conformation, while remaining production focused.

### Intriguing idea

When Lindsey Worden, Executive Director of Holstein Genetic Services, came to me with an idea for comparing classification data to production metrics from DHIA, I was intrigued. As a scientist and "dairy data geek," I'm always interested in looking at dairy related data sets.

I agreed to work on this project with colleagues Lindsey Worden and Daren Sheffield, Director of Holstein Performance Programs. However, I was skeptical as to what the results of the study would show. In many ways, my thought process was likely similar others who may doubt the value of physical conformation.

Some within the dairy industry argue physical conformation does not matter. This approach may lead to unintended consequences. All dairy producers strive for trouble-free, long-lasting cows, but some think "type" equates only to the show ring.

Showing Registered Holsteins® is certainly important for a segment of our membership. However, breeding for "type" doesn't necessarily mean breeding for show winners. For many, it can simply mean breeding for functionally correct animals. Udder and feet and leg conformation, for example, are traits most dairy farmers understand the importance of.

This study was conducted to quantitatively demonstrate the value of physical conformation and classification. The results should be compelling enough to re-engage many in the industry in the discussion surrounding conformation.

Holstein Association USA's study isn't the first of its kind. Similar studies are sprinkled throughout scientific literature from around the world. However, this study is based on recent data with high production cows in the United States, making it more relevant than some of the other data out there.

#### **Intentional dataset**

To conduct this study, a large dataset with matching data from Holstein Association USA classification evaluations and DHIA production records was used. This dataset covered almost 20 years of data and included over 1 million cows in over 5,500 dairies.

In the statistical modeling, the effects of herd, year, and season of calving were accounted for. Additionally, cows were only included in the final analysis if there were at least five herdmates in their herd, year, and season of calving. By doing this, concerns of preferential treatment for individual animals, particularly in smaller herds, were addressed. In this way, we made sure cows were compared to contemporary herdmates.

Further, most of the cows in the study were from larger herds. We used the first classification score for a cow assigned in her first lactation for the comparative analysis. For each trait, cows were categorized into quartiles to provide similar numbers of animals in each comparison category (about 240,000 cows per quartile).

### **Captivating results**

Do classification, type, and physical conformation really matter? The answers surprised me a bit. However, the results support what many Registered Holstein breeders have believed and practiced in their own herds for years.

In Figure 1, comparing the top quartile to the bottom quartile, the highest scored cows produced 13,389 more pounds of energy-corrected milk (ECM) across their lifetimes than cows in the bottom quartile. Using a long-term milk price of \$20/cwt, this difference represents \$2,678 more in lifetime gross revenue per cow. Cows with better physical conformation provide more lifetime revenue to a dairy.

The results are compelling, interesting, and thought-provoking. The results of this study may help breeders determine what kind of cow to breed for. Every edge toward increased milk production and lower Somatic Cell Score (SCS) helps.

Does this mean everyone should be breeding for stylish, high type animals that would do well in the show ring? This

isn't necessarily the case. Cows in the top quartile (82 to 80 final score) aren't always that type of cow. However, they are functionally correct, which should matter to every dairy producer. Functionally correct cows tend to last longer, which improves farm profitability and sustainability.

As we think about this data, there are a few cautions we should keep in mind. First these are phenotypic relationships not genetic relationships. It's always important to remember an animal's phenotype is a combination of genetics and environment (P=G+E).

Additionally, it's important to recognize correlation does not equate to causation. In other words, just because one trait is correlated with higher milk doesn't necessarily mean it definitively leads to more milk. In genetic selection, keep in mind that PTA Milk, Productive Life, and PTA Somatic Cell Score already account for the genetic differences in these outcomes. These traits, along with many others, are all included in the TPI formula.

The bottom line is the data clearly shows cows with more correct, functional conformation live longer and make more milk. Physical conformation still matters in today's dairy industry. In fact, with over a million cows in the dataset, there are a million reasons proving conformation matters.



Figure 1. Lifetime ECM, by Final Score Quartile



**Dr. Jeffrey Bewley** is the Data Analytics and Innovation Scientist for Holstein Association USA. If you have questions or ideas sparked by this article, please contact Jeffrey at jbewley@holstein.com or 859.699.2998.



A basic summary of the results along with much more detailed analyses are available at www.holsteinusa.com/typematters or by scanning the QR code with your phone.

Future articles will provide a deeper look at the analysis, examining correlations for individual linear traits, 1st lactation energy corrected milk comparisons, lifetime days in milk comparisons, and somatic cell count comparisons.

## BULLS OFFERED BY BREEDERS FOR BREEDERS

Holstein Marketplace Sires provides an attractive avenue for breeders to market genetics.

The genetic landscape of the Holstein breed has changed rapidly since the genomic era began in the mid 2000's. Major genetic gain, increased trait selection and focus, and the consolidation of genetic companies are just a few examples of these changes. The bulls used are younger and stay relevant for less time, as breeders look ahead to the next generation. Sexed semen and beef on dairy are additional tools breeders started using in their genetic programs.

New trends in the genetic industry have led to an acceleration of genetic progress that will continue to move faster. It wasn't long ago breeders had to wait years for genetic results of bulls they used in their herd.

Now, breeders can use sexed semen from bulls with genomic predictions at one year of age and match them with their highest genetic potential heifers, while using beef semen on their lower genetics. This guarantees a higher genetic value heifer replacement and eliminates the lower genetic end in the herd. That's an incredibly powerful process for genetic gains for those who choose that route.

This has resulted in a competitive market among the AI organizations, as dairy producers expect the best genetics from the organizations they work with. The consolidation of AI organizations has led to changes in the industry, leading to more hurdles for breeders to overcome. It's no secret Holstein breeders have far less opportunity to market genetics to AI organizations today than in the past.

### **New opportunities**

In 2019, Holstein Association USA launched Holstein Marketplace Sires to address these concerns and provide an additional market for members. The goal of

the program is to create more opportunities for Holstein breeders to market semen to fellow breeders. Holstein Marketplace Sires works with breeders to market and sell semen from their bulls with no strings attached.

The program is designed to be simple and transparent. Breeders retain ownership of their bulls and pay the expenses and collection costs. Marketplace Sires markets these bulls through their website, regional sales representatives, social media, and print ads.

Marketplace Sires retains a small fee to cover costs, while returning a greater portion of the sales back to the owners. Holstein Marketplace Sires gives the power back to the breeder, along with creating more opportunities for breeders to purchase semen directly from fellow Holstein breeders.

What can dairy producers expect for the future of Holstein Marketplace Sires? The program has shown successful profit for its breeder owners for past three years, and the next step is to expand upon this successful program and create the same opportunity for more breeders.

Registered Holsteins® provide a diverse genetic landscape filled with niche markets and numerous breeding goals. Holstein Marketplace Sires helps ensure Holstein Association USA members have a place to market their superior genetics. The program will continue to have elite genomic bulls that are high GTPI and Net Merit.

Holstein Marketplace Sires is also unique because it provides a space where breeders can develop generations of bulls that are free from restrictive contracts. This creates another opportunity for breeders to purchase semen from these bulls and create their own elite genetics, free of contracts or restrictions.







**GOLDEN-OAKS TANGO-RED** 



**BLUMENFELD NAVIGATOR-ET** 



SUGAR-C DENVER FINALE EX-91 2E 3rd Dam of SUGAR-C CAPTIVATING FABIO



SAVAGE-LEIGH CHARISMA BETTY
OUR-FAVORITE CHARISMA-ET Daughter

### **New sires**

The bulls added to the Holstein Marketplace Sires roster over the past several months demonstrate the diversity of bulls in the program. These bulls fit into a wide variety of breeding programs, and emphasis is placed on bulls with deep pedigrees.

One of the bulls released in 2022 is Blumenfeld Navigator, a Rayshen son from a GP-82 Rome. He has impressive stats at +1070 Net Merit, +6.8 Productive Life and +1 for DPR. Navigator was bred by Blumenfeld Holsteins in Hawley, Minnesota and is available conventional or sexed. Navigator, like all the bulls in the Holstien Marketplace Sires program, is free of any restrictive contracts.

In addition to type and production bulls, Holstein Marketplace Sires provides a place for breeders to market niche bulls, such as Red or Polled. An example of this is Golden-Oaks Tango-Red, the number one Red type bull available from Golden Oaks Farm in Wauconda, Illinois. Tango-Red was released in July 2022 and saw immediate demand and popularity.

In addition to being a high type Red bull, Tango-Red comes from one of the most famous families in the breed. Tango is an Altitude son from a VG-86 Jordy daughter of the world famous Miss Pottsdale DFI Tang-Red EX-94. Tang's family traces back to the tanbark veteran dam daughter duo of Tobi and Tina.

Holstein Marketplace Sires aims to meet the needs of all breeders, especially those looking for a balance of type and production. These bulls have production, type, and health traits. This combination is hard to find, and the breeders of these bulls need a place to market these sought-after genetics.

Synergy Kudos represents a balanced bull in the program. Released in October of 2022, Synergy Dairy of Pulaski, Wisconsin sent Kudos to Holstein Marketplace Sires. A Hanley from a VG-88 King Doc, Kudus defines balance with a +2821 GPTI, +804 of Milk, +111 combined fat and protein, Productive Life of +3.6 and a flat even 0 on DPR. To compliment those numbers, Kudos boast a PTAT of +3.06 and an udder composite of +2.88.

As times change, Holstein Marketplace Sires recognizes the need to compliment elite sexed genetics with an option for beef semen. Marketplace Sires released IR Primetime in September from Irvine Farm in Manhattan, Kansas. He is an extremely elite SimAngus™ bull that ranks highly on the HOLSim list.

Primetime combines the most proven and profitable genetics in the Angus and Simmental breeds in a moderate framed, homozygous black package. Primetime ranks in the top 1% for marbling and top 3% for ribeye area. Additionally, he is in the top 4% for calving ease and moderate for birth weight, making an ideal bull for beef on Holstein breeding programs.

As fast paced trends in the genetic industry change, it is clear more opportunities need to be created for Registered Holstein breeders to market their genetics to the world. Holstein Marketplace Sires provides an exciting new avenue for breeders to do just that. The program will continue to serve breeders by bringing in a wide variety of genetics from top notch breeding programs around the county.



**Tim Ziemba** is the Holstein Marketplace Sires Manager. Questions about the program or inquiries about potential bulls for the program can be directed to Tim at tziemba@holstein.com.



Scan the QR code or visit www.holsteinusa.com/marketplacesires to view the current Holstein Marketplace Sires or place an order!







## We Help You Bring It All Together

The Allflex Digital ID and Monitoring systems help your dairy march ahead with predictable consistency. Increase the ease and accuracy of collecting data and determining your herd's unique behavior, saving time and money while helping you streamline many breeding, management and milking processes.

Connect cows to vital records using our fast and clean Tissue Sampling Units, conveniently matched visual and EID tags, powerful new wand readers, and advanced cow monitoring technology. The sky is the limit.

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