


THE PULSE

Fall 2023 • Holstein Association USA, Inc.



U.S. REGISTERED HOLSTEINS®

THE WORLD'S PERFECT COW

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FOSTERING CONVERSATIONS

As I interact with Holstein Association USA customers, I often wish we had additional conduits for communication and feedback. Currently, members can receive information from *The Pulse*, news releases, *What's Up @ Holstein USA* videos, social media channels, and www.holsteinusa.com. Regional representatives, Holstein USA customer service and staff, delegates, and Board members also communicate with and receive feedback from members.

One example of feedback we currently offer our members is the classifier feedback survey. Breeders are offered the opportunity to provide an assessment of their classification experience.

Even with our current communication channels, more opportunities for communication and ways of gathering this feedback should be explored. During conversations with members who have concerns, I often think some issues could be avoided with better communication or two-way discussions.

To that end, I am creating a new committee, which I am naming the Membership Committee. This committee will be an additional avenue of two-way communication for Holstein USA's products, programs, and services. It will allow committee members to provide feedback and help improve services, leading to a better customer experience. Below is my vision for some of the work of the committee.

Committee Members' Role

- Identify member needs and provide an additional means of communication back to Holstein Association USA.
- Recommendation of the development of services to meet member needs.
- Promote an understanding of Holstein Association USA needs.
- Keep current members updated on relevant events and information.
 - o Outreach and communication of member programs, products, and services
- Increase membership through recruitment
 - o Recruit and retain members
 - ◆ Advocate for Holstein Association USA.
 - ◆ Offer advice and resources to membership
 - ◆ Mentor and encourage new members

Initiatives

- Recruit and retain members
- National Convention communication and feedback
- Young adult engagement
- Increase membership and program participation, both in traditional membership areas and large/expanding milk producing regions
- Others?

In addition to traditional committee members, this committee will have representation from young adult and Junior members to provide more complete feedback. Vice President John Burket will be the chair of this committee.

We look forward to exploring ways to enhance our communication channels and foster more two-way conversations with members. The Holstein Association USA Board and staff are committed to addressing member concerns and welcome your feedback and ideas.

If you have comments on this initiative or any other Holstein USA matter, please feel free to reach out at any time.

Sincerely,



**Jonathan Lamb, President
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**



A CHANGING AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE



As the pace of change in the dairy community continues to escalate, it's worthwhile to look at other parts of animal agriculture to compare how what's happening now in dairy might be similar to what's transpired in swine, poultry and beef farming.

Ask yourselves, how many of your parents or grandparents raised pigs, chickens or dairy steers in addition to dairy cattle? How many of you who are milking cows at the present

time raise pigs, chickens or dairy steers on your farms for anything other than your own personal consumption? My guess is that many of your parents or grandparents raised poultry, hogs and steers but a small percentage of you reading my column do.

Pigs

As you look back in history, in the '90s, industrial scale pork production started to develop. Prior to that, you could call nearby buying stations for a bid on your hogs, select the best bid, and sell and haul them to the nearest buying station which typically wasn't far from your farm. By the late 1990s, most of the buying stations closed and it is now very difficult to try to get competitive bids on your hogs.

Today, the vast majority of all pork production involves contract feeding by large companies that develop and control swine genetics.

At present, it is uncommon to come across farms whose owners actually breed pigs. Most farms that have pigs on them basically raise and feed them for other companies, and the genetics that those pigs come from are owned by those companies.



From what I understand, those models have been quite successful for some. Nonetheless, there aren't a lot of farmers who are actually hog breeders anymore; those in the swine business, for the most part, are hog raisers.

Currently, the U.S. pork industry is dominated by Smithfield Foods, Tyson Foods, Inc., and JBS USA Holdings.

Poultry

In the last 50 years, the United States poultry industry has shifted from locally oriented farmers and businesses into a massive integrated system.

I am old enough to remember when feed mills, hatcheries, farms and poultry processors were all separate entities that worked together cooperatively. It wasn't uncommon for local feed mills to lend money to farmers to buy the chicks they needed from local hatcheries, with the debt secured by a note on the farm. When the chickens were sold to a local processor, the farmer paid the feed mill.



In the late 1960s and '70s, entrepreneurs consolidated feed mill, hatchery and processing operations which resulted in the huge vertically integrated poultry industry we know today.

At this time, JBS S.A. of Brazil is far and away the largest chicken broiler processor, followed by Tyson Foods of the U.S., BRF of Brazil and Wen's Food Group of China.

Cal-Maine Foods is easily the largest egg producer in the U.S. followed by Rose Acre Farms of Indiana and Hillandale Farms of Pennsylvania. Those three groups own 43.97 million, 25.07 million, and 17.75 million chickens respectively.

“Will swine, poultry and beef models ever become part of the fabric of the dairy cattle industry?”



Beef

All Holstein breeders are a part of the beef chain whether or not we typically think about it. Currently, JBS, Tyson, Cargill and Marfrig Foods, headquartered in Brazil, control 85% of the beef market.

Because of this situation, there are too few buyers of cattle at this time which has resulted in lower prices for farmers when they sell their animals to be turned into steaks, hamburgers, and other beef cuts.

The consumer vulnerabilities that arise from the big four meat packers controlling the market like they do became crystal clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's now obvious the United States needs more regional meat packers, which in theory should create more opportunities for all of you who raise Holsteins and potentially lower prices for beef in the grocery store.

Clearly, we have an urgent need for more regional food processing and distribution systems that operate in the market space between local farmers' markets and mega corporations that dominate the pork, poultry, beef and, to a lesser degree, the dairy industry today.

Dairy

Recently, I became aware of a long time Midwest regional milk cooperative assessing their producer members an additional \$1.65/cwt. assessment for under class milk sales. The reason for this evidently has been excess milk in the upper Midwest, resulting in a significant amount of milk sold at very distressed prices. The cooperative I am speaking of is not alone in requiring milk quotas for their members.

Quite simply, arbitrary independent quota systems put on dairy farmers by their cooperatives will not cure the milk surplus situation we have presently. Any program to manage the supply of milk needs to be done at a national level.

The practice of milk buyers dictating how much milk you can provide may be an early step into losing your independence as a dairy farmer. Be cautious of these types of mandates from those you work with.

Will the swine, poultry and beef models ever become part of the fabric of the dairy cattle industry? Time will tell. Ultimately, you, as sellers of milk and purchasers of Holstein genetics, will make that determination.

In closing, your genetics and prefix have more value and potential today than ever before. Only you can make the decision as to what you want to do with them. It's my belief that your Registered Holstein® cattle are an investment that will only increase in value.

As we approach this season of Thanksgiving, it is my privilege to thank each of you who milk cows for providing consumers around the world with milk, the most nearly perfect food.

 Happy Thanksgiving 



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





The team at the UConn farm includes (left to right): Craig Jones, Paul Bleimeyer, James Civitello, John Paul Williamson, Mary Margaret Smith, Michael Watson, Tyler Bentley, Bedford Lawrence, and Lisa Nowak. Not pictured are Mary Kegler, James Dunn and Aubrey Grabber.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The University of Connecticut provides students with unique dairy-focused learning experiences.

On a warm day in early September, the University of Connecticut (UConn) campus is buzzing with students beginning a new school year. Friends reconnect over ice cream from the UConn Dairy Bar in between classes and activities. The delicious dairy treat is made with milk from the 85-cow herd on the nearby campus dairy farm.

Perched on top of Horsebarn Hill, the Kellogg Dairy Center overlooks the scenic college campus. Green pastures, brick buildings, and a vibrant atmosphere provide a picture-perfect view from the school's dairy barn. The farm was part of the gift of land made by brother Charles and Augustus Storrs in 1881, which established the University.

The campus dairy farm has trained numerous students and contributed valuable research to the dairy industry. Rich in history, the farm has been modernized as the years have gone on. Today, the primarily Registered Holstein® herd is milked by two DeLaval robots. With an active group of animal science students on campus, it also provides them with exposure to the dairy industry.

Enriching student experience

This year's incoming Freshman class of 182 animal science students will work hands-on with all types of livestock, including dairy, during their Introduction to Animal Science class. The enthusiastic bunch will put their skills to the test later in the semester by showing all the different species as part of their course experience.

In addition to an Animal Science degree, UConn offers a Dairy Minor and provides dairy management and skills, genetics, and reproduction focused courses. Students can also do independent studies or assist with research.

"There are plenty of opportunities for them to get hands-on experiences," says farm manager Mary Margaret Smith. "It doesn't necessarily need to be through a traditional class."

One of these opportunities is the UConn Dairy Club, which has around 50 active members. The Spring Dairy Show provides the opportunity for any UConn student to try their hand showing dairy cattle.

"It is a lot of fun getting to spend time working with our dairy heifers, meeting new people, and creating some of the best memories with our friends, all the way from the first day of practices up until show day," says current student Allison Tapley of Terryville, Connecticut.

UConn Dairy Club members also take 30 animals to the Big E for an educational display each year. This long-time tradition gives club members hands-on responsibility and a chance to share their dairy knowledge with the public.

"They've been doing that as long as I've been here and long before that," says Mary Margaret, who has served as the farm manager for 20 years.

On-Farm opportunities

Traditional dairy focused activities such as the Dairy Club, Dairy Judging Team, and Dairy Challenge Team offer students the chance to deepen their understanding of the industry. UConn also provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity to four fortunate students each year.

"We have housing for four students to live on the farm. In exchange for living here, the students work 12 hours a week," says Mary Margaret. "There's a huge opportunity for them to be involved."

Animal Science student Allison Tapley is taking part in this unique program for the second year in a row. The college Junior did not grow up in agriculture, but quickly found her way there after participating in FFA during high school and later enrolling in the pre-vet track at UConn.

"It started with showing a dairy heifer during my first semester as a requirement for an intro to animal science course. From there on out, I was hooked," Allison shares.



Allison Tapley

“After that, I decided to participate in the UConn Dairy Club’s Spring Dairy Show, take a dairy cattle artificial insemination course, and take a position as a student employee at the Kellogg Dairy Center.”

These experiences helped Allison discover her passion for working with dairy cattle. After learning about cow care and calving protocols last year, Allison is looking forward to spending time shadowing herd health checks with the veterinarian.

“There is a lot of hard work and dedication in the dairy industry, but it is all worth it in the end when you see the herd happy and healthy,” she says. “You know that at the end of the day, you are helping to put food on the tables of people all around you.”

Diving in with data

Farm managers and professors at UConn strive to prepare students to enter the modern dairy industry. This means teaching them how to properly evaluate data generated on the farm. The transition to robotic milkers provides a large amount of data and illustrates the value of labor efficiency to students.

“I think it’s important that they put the pieces together,” Mary Margaret explains. “It’s not just numbers on a page, it does actually mean something.”

Students practice analyzing data provided by the robots, and other sources such as genomic testing and Redbook Plus, to make decisions about the herd. These tools help students learn to make connections between what the data shows and what happens in the barn. Programs from Holstein Association USA further the learning opportunities for students.

“We are a COMPLETE herd. We classify every seven months, use Easy ID, Redbook Plus and MultiMate, and we are genomic testing,” Mary Margaret shares.

Dairy herd management students participate in classification and help prepare the herd before each visit from the classifier. The University of Connecticut ranked seventh for BAA on the top College and University Herds list in 2022. Mary Margaret says they take conformation and milk production into account when making breeding decisions.

“I want the cows to make as much milk as possible and be as healthy as they can be doing it,” Mary Margaret explains. To achieve these goals, they breed Registered Holsteins with good feet and legs and teat placement and pay attention to health traits, DPR, and somatic cell score.

Research then and now

Research is an important tenant of the overall picture at the University of Connecticut. In 1999, UConn gained publicity for the work done by animal science professor Xiangzhong “Jerry” Yang. Just three years after Dolly the sheep was cloned in Scotland, a Holstein calf named Amy became the first cloned farm animal in the United States.

Today, research projects at UConn include one being funded by Holstein Association USA’s Research Grant Program. Launched in 2017, the program provides funding to principal investigators at U.S. Universities or non-profits for research projects with expected outcomes to benefit the profitability from Holstein cattle.

“Dr. Breno Fragomeni has a research grant through the Holstein Association for evaluating the impact of heat stress on milk production,” explains Mary Margaret.

Dr. Fragomeni’s proposal is focused on evaluating the impacts of heat stress on milk production of U.S. Holstein cattle in Texas and Wisconsin and developing a genomic selection program for heat tolerance.

“I have been working with genotype by environmental interactions since graduate school, and heat stress in dairy cattle is the current focus of my career,” Dr. Fragomeni shares.

He predicts animals in the South will be more resistant to heat stress, while cows in colder climates will be more susceptible to it. Through this research, they will investigate the need to split the genetic evaluations between regions and if the ideal genetics for each region are different. While he greatly appreciates the funding, Dr. Fragomeni says involvement in the Research Grant Program also shows his research is valuable to the dairy industry and relevant to stakeholders.

“This sort of program is extremely important to connect academia and industry, and it bridges an important gap between the theory we develop and the tools that are needed for solving real-life problems,” he says.

Between exciting research projects, distinctive student experiences, a great herd of cows, and a gorgeous setting, UConn has much to offer young adults with an interest in the dairy industry.

“The opportunities I have had at UConn in the dairy industry and agriculture have truly been life changing and I couldn’t be more thankful for them,” says Allison. “They have allowed me to discover what I am most passionate about and what I love to do.”

WHY REGISTERED HOLSTEINS®?

No matter the goals you have for your herd, U.S. Registered Holsteins fit the bill. Genetic progress has enabled Registered Holsteins to become the top choice for production and efficiency in the global dairy industry. This is just one of the reasons our beloved black and white cows are seen on a diverse mix of dairy farms.

The value of Registered Holsteins means something different to each of our members. Here's a snapshot of some of the reasons fellow dairy farmers from across the country choose Registered Holstein cows for their operation.

“There is no more marketable asset than the Registered Holstein cow. The iconic black and white Holstein is in vogue and has been for years. She's known worldwide for her production potential, her longevity is unmatched, and those are the things we need to make our farm viable for the next hundred years.”

– **Michael Turley,**
Rolling Lawns Farm,
Greenville, IL



“Registered Holstein cows add a premium to their value. When I market cattle, and when I have that piece of paper, it matters. It's not just an everyday, run-of-the-mill Holstein cow. We can tell you exactly where she's from and can predict her future through genomics. To me, that adds value.”

– **Michael Santos Jr.,**
Terra Linda Dairy, Tulare, CA



“We believe that working with the Holstein Association is ultimately an investment in our future. We know that for us to achieve the goals that we have for our cow herds, we have to invest in the genetics and the genetic future of our cow herd. We wouldn't be where we are today in terms of milk production or genetic profile without the help of the Holstein Association.”

– **Ken McCarty, McCarty Family Farms,**
Rexford, KS & MVP Dairy, Celina, OH



“The Holstein cow is really a cash flow machine from the value of her calf to the value of the milk she produces in that subsequent lactation. Nothing in livestock agriculture can beat a Holstein cow when it comes to generating revenue that comes right back here on the farm.”

– **Mark Crave,**
Crave Brothers Farm,
Waterloo, WI



“There is no doubt the U.S. Holstein is superior to all other dairy genetics around the world, and the world knows that. I do think that Registered, identified cattle are worth a premium, because they are more profitable cattle. The genetics just continue to get better all the time. Cows are healthier, have better conformation, produce more than ever before, and do it with more ease than ever.”

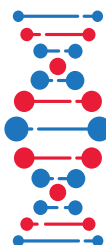
– **John Burket, Burket Falls Farm,**
East Freedom, PA



“We're members of Holstein Association USA because we really believe in the quality of the data. We believe that data drives everything. Data basically drives every decision on this farm, and if we don't have good data, then we can't make good decisions, and the Holstein Association is a big part of that data for us.”

– **Scott Ruby, Fir Ridge Holsteins, Scio, OR**

Here's More Important Information:



6,553,362

genotypes for Holstein cows.

That's over **7.8 more**

genotypes for Holsteins than

Jerseys, Brown Swiss,

Guernseys and Ayrshires combined*.

*Source: Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding Genotype Count



According to a recent Michigan State University study comparing the profitability and efficiency of Holsteins and Jerseys, Holstein cows were **\$456 more profitable** per cow annually than Jersey cows.

77%



of the revenue advantage for Holsteins came from producing about **810 additional pounds** of components annually.

**“No matter what
your goals are,
there seems to
be an avenue
with Registered
Holsteins.”**

-Todd Whittier



Katelyn Poitras and Todd Whittier pose with Whittier-Farms R Cassie-Red EX-91.

PASSION FOR PEDIGREES

Massachusetts Holstein breeder fulfills goals with Registered Holsteins®.



Lifelong dairy farmer Todd Whittier's love of Registered Holstein® cows runs deep. He grew up traveling with his grandfather, Harold Whittier, who served as a director on Holstein Association USA's board of directors from 1973 to 1977.

"I was always Gramp's sidekick," Todd says. "I went everywhere with him and got to learn about the industry and meet a lot of people as a result."

These early memories helped solidify Todd's passion for the dairy business. Even as a teenager, he knew a career as a dairy farmer was a good fit. Todd took over as Whittier Farm's herdsman two months before he graduated from high school and has been caring for the herd ever since.

Dairy farming is no easy endeavor, but Todd says his passion for deep pedigreed cows makes the hard work and sacrifice worth it. He also believes in the possibilities U.S. Registered Holsteins provide.

"I like all aspects of Registered Holsteins. I think there are so many great opportunities whether you like the type end of it, or whether you like the production end of it," Todd shares. "No matter what your goals are, there seems to be an avenue with Registered Holsteins."

Guided by generations

Whittier Farms was started by Todd's grandfather in 1945. Located near Sutton, Massachusetts, the farm sits just an hour away from Boston. The herd became 100 percent Registered in 1971 and still is today. Todd says his love for cows was passed down from his grandfather and father.

Over the years, the farm has changed to keep pace with the ever-evolving dairy industry. Today, Todd milks 55 cows in a double-six parlor twice a day. The high-type group of cows is housed in a freestall barn.

In addition to the dairy, Whittier Farms also has an on-farm store where they sell a variety of fresh produce, beef, and other local products. Todd breeds a portion of their dairy herd to beef bulls to provide the popular item to his family's farm store.

"We process two beef cows every three weeks and sell every bit of it," Todd explains. This is not the only way Whittier Farms has diversified their business.

"The other avenue I've had in the past couple of years has been an outlet for bulls," Todd says. "I sell them at six months old to a friend who raises them until they're ready to go."

As the farm has changed over the years, Todd has remained loyal to Registered Holsteins and the potential they provide. Advice from his father guides his willingness to pivot as the industry changes.

"My father always said there is more than one way to do things right and more than one way to be successful," Todd recalls.

The complete cow

When it comes to breeding his Registered Holstein herd, Todd says his goal is to have it all.

"I want the complete cow that's very balanced," Todd explains. "I don't like the extremes and I use modern bulls."

He pays careful attention to pedigrees and is intentional when making breeding decisions. If a bull has worked well for Todd in the past, he looks for sons to use in his herd down the line. Todd also uses a mix of both proven and genomic bulls, and says he's had success with both.

Several resources from Holstein Association USA help Todd make well-informed decisions about managing his herd. For example, the herd is on the TriStar program, which is Holstein Association USA's program for administering production records, cow and herd genetic performance reports, and recognition.

Core programs such as registration and classification also benefit Whittier Farms.

"Classification has always been my favorite," Todd says. "I think that's one of the biggest tools to help breeders."

Over the years, Todd's breeding philosophy and emphasis on correct conformation has paid off. The accomplished Registered Holstein breeder has bred or developed seven 95-point cows.

Perhaps Whittier Farms' most well-known 95-point cows have been Whittier-Farms Lead Mae EX-95 and Whittier-Farms Outside Roz EX-95. Roz had several sons in AI and embryos exported to multiple countries, expanding the impact of the foundation cow across the globe. Todd continues to strive for more high-scoring cows.

"One of my goals has always been to have more Excellent cows than Very Good cows," Todd shares, adding he has achieved this goal in recent classifications.

For Todd, dairy farming isn't just a job, but a way of life. Seeing things come full circle also provides a sense of accomplishment for the dedicated dairy farmer.

"I enjoy the challenge of picking the right sire, having the calf born, and watching her grow and develop."

Mentoring future leaders

Though day-to-day chores on the farm keep Todd plenty busy, he takes time to share his knowledge with youth who show an interest in the dairy industry.

"I enjoy helping young people," Todd shares. "I've had a lot of great mentors and hope I'll be one for someone else."

Katelyn Poitras is one of the young people who has benefited from Todd's guidance. She began showing animals for Whittier Farms four years ago. Now, Katelyn is often responsible for managing the string at local, state, and national level shows.

"It's really cool to work with such good cow families and watch them develop over time," Katelyn shares.

Katelyn family's farm has only heifers, so learning how to care for cows was a new experience for her. This includes Whittier-Farms R Cassie-Red, a promising young cow recently scored EX-91.

Katelyn found showing success with Cassie, placing at the top of Senior Two-Year-Old class in both the Junior and Open divisions at the Eastern States Red and White show at the Big E in 2023. She also garnered Intermediate Champion and Reserve Grand Champion accolades in the Junior show.

Beyond the showing, Katelyn finds value in participating in other aspects of the National Junior Holstein Association.

"I participate in Dairy Bowl and Dairy Jeopardy, and I've been heavily involved in the New England Holstein Association," she shares. "The group of people I've gotten to work with throughout National Holstein and New England is exceptional. I've gained a lot of friendships across the country through both of them."

Todd believes mentoring and engaging youth is important for the future of the dairy industry. He finds fulfillment knowing he's used knowledge gained from his own mentors, particularly his father and grandfather, throughout his career as a dairy farmer.

DRY COWS DESERVE COMPLETE CARE

Giving dry cows the right care at the right time helps ensure they remain productive for the next lactation. Merck Animal Health makes supporting both cows and their newborn calves simple with a portfolio of solutions that has everything you need to successfully manage the dry period.



BOVILIS® Guardian®

BOVILIS® J-5

SHUTOUT®

Orbenin-DC™
(cloxacillin benzathine
intramammary infusion)

COMPLETEDRYCOWCARE.COM

ORBENIN-DC: For use in dry cows only. Do not use within four weeks (28 days) of calving. Treated animals must not be slaughtered for food purposes within four weeks (28 days) of treatment. For additional information, see the product label.

BOVILIS J-5: This product contains oil adjuvant. In the event of accidental self-injection, seek medical attention immediately. For additional information, see the product label.