

# Info Holstein

## We Do Success

### *A dream fulfilled for son of non-Holstein producer*

**T**here was a time, not so long ago, when Pascal Guillemette, Saint-Charles-de-Bellechasse, Qc had nearly given up on his dream to become a dairy farmer.

Then, he attended a country dance one night!

Pascal was not born or raised on a farm. His desire to become a farmer originated with his grandmother and grandfather [on father's side], who owned a grade herd. As he matured, so did his responsibilities—and liking for country living.

Following jobs with Olymel Food Service and New Holland Equipment, he worked for Ferme Harosem Inc., St-Malachie, Qc. Here, he was instrumental in prompting them to implement classification.

He took courses related to dairy production, eventually graduating with an agricultural diploma.

But how does a young fellow start to finance a farm operation of his own these days?

His dream was fading ... and fast!

Then, out of the blue, Pascal meets and becomes smitten with Geneviève Gonthier—who, like him, enjoyed country dancing. And, surprise, she just happens to be a Holstein breeder's daughter.

However, thwarted again, her father, Daniel Gonthier, had sold his cows and quota two months prior!

Again, Pascal's dream was fading!

Marrying Geneviève



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*Pascal Guillemette and Geneviève Gonthier*

A Holstein Canada publication providing informative, challenging, and topical news.



Geneviève Gonthier and Pascal Guillemette, with sons Félix-Antoine and Étienne, are pictured with their favourite cow, Lexis Astro Wicked (VG-86-3yr-CAN).

in 2004, it was three years later that they first learned about an incentive from the Milk Producers' Federation. This program encouraged new farmers to rent 10 kg quota for five years, to be paid back in 10 years.

Not a hard decision for either, the young couple rented the highly-arable, 120-acre farm from her father, in 2008. They acquired quota and started buying Holsteins to fill the barn.

In retrospect, the couple had a really good eye when purchasing Holsteins from neighbours and auction sales. They also sought advice from parents and friends. Paying approximately \$2,000 per head, they predominantly bought cows on looks, with many unclassified.

Destined for Ferme *Pagelait* Inc. were first and second-calf cows. Most of these typey purchases actually turned out to be purebred, with decent pedigrees. Moreover, many have since classified Very Good.

To accommodate a neighbour, they temporarily lodged 12 animals. From this extra income, they were able to finance their herd over a few months.

Pascal was the ideal candidate to join the Synergie Program in February 2008 (Québec's incentive program).

Sire mating advice from Progen and

CIAQ incentives for young sire and proven-bull semen are already making a difference in *Pagelait's* calf quality. Deep pedigrees of bulls are very important to this genetic enthusiast. As well, young-sire daughters will receive a credit when classified.

This newcomer also appreciates that seven calves were electronically registered free for one year with Holstein Canada. Pascal has declared that registration is now a lifetime commitment.

Having classifications completed for first-lactation heifers at no cost for one year, and reduced fees for the next four years really excites Pascal. He relays, "I love talking to the classifier. During the visit, I ask all these questions about desirable traits and how I can improve my lineup."

It turns out that all 28 animals at *Pagelait* are now purebred, except one at 87%. However, her calf will be designated 94% [purebred].

Within two years, Pascal has met his first goal to have a totally purebred herd!

Although they currently live 3.5 km away, at some point Pascal and Geneviève plan on moving into the house on the farm. Her father and mother would then take over her grandparents' home.

Daniel continues to spend

considerable time helping around the farm and owns a 40-acre sugar bush and house.

Although Pascal and Geneviève have young sons Félix-Antoine and Étienne, hard-working Geneviève continues to work for Co-op Montmagny four days a week. On farm, she completes paperwork, helps milk, and calculates all nutrition for the herd.

They grow oats and hay, with Pascal quipping, "I am the TMR mixer."

However, as soon as financially possible, this energetic, enthusiastic couple want to work together full-time on the farm.

Future goals include purchasing and expanding the current farm. The barn needs renovating with wide tie-stalls for their forecasted, 50-purebred cows. Furthermore, within eight years [age 40], this couple also desires generations of VG and EX cows and an EX cow carrying the *Pagelait* prefix.

Valacta also played an important role, regarding Synergie, in their start-up last year. The current herd average of 9,500 kg milk, 3.8% fat, and 3.3% protein serves as a benchmark for increasing milk yield and components.

While Pascal is not currently interested in showing, he wants to be recognized as a breeder of good, balanced cows for both type and production.

Pascal summarizes, "My dream of a lifetime has come true. I find so much satisfaction in farming. I wake up happy every morning because we *do* success."

**When asked how a young person of a non-Holstein producer can get started in farming, Pascal laughs, "Find a girlfriend with a farm!"**

**"Seriously," he adds, "It's very hard to start a farm these days.**

**"Firstly, you must believe in yourself and the possibility.**

**"You need a lot of help and, ideally a partner with the same passion for the business as you have.**

**"Also, you could team up with a farmer with no children or one who has children seeking alternate careers. Become an invaluable herdsman to that person, as a good relationship means everything"**

# Synergie Success

**Québec incentive program encourages the use of genetic evaluation tools for improved producer profit**

Throughout the years, dairy industry partners in Québec have been very creative and progressive in attracting new members.

However, 40% of cows are still not available for genetic evaluation.

Their latest initiative is called *Synergie*.

**Synergie=the interaction of two or more organizations to produce an effect that exceeds the sum of individual effects.**

Alain Lajeunesse, Holstein Canada's Manager of Business Development and Communication states, "Synergie is a collaboration of dairy industry partners from breed associations, milk recording, AI, and the government.

The goal is to encourage dairy producers to take advantage of the combined benefits available through all partners. It would have been very difficult to put this program together without funding from the Québec provincial government."

As Valérie Tremblay, Manager of

Advisory Services, Holstein Québec relays, "Synergie is different from previous programs. We entice the producer to classify his herd *first*, even before the animals are all registered. This way, he can immediately witness some tangible benefits.

"By conducting classification first, the producer also sees the benefits of other genetic evaluation tools—milk recording, registration, and AI.

"We decided to take a new approach by offering numerous producer incentives immediately after the producer signs up for Synergie—a five-year commitment."

## Synergie Benefits

- New membership fees for Holstein Canada and Holstein Québec are waived for one year.
- First-lactation females are scored free on the first round. For rounds two to six, they are discounted by 50%.
- There is no charge for electronic calf registrations and transfers for the first year.
- CIAQ offers a 40% discount on young sire semen, if the producer averages at least 50% young sires in the herd under PEP (Young Sire Proving Program). A free mating report (Progen) is provided and some discounts for proven bulls are allowed.
- The producer receives significant

milk recording credits (\$400+) through Valacta.

<b>Synergie Results</b> November 2009	
<b>Total New Herds</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Total Cows</b>	<b>7,930</b>
<b>No. of cows per herd</b>	<b>42</b>

Normand Desranleau, Synergie Representative concludes, "Because of the tremendous co-operation among dairy industry partners, Synergie has been a real success.

"The program concludes December 31, 2009 as we approach our target of 200 herds.

"Producers have really appreciated the simplicity of the program and the increased savings. It is very satisfying to witness producers getting excited about the genetic improvement tools available to them."

## Synergie Goals

- expand the use of genetic improvement services
- encourage producers to register, classify, and milk record
- increase the number of active members within breed associations
- improve herd genetic potential
- help producers increase profitability



Nasal swab kit

## The Nose Knows

In a pilot project involving about 50 Holstein herds and 50 dam/daughter pairs, the Association used a nasal swab for DNA parentage analysis. This was done to determine whether parentage can be accurately predicted through a more convenient, practical method.

While the current practice of pulling hair is very reliable, collecting a nasal sample may be easier for some producers. GenServe Laboratories is conducting the experiment.

In early 2010, a determination will be made whether this nostril test is a feasible alternative to hair or tissue sampling for parentage testing.

# The Potential Success Index

by Holstein Canada President,  
Germain Lehoux, Saint-Elzéar, Qc

**Yes, a new index follows LPI,  
GEBY, GPA, etc.**

**A**n idea has been mulling in my mind for a while now. How can we predict the success of a project, business, organization, and event? Is there a common denominator to success? What are the factors that give rise to this?

By looking closely around me and, especially, by listening to success stories, we can create our own recipe.

Let's start with the ingredients.

The first is **Passion**.

This includes the passion for a job well done. It's passion that pushes each one of us to excel and partake in something bigger than ourselves.

Passion makes us dream of that champion—the envy of all. It makes us work long hours without ever totalling them. Passion is ingrained in all Master Breeders or, those that aspire to this highest honour.

Passion makes that difference!

The second ingredient is **Knowledge**.

This is about life's experiences—the good moves and the lessons learned from bad moves. Then, add scientific knowledge. If our personal experiences are of great value, science will then reveal the reasons why.

Let's use genomics as an example. The increased reliability of less-

heritable, genetic traits will help us make better decisions and guide us on the road to success.

Traceability is another example, scheduled to be in place across Canada in 2011. This should be linked to a component of animal and herd health. A health passport, tied to traceability, will help the producer manage diseases in his own herd. This will also ensure an effective follow-up when the animal leaves the herd, either for culling or for production in another herd. The confidential aspect of information is maintained at all times. We cannot forget that our freedom stops at the same point where it starts for others.

People can help us attain knowledge. As my old friend Mario always said, "What is important is not to *be* the best, but to surround you with the best!"

The third ingredient is **Luck**.

We all need luck at some point in our lives. This can come in the form of good timing, insight, or advice. Sometimes, we must even create our own luck—put the odds in our favor!

Regardless of the emphasis placed

on each of these ingredients, adding a proportion of these three elements will lead us to success over a short and/or, long period of time.

By the way, there is a way to put the odds in your favour. Come and share the contagious passion of Holstein members and experts at the Visionary Meeting, during the 2010 Holstein Convention. The knowledge that is essential to research will play an integral role through interactive workshops.

Welcome to the PSI (P+K+L) club!

**Potential Success Index =  
Passion + Knowledge + Luck—  
a simple formula,  
but so effective!**

I conclude by wishing each and, everyone, a very Merry Christmas filled with love and peace.

Also, dear breeders, members, clients, and friends in Canada and abroad, I hope that the year 2010 is filled with health and ... PSI ... at 100%.

Until next time ...

## Don't Drop the Ball

It is very important that NLID and ATQ replacement tags be obtained as quickly as possible to avoid misidentification and misreads.

Holstein Canada sympathizes with producers when tags are not available to insert immediately. To accelerate the process in automated systems, NLID has expedited the acquisition of RFID replacements from tag manufacturer Allflex.

When an animal loses its tag, it is important to ensure the continued identity of this animal. Until the replacement tag is received, producers may need a secondary method to maintain its uninterrupted national status. This includes neck tags; temporary, generic ear tags; photos; or sketches. Herd records must be cross-referenced accordingly.



# Sun Sets on Bar-coded Tag Status

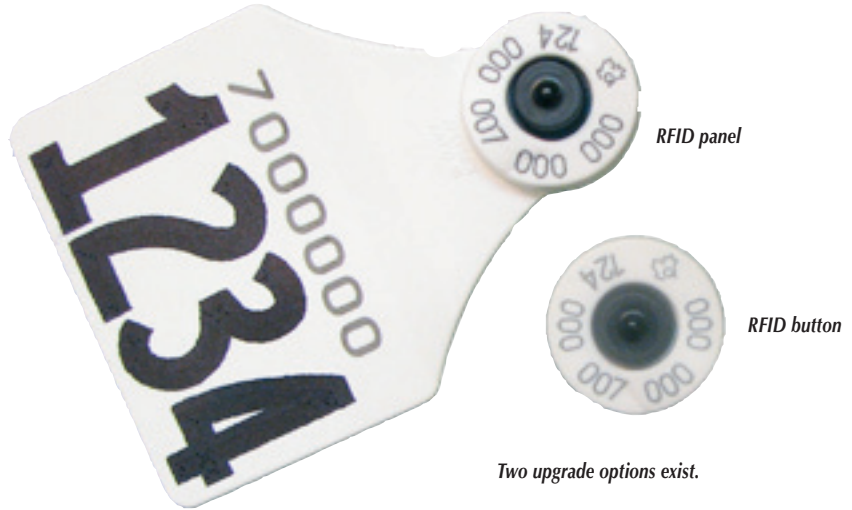
Commencing January 1, 2010, as required by Health of Animals Regulations, all animals (dairy and beef) in all provinces must be identified with approved **RFID** tags. This reminder is of particular significance for animals moving off-farm and/or co-mingling—mixing animals of different origins.

In the case of NLID, distribution of bar-coded tags was discontinued January 2008. However, some dairy animals may still sport bar-coded tags as they have never moved off-farm. If this is the case, then all affixed tags must remain in the ears plus the addition of a RFID tag.

The RFID tag may be ordered from NLID with the same lifetime and management number [as bar-coded tag]



Barcoded tags are still recognized as security dairy tags, but do not have national recognition off-farm.



Two upgrade options exist.

for \$3.95. If a panel is desired, the radio XL panel is available for \$5.25 (radio button fused into panel).

### An animal requires a RFID tag to move off-farm even if previously identified with a bar-coded tag.

In the event a CCIA yellow RFID tag (generic, respecting dairy) is used, then this number must be cross-referenced with the animal's original lifetime number (NLID/ATQ) in herd records and, ultimately reported to the emerging traceability network.

### Pillars of Traceability

RFID technology must be implemented across the entire country's bovine sector to enable Canada to move forward on traceability.

There are three pillars of traceability.

**Animal identification**, with 80-85% adaptation, is now nationally co-ordinated by DFC on behalf of all dairy producers and industry stakeholders.

Secondly, unique **premise identification, location, and attributes** are necessary to support animal movement. Provinces have been assigned the responsibility to lead this key, massive project.

**Animal movement**, the third pillar, can be achieved by full, national co-ordination and adaptation of **RFID** tags and technology. This encompasses auction marts, exhibitions, co-mingling sites, community pastures, and abattoirs.

- NLID=National Livestock IDentification
- RFID=Radio Frequency ID
- ATQ=Agri-Traçabilité Québec inc.
- CCIA=Canadian Cattle Identification Agency
- DFC=Dairy Farmers of Canada

## It's a No-no to Reassign Tags

Producers are prohibited from reassigning national tags and numbers from one animal to another animal for *any* reason. Once they are assigned and birth particulars are submitted for registration and/or traceability, the corresponding tags must not be re-designated even in the event of calf mortality.

Birth details must not be submitted for registration or traceability (age verification/tag activation) unless official,

national tags have been previously applied—one matching pair in each ear.

System credibility and traceability efforts rely on the accurate recording of *all* events on-farm, e.g. births, herd additions, sales, disposals.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency continues to up its enforcement efforts for non-compliance.

# Slight Fee Increase

There's no easy way to say it!

While the National Board of Directors and staff have kept costs in line for many years, the time has come for some fee increases.

These changes will allow Holstein Canada to meet expenses and to make the investments necessary to provide quality products and services. Accordingly, these will enable dairy producers to be more profitable in future.

Today, the cost for the majority of registrations, including provincial levy, is significantly less than in 1990. Since the advent of electronic registrations in 2002, Holstein Canada has passed on, in the form of lower fees, savings to members in excess of \$1 million per year.

Effective January 1, 2010, fees for registration will increase \$1 per electronic application and \$2 for each hard copy application.

For 15 years, national membership fees have remained static. In January, regular membership will rise to \$25 and affiliate membership to \$35. Junior membership, at no cost, remains the same.

Your continued support of Canada's largest dairy breed organization is much appreciated!

Holstein Canada Fees		
	2009	2010
<b>Registrations (calf under 3 mos.)</b>		
Electronic	\$ 8	\$ 9
Hard Copy	\$ 11	\$ 13
<b>Memberships</b>		
Regular	\$20	\$25
Affiliate	\$30	\$35
Junior	0	0

# All Animals Categorized—No Gaps

**Males less than 96.87% and resulting female progeny eligible for registration, without gaps**

With expansion of Holstein Canada's Full Spectrum Registration Scale, males less than 96.87% are now eligible for registration.

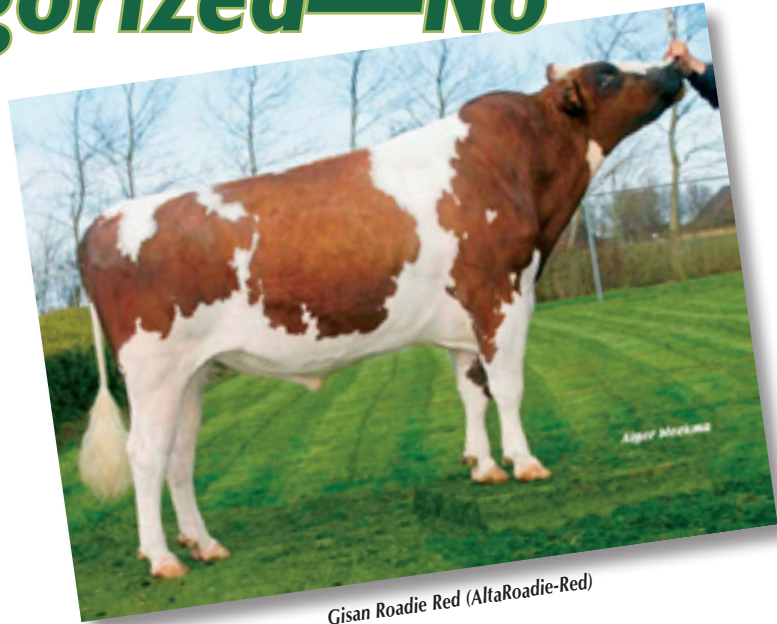
Prior to the March 2008 By-law change, female progeny of sires less than 96.87% (pure) were registered at the entry level *BB* and without paternal lineage.

Now these animals are entitled to enter the Herdbook with a full pedigree. Eliminating blanks, all animals and genetics are fully categorized in accordance with Holstein inheritance.

Applications for registry of former ineligible calves, regardless of age, can be submitted for registration. Base fees apply until March 31, 2010.

Previously-registered animals with pedigree gaps and/or purity issues can be returned to Holstein Canada for re-categorization at no cost.

Contact Grace Cyperling at the Association.



Gisan Roadie Red (AltaRoadie-Red)

**Holstein Canada can now provide the complete pedigree of Gisan Roadie Red NLDM350993858 (AltaRoadie-Red).**

The information herein contained is based upon the records maintained by the Holstein Association of Canada. The accuracy of the information is not guaranteed and is subject to correction according to the Association's By-laws.

L'information contenue dans la présente est fondée sur les registres tenus à jour par l'Association Holstein du Canada. L'exactitude de cette information n'est pas garantie et est assujettie à des corrections conformément aux Statuts de l'Association.

# Polled Opportunity

**Analysis now available to detect homozygous polled Holsteins—a means to horn-free**

**A** breed-specific horned/polled analysis from IGENITY is now available for Holstein cattle. As a pioneer in dairy DNA technology, this company is the only provider commercially offering validated polled tests to the industry.

Because an animal's horned status varies by breed, an analysis had to be specifically developed for Holsteins.

Until now, producers and breed associations had to rely on progeny tests and visual observation to determine if animals are homozygous polled. Now, using SNP markers, the polled status of an animal is known definitively and quickly. This has significant marketing opportunities for AI sires, bull dams, and the general population.

Polled in Holstein's case refers to the absence of horns and scurs—animals born naturally hornless.

The polled characteristic in cattle is

## Polled is dominant, desirable gene

inherited as a simple, dominant gene. Therefore, horns result from two copies of the recessive gene at one location on the chromosome.

When a polled, heterozygous animal is mated with a horned animal, approximately one-half of the offspring will be polled and one-half will develop horns.

Heterozygous Polled Parent (Ph)			
Homozygous Horned Parent (hh)	h	P	h
	h	Ph	hh

Offspring are 50% polled and 50% horned

When a polled, homozygous animal is mated with a horned animal, all offspring will be polled.

Homozygous Polled Parent (PP)			
Heterozygous Polled Parent (Ph)	P	P	P
	h	Ph	Ph

Offspring are 100% polled (50% are heterozygous)

animals will be temporarily coded PO or PP in Canada.

Owners can apply to add the PO code to previously-registered animals born hornless, at no cost. If testing is desired, contact Holstein Canada's Data Integrity team. Results would be available in about two weeks after the hair sample and paperwork is received at GenServe.



Three, heterozygous, polled full sisters, owned by Crescent Lane Farms Ltd, Goderich, ON include (l-r) La Presentation Jezabelle P (VG-85-3yr), La Presentation Brigitte P (VG-87-3Yr), and La Presentation Violet P (GP-83-2yr).

In the event a calf is born hornless, owners may wish to officially verify the polled status. If desired, the animal can be officially verified as homozygous or heterozygous for \$94.

Until the horn-free animal has been tested, it will be coded by Holstein Canada as PO in Herdbook and Who's Who file layouts. The Association—as part of the verification process—will verify the source of the polled gene from a polled dam or polled sire or both.

Once the polled test has been conducted, the animal's record will be coded **PP** for homozygous or **PO** for heterozygous. This code will print on Certificates of Registry and pedigrees, along with other official genetic codes.

The World Holstein-Friesian Federation is in the process of developing a three-digit, polled coding system. However, in the interim,

**SNP**—Single Nucleotide Polymorphism, or SNP (pronounced "snip")

**PO** (transmitting code) assigned by Holstein Canada after verified as Heterozygous Polled through ancestry validation and/or testing

**PP** (transmitting code) assigned by Holstein Canada after analyzed through a SNP marker test as Homozygous Polled by GenServe/IGENITY

**Homozygous**—an individual having two identical alleles of a particular gene, which breeds true for a corresponding characteristic

**Heterozygous**—an individual having two different alleles of a particular gene, giving rise to varying offspring

## HC Open for Business

The Brantford office will be open three days to serve you during the last week in 2009—Tuesday, Dec. 29; Wednesday, Dec. 30; and Thursday, Dec. 31.

# New Website at Holstein Canada



## Patience is a virtue, while website is enhanced

In October, Holstein Canada released a totally redesigned website.

Directors and staff recognize that for some users, this has not been a positive experience. We sincerely apologize for this and, ask for your continued co-operation and patience, while we make improvements to the site.

Because the entire look and feel of the website is very different, it requires time to become comfortable with it. One advantage is that most information is available in two to three *clicks*, making it better organized and more logical to follow.

The Home Page includes a direct link to Animal Inquiry—the most frequently-visited section. Animal information is designed using tabs for navigation, which helps users locate information quicker.

The electronic registration process has been redesigned and simplified making the process more straightforward. Corrections to online registrations are clear, allowing customers to review their registrations and make necessary edits prior to submission.

Herd trend reports are a new and exciting feature for active customers with an electronic account. These reports provide invaluable information on genetic progress achieved. Producers can compare themselves to the national average for the top

*I just spent some time on the new website. While I was very comfortable and happy with the old one, the new one is light years ahead.*

*I especially like the herd trends section. I could spend way too much time studying this section alone!*

*Thanks and congratulations.*

*D. R. Vaandrager, Lavender Farms, BC*

and bottom 10% for inbreeding, milk production, LPI, conformation, and many other traits. These reports will evolve to provide dairymen with more pertinent information for improved profitability.

Additional information is available on cow rankings and Master Breeder status.

While there are many positive enhancements, we have also identified some frustrating issues for customers.

**Speed:** While close to 80% of users are on high speed, dial-up clients have commented that the site is slower. Holstein's Information Technology (IT) team is making changes to improve the speed for this segment.

It is also worth noting there have been some new options for high-speed, cellular internet. These options are becoming more affordable and available to rural users across Canada.

**Electronic registrations represent almost 80% of all registrations filed.**

**Links to previous site:** With the new site, all links to Animal Inquiry must be updated. The IT team has created a short-term, *redirect link* to give users some time to make these updates. IT staff are also available to help you find the best way to update your links to Holstein Canada's site.

**Browser versions:** Some users with older computers or browsers have experienced difficulties accessing our site. The IT team is available to provide advice on best options to meet your needs.

**Mobile devices:** We have received comments from mobile device users (e.g. BlackBerry) that they would like to use their devices for basic Animal Inquiry Searches. We concur. In the coming weeks, we will launch a new AIS that is mobile-device friendly.

We appreciate your comments and patience, while we continue to make improvements to our site.

**Forward ideas and/or suggestions to [customerserviceweb@holstein.ca](mailto:customerserviceweb@holstein.ca) or fill in the Feedback link on the site.**

It remains an ongoing focus and goal to improve Holstein Canada's website for producer ease and functionality.

## Annual Web Stats

- 900,000 visits per year from 142,000 unique visitors
- 12,000 users represent 86% of activity on site. On average, they visit each week. Fourteen percent of visitors are totally new.
- average time on site is 6:42 minutes
- for site traffic, 41% come direct, 36% are from other sites, and 23% result from search engines, e.g. Google
- referring sites also include industry partners and individual breeders
- 80% of hits are Canadian. Five percent come from the US. Ten percent trace to European countries, with the remainder from all over the world.





# Member-Friendly AGM Schedule

Holstein Canada's upcoming Annual General Meeting of Members is Saturday, April 10.

The formal business meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. This gives local members time to travel and attend the meeting at the Hôtel des Seigneurs Saint-Hyacinthe in Québec. A little extra sleep is also appreciated by partiers attending the Master Breeder extravaganza the previous evening.

Without interruption, interesting and informative reports from the Board of Directors, Secretary-Manager, Finance, and President will be communicated in sequence.

Members will have plenty of time to discuss the business of the Association. While there are no By-law changes this year, resolutions from branches, clubs, and members should evoke stimulating discussion.

A highlight of the Annual Meeting occurs later on the agenda. The 2009 Cow of the Year, as voted by members, will be announced and the owner gifted with a Canadian, one-of-a-kind artpiece. Other significant awards will be presented by Holstein Canada.

Selected as guest speaker to conclude the Annual Meeting is Jacques Demers.

Enjoying an impressive hockey career, he was nominated three times for Coach of the Year. Jacques is one of only five National Hockey League coaches to direct his team in 1,000+ consecutive games.

Jacques led players to the Conference Finals three times, with his Montreal Canadians capturing the Stanley Cup in 1993.

## Meeting of the Minds

A *Visionary Symposium* will be held Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> in Saint-Hyacinthe, Qc, in conjunction with the National Holstein Convention.

Following a brunch, a session chocked full of information and verbal exchange will unfold. Attendees will be encouraged to project themselves into the future.

Three sessions, in partnership with the Conseil Provincial des Cercles d'Amélioration du Bétail Québec, will be staged. These include Consumer of the Future, Breeder of the Future, and Cow of the Future.

Consumer of the Future	
Speakers	Features
Maurice Doyon Ph.D. Rural Economy Master Program Director, Laval University, Qc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consumer expectations and concerns—biosecurity, functional foods, and animal welfare</li> </ul>
Breeder of the Future	
Pierrette Desrosiers M.Ps. Work psychologist, speaker, and specialized coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aptitudes required in future—attitude, relationships, professional development, management</li> </ul>
Cow of the Future	
Robert Chabot, <i>Belfast</i> Holstein enr. and Syndicat <i>Gen-I-Beq</i> , Qc Dirk Appel, Spruce Lane Dairies Ltd. ( <i>Altappel</i> ), AB Carol and Guy Levac, Ferme Mirella inc., ( <i>Mirella</i> ) St. Bernardin, ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>breeders' points of view from different breeding profiles, presented by video</li> </ul>
<b>Genetic Challenges and Innovative Strategies</b> Brian van Doormaal M.Sc. General Manager, CDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>current situation and possible solutions through genetic evaluations and genomics</li> </ul>
<b>The Use of the Latest Genetic Tools by Breeders</b> Jay Shannon B.Comm. Breed Improvement Manager, Holstein Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adaptations to, and, use of tools and programs for desired performance of the cow of the future</li> </ul>
<b>Biotechnology's Potential</b> Dr. Patrick Blondin Ph.D. Director of Research and Development, L'Alliance Boviteq, Qc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>research results and latest developments regarding embryo biopsy, increasing performance of regular and sexed semen, and other biotechnologies accelerating the development of the cow of future</li> </ul>

**Breeders of the Future—we need photos!**  
E-mail your photos (with captions) of youth, young adults, Holstein families, and farm operations to [Congresnational2010@holsteinquebec.com](mailto:Congresnational2010@holsteinquebec.com) by Feb. 15, 2010.

**Opportunity for Young Adults**  
Are you 19-29 years of age and interested in attending the Convention?  
Contact your branch or  
[www.holstein.ca/Content/Sites/AGM/English/youngagm.html](http://www.holstein.ca/Content/Sites/AGM/English/youngagm.html)

Thirty young adults were highly attentive to guest speaker Doug Blair at the 2009 Annual Meeting.



## Top Conformation Herds—150+ Cows

At every classification visit since August 2005, the system has calculated herd averages for all traits based on all active cows and all active first-lactation cows.

Using the accumulated history of these herd averages, a report is generated at each visit. This shows the herd trend for all scorecard categories and final score for first-lactation animals and all active milking cows.

Holstein Canada conducted a recent analysis of the conformation averages for herds classifying in rounds 72 to 77—spanning August 2005 to July 2009.

For comparison purposes, it is best to look at first-lactation averages, since they are more comparable figures across herds, reducing the impact of re-classification and culling practices.

Additionally, herds were grouped according to one of three herd size categories: 40 to 75 cows, 75 to 150 cows, and 150+ cows. Due to space limitations in this article, the two charts presented are for the 150+ cow herd category. Future issues will display the top herds in the other herd-size categories.

The top ten conformation herds with 150+ cows were selected based on the average final score of active first-lactation animals in visits from rounds 72 to 77 (**Table 1**).

In **Table 2**, the top ten improvement herds are presented. These showed the greatest progress in average first-lactation, final score from rounds 72/73 to rounds 76/77. The only other criteria applied was the average final score for the herd in rounds 76/77; it had to be at, or above, the national average score for first-lactation animals.

# Embrace Genomics ...

## Genomics takes off with a bang!

In 2009, the dairy industry has witnessed the coming-of-age of genomics. Uptake of the technology among breeders has been remarkable. Almost overnight, it has become a determining factor for bull dam selection, embryos, and cattle sales.

The potential that genomics provides for accelerated improvement in the breed is very exciting. Yet, the application of this cutting-edge technology, as a breed improvement tool, is still in its infancy.

As technology continues to advance, at an incredibly-rapid rate, a greater understanding of the entire genome will be acquired leading to genomic predictions that are more and more accurate.

At this point in time, though, it must be recognized that genomic predictions are a phenomenal achievement, but also a work in progress.

## Testing Update

In the first 10 months since the service has been available, 1,678 Canadian Holstein females have been

**Table 1: Top 10 Conformation Herds 150+ Cows**

by average final score for active first-lactation cows  
includes rounds 72 to 77 (August 2005 to July 2009)

Herd	Avg. Score - All 1st-lactation cows rounds 72 to 77
BOSDALE - Bosdale Farms Inc., Cambridge, ON	83.5
ARLA - Conrad Riendeau, St. Cesaire, Qc	83.4
COMESTAR - Comestar Holstein, Victoriaville, Qc	82.9
WILLSWIKK - J. William Wikkerink Farms Ltd., Cobble Hill, BC	82.9
JACOBS - Ferme Jacobs Inc., Cap Sante, Qc	82.7
BOULET - Ferme Boulet Inc., St. Francois Montmagny, Qc	82.6
PIERSTEIN - Pierre Boulet, Montmagny, Qc	82.5
MARTINDEL - Dennis E. Martin, Palmerston, ON	82.4
WOODFIELD - Woodfield Holsteins Ltd., Caledon, ON	82.4
WEDGWOOD - Wedgwood Holsteins, Cobble Hill, BC	82.4

**Table 2: Top 10 Improvement Herds 150+ Cows**

by greatest improvement in average final score for active first-lactation cows  
from rounds 72/73 to rounds 76/77 (August 2005 to July 2009)

Herd	Avg. Score 1st lactations in rounds 76/77	Avg. Score Improvement 1st lactations from rounds 72/73 to 76/77
DYKSHOORNS - Dykshoorn Farms Ltd., Abbotsford, BC	79.5	+2.9
NEWMORNING - New Morning Holsteins, Bright, ON	79.6	+2.7
HAMMING - Hamming Holsteins Ltd., Vernon, BC	81.6	+2.3
SUGARLOAF - Bekkers Farms Inc., Antigonish, NS	80.0	+2.2
SWISS ACRES - Fermes Gasser Ltd., Pike River, Qc	79.7	+2.1
MARDELEN - Mardelen Holsteins Ltd., Chilliwack, BC	79.6	+2.0
FRONT VIEW - Fermes Verhaegen Inc., Clarenceville, Qc	80.5	+1.9
BERGEROY - Bergeroy Holstein Inc., St. Samuel de Horton, Qc	82.2	+1.9
MARWAYNE - O.B. Holdings Corporation, Marwayne, AB	79.7	+1.7
LESPERRON - Ferme Lesperron Enr, Bury, Qc	81.8	+1.7

# but With Caution

submitted to Holstein Canada for genomic testing using the 50K SNP chip. The initial fee of \$280 was re-negotiated and reduced to \$250 in September. It is predicted that the fee will continue to come down over time as testing broadens world-wide and developments in the technology make it possible to do more, for less.

## Where's the Technology Going?

We could leave this prediction to the genomic gurus, but two things appear clear.

In 2010, there should be two, new testing panels available. One is a much higher-density panel (600K to 1M SNPs), accessible at a higher cost. The second is a lower-density panel (possibly 1K to 3K SNPs) that will be priced as low as \$30-50.

How might people use the various

options for testing?

It would certainly depend on the accuracy gains from the different tests and the value of the animal being tested. It might make sense for a herd to test a large number of animals using the low-density panel, much like a screen or filter. Then, some animals could be selected to be tested using the more accurate, mid-density (50K SNPs) or higher-density panel.

Holstein Canada is a strong advocate of the use of genomics for genetic selection. The Association believes it will be the single, greatest development in the modern history of animal improvement.

The take-home message for producers is to embrace genomics and use the tests available. However, they should also exercise an appropriate level of prudence in these early stages of this novel technology.

## Top Sires Making Improvement on Dam










Based on 1st Lactation Classifications from September/October 2009

Top 10 Sires with 100+ Daughters Classified in Two-Month Period				Top 10 Sires with 30-100 Daughters Classified in Two-Month Period			
Sire	Daughters Classified <sup>▲</sup>	% Higher than Dam	Daus/Dam Avg. Scores	Sire	Daughters Classified <sup>▲</sup>	% Higher than Dam	Daus/Dam Avg. Scores
Lheros	124	63.7	81.1/81.0	Bambam	55	80.0	81.2/79.7
Final Cut	349	61.9	80.8/80.6	BWM Leader	78	69.2	80.5/79.4
Goldwyn	538	60.2	81.8/81.6	Morty	40	67.5	79.7/79.3
Samuelo	115	60.0	79.8/79.6	Derek	45	66.7	79.3/78.5
Stormatic	127	59.1	81.1/80.9	Redman	40	65.0	80.9/80.4
Dolman	474	57.8	79.9/79.7	Re Design	30	63.3	81.7/81.2
Blitz	161	57.8	79.1/79.3	FBI	61	62.3	79.7/79.9
Spirte	127	57.5	80.0/79.8	Kite *RDC	31	61.3	81.2/81.6
Bolton	121	57.0	81.0/81.0	Lucky Star	74	60.8	79.8/79.4
September Storm	220	55.9	80.2/80.2	Igniter	61	60.7	80.6/80.5

Note: <sup>▲</sup> Daughters are included in the statistics only if both the daughter and her dam calved for the first time before 30 months and were both first classified within the first six months of lactation.

## Classification Schedule

 mid-round

Classification	Provinces	Month
ON –  Brant, Haldimand Norfolk ON – Leeds, Lanark QC – Richelieu, Verchères, Rouville, Abitibi, Témiscamingue QC –  Dorchester BC – Upper Fraser Valley, Okanagan, Vancouver Island	ON, QC, BC	December
ON – Grenville, Renfrew, Grey QC – Pontiac, Labelle, Papineau, Gatineau, Argenteuil, Deux-Montagnes, Terrebonne	ON, QC	Mid
ON – Bruce, Huron, Halton, York, Peel, Simcoe QC – Champlain, Lavolette, Portneuf QC –  Montmagny, L'Islet, Kamouraska AB – 	ON, QC, AB	Early
ON – Ontario, Northumberland QC – Lac St-Jean, Roberval, Lapointe, Dubuc, Charlevoix, Chicoutimi, Vaudreuil, Soulanges, MB – 	ON, QC, MB	Mid
ON – Dufferin, Durham, Peterborough ON –  Middlesex, Lambton, Elgin, Essex & Kent QC – Huntingdon, Châteauguay, Beauharnois, Laprairie, Napierville, St-Jean, Iberville, Shefford	ON, QC	Late
ON – Victoria, Lennox & Addington, Frontenac, Hastings, Waterloo QC – Richmond, Missisquoi QC –  Rivière-du-Loup, Témiscouata, Rimouski, Matapédia, Matane, Bonaventure PE, NB, NS, NL	ON, QC, PE, NB, NS, NL	Early
ON – Prince Edward QC – Brome, Sherbrooke QC –  Arthabaska, Mégantic, Wolfe	ON, QC	Mid
ON – Wellington, Northern Ontario ON –  Oxford QC – Compton, Stanstead SK	ON, QC, SK	Late

# When is it Time to Pass the Torch?

by Secretary-Manager Keith Flaman

**F**or many organizations or farms, the topic of succession receives too little attention. Transition is seen as an event. It shouldn't be ... it's a process.

As one generation ages, another steps forward and a new one is born. It is a continuous cycle that has been going on for centuries.

However, how do we make the transition as smooth as possible?

It seems there are many aspects that need consideration, but two of them are critical in setting the foundation for succession. One is teaching and mentoring and the other is handing over responsibility.

In each case, the process should start early—both in life and careers. Learning and being accountable are critical in the development of skills required to succeed. Successes offer the confidence to move forward with new challenges and, consequently, personal growth.

Parents, owners, directors, managers, friends, and colleagues



*International ambassador Keith Flaman was a respected, progressive Chairman of the World Holstein-Friesian Federation. (l-r) Mathieu Meers, Belgium; Ireland's Agriculture Minister Brendan Smith; and Keith Flaman at the 12th World Conference.*

can help to develop an environment where the next generation can boldly forge ahead. Genuine support and encouragement, to meet and conquer any obstacles along the way, are welcome and necessary.

Innovation and initiative should be promoted and applauded. If the envelope is pushed, mistakes will be made. These are actually a good measurement that something is happening. Making mistakes is a wonderful way to gain experience.

We can't be afraid to step aside. If we have done our job as teachers and mentors, our successors will push it up a notch or two. What an accomplishment!

So, when is it time to pass on the torch?

When the flame is the hottest and

brightest!

At this time of year, when birth is celebrated and, when we count our achievements and blessings, we should consider whether we are a facilitator or an obstacle in the evolution.

On behalf of staff, I wish you all an enjoyable holiday season and a happy, healthy new year.

**Keith Flaman embraces the succession cycle, electing to pass the torch following 17 innovative years at the helm of Holstein Canada.**

**While Keith continues to be available for advice and consultation, a successor will be named in 2010.**



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