

# *info* Holstein

May/June 2016 issue no. 139

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







# 2016 NATIONAL HOLSTEIN CONVENTION

## CONGRÈS NATIONAL HOLSTEIN 2016

Alberta • Calgary & Banff, April 20 - 23, 2016

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We wish to thank all volunteers for their significant contributions and efforts in bringing this national event to a memorable and successful result!

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**ABOVE:** Be sure to check out this edition of the Farm Profiles feature! In this issue we feature four Canadian herds with a focus on new entrant operations. Have a theme you would like us to cover? Let us know!

**ON THE COVER:** The girls of Maple-Ain Farms enjoying a snack from the automatic grain feeder. The photo was Lyndsay Dickson's submission to the #Frametheherd Photo Contest for the "iFarming" theme.

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# Holstein Canada Services: Management Tools First and Foremost

By Holstein Canada Chief Executive Officer, Ann Louise Carson, agr.

**TODAY'S DAIRY PRODUCERS** have countless tools in their "Management tool box", and limitless opportunities to use them! We are proud to label Holstein Canada core services as management tools. Our members repeatedly tell us that this is how they view the services, and we are always so glad to hear you share this opinion with us.

The announcement of the Top Managed Herds in Canada earlier this year, by Canwest DHI and Valacta, was a very tangible reminder of just how serious members are about using Holstein Canada services to assist them in managing their herds.

## A QUICK ANALYSIS OF THE TOP 10 HERDS SHOWS:

- All are members of their Breed Association (one Ayrshire herd) – in fact, 28 of the top managed 29 Holstein herds in Canada are members (three top herds per province)
- All herds register and classify
- 60% of these herds have adopted genotesting, well above the Canadian average
- Average classification results for 1st lactation animals in these outstanding herds are slightly above the average national score, confirming these herds use classification as a management tool first, with marketing occurring in some herds as a secondary benefit

- There are four Master Breeders in the top nine Holstein herds, a great reminder that the prestigious top award of our great breed is also recognition of top management.

The listing took into account the milk value, udder health, age at first calving, calving interval, longevity, and herd efficiency of each of the herds. When reviewing the six criteria of this very prestigious "award" by our Industry Partners, it makes so much sense that Holstein Canada services would fit right in, serving as a contributing factor to the success of these herds. We all want a profitable cow.

However, any tool is only as good as the person using it. Holstein Canada congratulates everyone involved in the daily operations and decisions of the top 10 herds in Canada and in the top three herds per province on the Herd Management Score. To all others, no matter where you landed on the list, how motivating it must be to have that benchmark to measure future success.

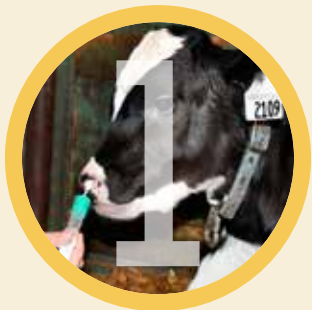
A big shout out also goes to our Industry Partners, CanWest DHI and Valacta, for launching this important list on a national basis for the first time, a list that includes 8,500 herds.

Happy managing! 🐄



## Did you know?

**YOU NOW HAVE 3 OPTIONS TO COLLECT YOUR DNA SAMPLES FOR GENOMIC TESTING!**



**SWABS** are used to collect a nasal sample. They have a 2-year shelf life and can be stored in a wide range of conditions. Kits cost \$6 each or \$50 for a pack of ten and can be ordered through Holstein Canada.



**HAIR** can be collected by pulling at least 40 hairs with visible hair follicles (roots) from a clean, dry tail. Sample should be submitted along with the Genotyping Request Form.



**TISSUE SAMPLING UNIT (TSU)** is used to collect a tissue sample. The sampling punches are available in boxes of 10 for \$30/box or three boxes (30 punches) for \$75.

The tissue sampling units (punches) and NLID ear tags can now be purchased as a combined set. Each set will carry matching ID numbers on the tags and TSU to help facilitate genomic testing at birth. **They must always be used as a set – tag and sample from the same animal.** When you purchase your tag sets with TSU; an additional \$2.00 per tag set will apply (additional \$60.00 for 30 tag sets).

**To order your sets of tags with TSU:** Producers should contact NLID at 1-877-771-6543 or by email at: [nlidorder@holstein.ca](mailto:nlidorder@holstein.ca). Quebec producers should contact ATQ at 1-866-270-4319 or visit their website: [www.atq.qc.ca/index.php/en](http://www.atq.qc.ca/index.php/en) to order tags and sampling units. At this time the combined sets are not available through ATQ, tags and TSU are sold separately.



# We Were There

THE PAST FEW MONTHS have been busy with events for the Holstein Canada Board of Directors and Team. Check out just some of the places we have been and people we have met!



1. While at the Alberta Holstein Branch AGM, President John Buckley caught up with three Albertan Holstein Canada Past Presidents: Lawrence Henderson (1987), Dale Bienert (1999) and John Iversen (2007).

2. Holstein Canada Ambassador Tom Byers and Western Field Service Business Partner, Brian Nelson, attended the BC Dairy Genetics Marketing Workshop, where Tom gave a Classification demonstration and presentation on "The Everyday Cow vs. The Show Cow".

3. The inaugural *Carrefour de Jeunes Gestionnaires* was held in December. Similar to the Dairy Sen\$e programs held in other provinces, this program is an on-farm management workshop for dairy youth looking to improve their dairy business management skills. Holstein Canada Extension & Education Specialist, Laura Donkers was there to present on genetic strategies for increased herd profitability.

4. President John, Director Harry Van der Linden, Ann Louise and Atlantic Field Service Business Partner, Barb Christie, attended all of the Branch AGMs in Atlantic Canada. Barb is pictured here with 2015 Convention Committee Member Alain Blanchette (left) and 2015 Convention Co-Chair Brent Dunphy (right) during the New Brunswick AGM farm tours.

5. President John Buckley, Vice-President Robert Chabot, CEO Ann Louise, Classifier Coordinator Bruno Jubinville and two enthusiastic Young Leaders, Bridget Wilson (N.S.) and Cindy Jatton (Que.) traveled to Argentina to attend the World Holstein Conference. A day of farm tours included a stop at Farm El Escondido, where they use 100% Canadian genetics. Canadian balanced breeding = longevity, and this is a top priority for this farm in pasture-based management.

6. Prior to the annual Joint Branch Meeting, Holstein Branch Representatives from the Western Provinces had the opportunity to visit a couple of Ontario herds with National Director Doug Peart. The group is pictured at Cranholme, and also enjoyed a visit to Bosdale.





# CONFORMATION ASSESSMENT UPDATES

CONFORMATION ASSESSMENT is a herd management tool which identifies each animal's strengths and opportunities for improvement. This can lead to accelerated genetic progress, profitability, and longevity, when used in combination with corrective mating strategies. Keeping in line with Holstein breed goals, the objective is to select cows that can perform at high levels for a longer period of time with greater ease.

As our understanding grows with respect to how conformation affects important economic parameters on dairy farms, it is crucial that the assessment program continually evolves to reflect these parameters. As a result, Holstein Canada's Board of Directors has recently approved updates to the Conformation Assessment program, as recommended by the Classification Advisory Committee.

The following updates will take effect June 13th, 2016, allowing the classification team time for training at the semi-annual Classifier Conference in June. Updates this year directly affect all sections of the scorecard, with the exception of Mammary System. There are also changes that will directly affect **Final Score**.

In our current program, if a cow is identified as being crampy, the defect and associated deduction is seen in the Feet and Leg section. Moving forward, deductions for this genetic defect will be deducted directly from the **Final Score** instead of **Feet and Legs**. The severity of the deduction reflects the current lactation of the animal at the time of assessment – as the number of lactations an animal has goes up, the deduction is reduced.

Deduction to Final Score for Crampiness	Lactation number of animal at assessment
4 points	1
3 points	2
2 points	3
0 points	4*

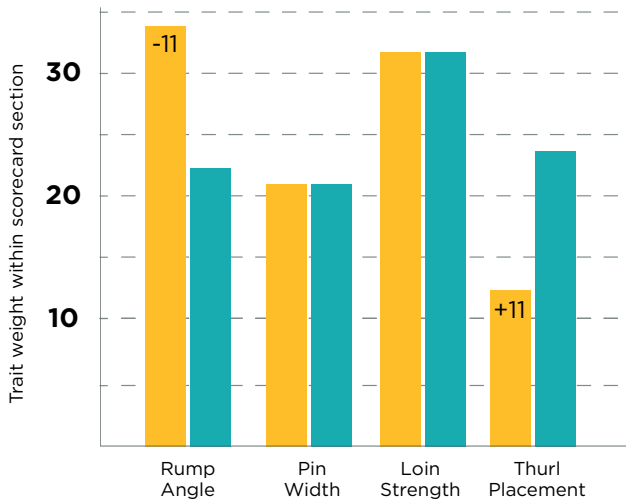
**\*NOTE:** an animal assessed as crampy in her 4th lactation or later will have no deduction from her Final Score, but Final Score shall not exceed 94 points

This change will not affect the interpretation of the Defective Characteristics table at the bottom of the Type tab for a bull on the CDN website.

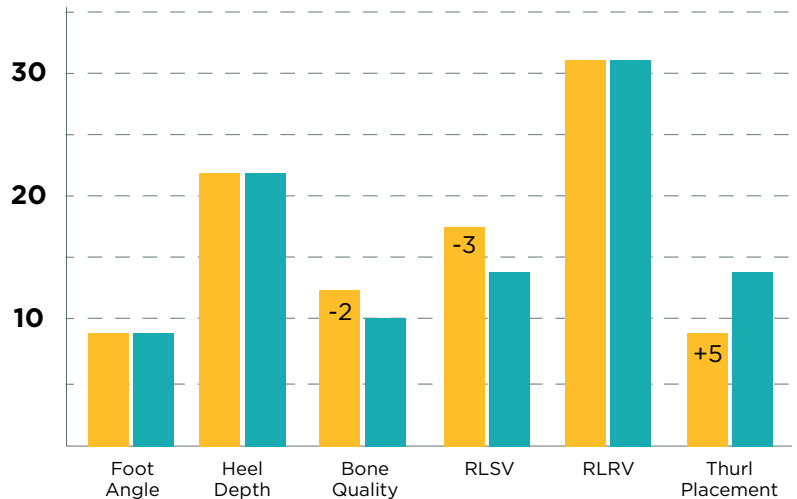
Summary	Genomics	Prod.	Type	Functional	Mastitis	Calving	Progeny	Pedigree	Inbreeding	
<b>Type Evaluation Details</b>										
<b>DEFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS</b>										
<b>Mammary System</b>			<b>Feet &amp; Legs</b>			<b>Dairy Strength</b>			<b>Rump</b>	
Tilt	1		Corkscrew Claw			Wry Face		Advanced Anus	1	
Reverse Tilt	-3*		Weak Pasterns			Malformed Jaw		Advanced Tailhead		
Short Fore	1		Boggy Hocks	2		Shallow Fore Rib		Recessed Tailhead	-1	
Short Rear			Lacks Bone			Weak Crops	1	High Tailhead	2	
Lacks Udder Shape			Crampy	-1*		Weak Back		Wry Tail		
Unbalanced Quarter			Rear Legs Back	-1		Not Well Sprung				
Blind Quarter			Toes Out Front	-1		Lacks Balance	1			
Webbed Teat										
Front Teats Back										
Rear Teats Back										

Under the **Rump** section, Thurl Placement will receive a higher weight emphasis. As a result, the weighting on **Rump Angle** will decrease. In the same vein, Thurl Placement will also receive a higher weight emphasis under the **Feet & Leg** section, with the difference taken from Bone Quality and Rear Legs Side View. This increased emphasis on Thurl Placement is a direct result of the relationship between Thurls and profitability, longevity and functionality.

### RUMP (10%)



### FEET & LEGS (28%)



■ CURRENT ■ AS OF JUNE 13TH

Under the **Dairy Strength** section, the ideal code for **Chest Width** for first lactation animals is changing from a 7 to an ideal of 6. The age at first lactation is becoming younger and younger. Keeping in mind Conformation Assessment makes adjustments according to age and stage of lactation, this modification to the ideal for chest width reflects that first lactation animals are still developing.

Finally, the last update will be made to **Final Score** in first lactation animals. A first lactation cow may not be 89 points on her first classification (including a revisit), however, may be considered for 89 points if she is classified a second time during her first lactation.

For questions or inquiries, please contact our Classification Field Service Department at [classification@holstein.ca](mailto:classification@holstein.ca).

**For those producers with Jerseys in their herds, changes have been made to the Jersey Classification scorecard as well. They will also take effect in June 2016, and the updated scorecard will be available to review at: [www.holstein.ca/Public/en/Services/Classification/All-Breeds\\_Classification](http://www.holstein.ca/Public/en/Services/Classification/All-Breeds_Classification). The Jersey worksheet can be found by scrolling to the bottom of the page.**

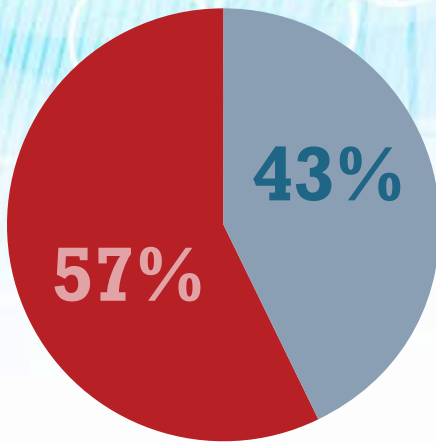


## GENETICS 101

# HERITABILITY & LONG-TERM HEALTH

### Milk Yield Outcomes as a Product of Genetics & Management

■ Genetics ■ Management



Dairy producers strive for improved performance with each passing year and each successive generation on their operation. There are many ways to pursue this outcome, but for the purpose of this article we'll categorize them as either management (affecting the cows' environment) or genetic. Improvement can come from either category, but the amount of improvement seen in the performance of the next generation varies by trait and its heritability.

Heritability is a term used to estimate the amount of performance (phenotypic) variation in a population that can be attributed to the genetic variation within the same group of animals. Remember that performance outcomes are the result of the animal's genetics AND its environment.

**PHENOTYPE = GENOTYPE (BREEDING) + ENVIRONMENT (MANAGEMENT).**

Sometimes written as  $h^2$ , heritability can be expressed as a percent or decimal. In dairy, production traits tend to be the most heritable, functional (health and fertility) the least heritable, and conformation trait heritability is in between. Using the Milk Yield trait that is 43% heritable, we could assume that the average cow's milk yield is 43% the result of her genetics and 57% the result of the herd management and her environment.

For producers looking to improve their genetic potential for production, the moderately high heritability means that they can make significant progress quickly. The opposite is also true; mating cows to inferior sires will affect the progeny production performance more drastically than for other traits in a single generation.

TRAIT TYPE	HERITABILITY* (%)
Milk Yield	43
Conformation (Final Score)	21
Daughter Fertility	7

\*CDN, 2014



# The Health Challenge

A quick look at a selection of functional trait heritabilities (Table 1) reveals that on-farm health and fertility performance is often 80-90+% contributable to herd management. Genetic improvement for these traits is significantly slower than for production or conformation traits.

Does that mean selecting for health and fertility is futile? Certainly not.

Genetics are additive and permanent, meaning that the genetic outcomes of the breeding decisions you make today, will be transmitted for generations to come. A feed ration compromised by poor storage will certainly affect a herd, but the issue can be fixed with a new harvest of silage and the performance of the herd should improve accordingly; the past ration and spoiled feed forgotten. Unlike feed rations, breeding decisions will result in offspring that receive genetic gains, or genetic declines, from their parents. These genetic results cannot simply be reversed. Any given animal will transmit half of their genetics to their progeny and consequently transmit, on average, one quarter of their genetics to the offspring of their progeny (see image).

Let's take a look at how a low heritability trait, like Daughter Fertility, can play a role in cow performance. Between the top 5 and bottom 5 bulls, ranked by Daughter Fertility, with 1000+ daughters in their proof, there is a significant difference in their RBV and the reproductive performance of their progeny (Table 2). These differences can be achieved through generations of breeding.

**TABLE 2**

Average Daughter Performance for the Top 5 and Bottom 5 Sires for Daughter Fertility with Greater than 1000 Daughters:

SIRE GROUP	AVERAGE DAUGHTER FERTILITY PROOF	PERFORMANCE MEASURES OF DAUGHTERS	
		NUMBER SERVICE PER CONCEPTION (COWS)	DAYS OPEN
Top 5 Sires	108	2.05	117
Bottom 5 Sires	90	2.35	127
Difference	+19	-0.30	-10

*The Truth About Low Heritability Traits, CDN, 2014, July.*

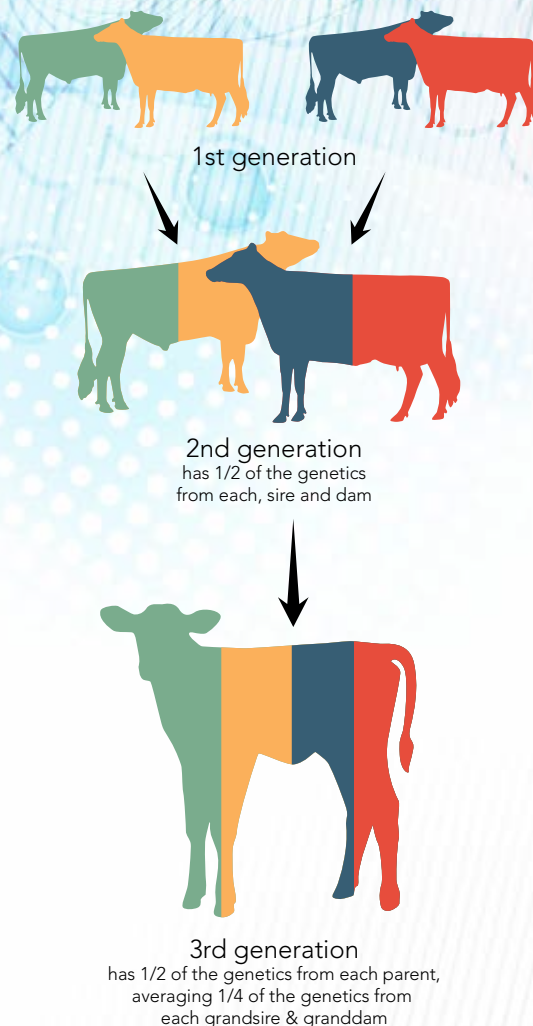
Sound management will certainly pay dividends. This is especially true for health and fertility performance. At the same time, striving for genetic improvement in traits that have lower heritability takes time, but the incremental improvements and their additive results from generations of breeding can amount to significant genetic progress, further enhancing performance. Who wouldn't want to cut more days off their herd's average days open?!

**TABLE 1**

FUNCTIONAL TRAITS	HERITABILITY
Somatic Cell Score	27
Milking Speed	14
Mastitis Resistance	12
Herd Life	10
Daughter Fertility	7
Calving Ability	6

*Heritability Estimates Used for Genetic Evaluations in Canada, CDN, 2014, August. (Holstein)*

## Transmission of genetics through successive generations





## New Entrant

### Houle & Sons

Osler, Saskatchewan



By Brian Nelson, HC Field Service Business Partner

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Cameron Houle and his young sons, Gabriel, Gavin and Rhys.

**# OF YEARS AS A HOLSTEIN CANADA MEMBER:** This is our first year with the Houle membership, but I was involved with the XXL membership for about 10 years previously.

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 32

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 0

**FACILITY TYPE:** Rented Tie-Stall.

**FEEDING SYSTEM:** I buy a TMR from a neighbour, and feed it out twice a day with a hydrostatic feed wagon.

**OTHER BREEDS:** No, but I am open to the idea of adding a few Jerseys, just for curiosity's sake!

**HOLSTEIN CANADA SERVICES USED:** Registration, Classification & Genomic testing.



**WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND, AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO START UP ON YOUR OWN?** I grew up on a dairy farm, but it was sold while I was still in school. I worked in the industry for 12 years as a herdsman, herd manager, and as a semen salesman. I always planned to milk my own cows; it was just a matter of being prepared when the right opportunity finally arose.

**FROM THE TIME YOU DECIDED TO BECOME A NEW ENTRANT, HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO BE UP AND RUNNING?** From the time I was accepted into the Dairy Entrant Assistance Program (DEAP), it took about six months to sell my first tank of milk. However, I decided a decade ago that I wanted to milk my own cows.

**HOW DID YOU ASSEMBLE YOUR HERD?** I purchased cows from reputable tie-stall farms through a local broker. However, tie-stalls are rare out here, so I filled in the gaps with animals from other herds that I knew and respected.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SUCCESS AND YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE SINCE STARTING UP?** The biggest success so far was successfully filling my quota the first month, even producing about 1.6 days over. The biggest challenge is no longer having someone to turn to when I have to make decisions, especially on the fly. I cannot simply "ask the boss" anymore, and that has been a difficult concept to wrap my head around. It's all on me to make the right decisions at the right time.

**SIMILARLY, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF STARTING A FARM IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN?** The biggest challenge around here is that very few people still milk cows the same way I do. Most are large, free-stall, and much more modern so I really have to make-do with the resources I can find. If my feed cart breaks down, it would be a challenge to find parts, and especially advice, that I

need. For this reason, I rely heavily on my social media connections.

**TO ENSURE THE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO HAVE NEW ENTRANTS LIKE YOURSELF, WHAT DO YOU NEED MOST FROM HOLSTEIN CANADA AND YOUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS?** Support us, and make it [services] cost-effective for us. It is difficult to explain to a bank why I need to register, classify, and DHI test my cows. I think a lot of new entrants, especially out here, will forego the added work and expense. We need to be able to see the value and show that value to our lenders.

**ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO OTHERS LOOKING TO BECOME NEW ENTRANTS?** If you're just thinking about it, and are not sure, then don't do it. This was always my direction, and I didn't have to sit down to decide IF I wanted to do it, just HOW I was going to make it happen. Thankfully we have the DEAP program and those pieces all fell into place. Also, find a vet you love, an accountant you respect, and choose your dairy service supplier by which person you feel most comfortable calling at 3 a.m. on Sunday. It's the feet on the ground that count, not the colour of their coveralls.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HERD OBJECTIVES?** My objective is to improve every cow family in my barn, with every generation. I don't want to start chasing numbers, I just want cows that classify higher, live longer, are pleasant to work with, and make more milk.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR HERD IN 10 YEARS?** Hopefully I will be milking 70 cows with my sons, filling 100 kg of quota, the majority of the herd scored VG+ and a few HOULE EX cows in the barn.

**WHAT DOES THE IDEAL COW LOOK LIKE ON YOUR FARM?** An EX Holstein cow that milks 16,000 kg of 4.2% milk per year, gets pregnant on the first service, is always hungry, always clean, and is standing beside two or three of her daughters or granddaughters. I can dream, right?



**WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND, AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO START UP ON YOUR OWN?** We were both raised on farms and attended Guelph. After graduation I continued to work on my parents' dairy operation. When our first daughter arrived in 2010, we realized we had different goals not necessarily aligned with my parents', so I went to work for a dairy equipment supplier. Interacting with farmers daily reinforced that I still had a passion for the dairy industry. We looked at different scenarios, but the New Entrant program was the best option based on business viability and knowledge of the industry.

**HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR YOU TO BE UP AND RUNNING?** We completed the required business plan, sought approval from the bank, and applied for the New Entrant with Assistance program in 2010. We were fortunate to be selected in the lottery on our first application. We were notified in January 2011 and January 1, 2012 was our first shipment of milk. This gave us time to build a new free-stall barn with 35 stalls and a robotic milking system, using the existing bank barn for dry cows and heifers.

**HOW DID YOU ASSEMBLE YOUR HERD?** Our milking cow herd was assembled from six farms. We bought cows from a couple of robot farms to help with the transition. Today, about 50% of our herd is made up of genetics from two respected herds, Albadon Farms Ltd. and Christhill Farms Ltd. We greatly appreciate their knowledge and support.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SUCCESS AND YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE SINCE STARTING UP?** Besides raising our daughters on the farm, our biggest success is that our DHI management score was 947 last year, placing us 8th in Ontario and 14th in Canada. Our herd management score was 555 our first year! Our biggest challenge is finding the right farm/family balance. Amanda works fulltime in agricultural lending for RBC and is Chair of the Canadian Association of Farm Advisors. I am a municipal councillor, and soccer and hockey coach, while Amanda is Secretary of the Arran Tara Agricultural Society. We are lucky to have our Uncle, Ron Hammell, a retired dairy farmer, to help us as we need. We appreciate his experience!

**SIMILARLY, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF STARTING A FARM IN MID-WESTERN ONTARIO?** In the last five years, land prices increased 27% in Southwestern Ontario and 50% in Bruce County. Thankfully, we purchased our farm in 2008 before the land costs increased. We believe we need to spend money where we will make money. Therefore we buy quota monthly, and the only equipment we own is a TMR mixer and one loader tractor. While we were raised on farms and could say we are 3rd and 4th generation farmers, we are a 1st generation farm.

**TO ENSURE THE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO HAVE NEW ENTRANTS LIKE YOURSELF, WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM HOLSTEIN CANADA AND YOUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS?** Angela Howard was extremely helpful when we started and we hope Holstein Canada can have more people like her. We need our industry partners for advice and solutions, not only products and service.

**ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO OTHERS LOOKING TO START UP ON THEIR OWN?** Put time and effort into your business plan; assemble a farm management team consisting of a nutritionist, vet, banker, agrologist and other important industry peers; be realistic; attend industry events; and use projections to know your costs and what you can afford.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HERD OBJECTIVES?** We are building an addition for more milk cows, dry cows and heifers, so we can improve heifer growth and our transition cow program and have more stalls for our milking herd.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR HERD IN 10 YEARS?** In 10 years, we would like to be milking 45-50 cows, own 75 kg of quota and have 60% of the herd in 3rd lactation or greater.

**WHAT DOES THE IDEAL COW LOOK LIKE ON YOUR FARM?** The Robot and I like a moderate framed cow with good teat placement and great mobility. My ideal cow is old because this means she has paid her bills!



## FARM PROFILE

### New Entrant



## Lorncliffe Livestock

Dobbinton, Ontario

By Jennifer Kyle, HC Communications Coordinator

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Steve and Amanda Hammell and their young daughters, Madison, Hailey and Ava.

**# OF YEARS AS A HOLSTEIN CANADA MEMBER:** 4 years

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 30 filling 43 kg of Quota

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 100 acres owned and 100 acres rented.

**FACILITY TYPE:** Free-stall with a Lely Robot.

**FEEDING SYSTEM:** We feed a TMR ration of corn silage, baleage, a protein blend of corn/soymeal/dry corn and minerals. The cows also receive pellet in the Robot.

**OTHER BREEDS:** No, only Holsteins.

**HOLSTEIN CANADA SERVICES USED:** Classification and Registration.





## FARM PROFILE

### New Entrant

## Ferme Lescal

Saint-Noël, Quebec



By Myriam Côte, agr., Holstein Quebec Advisor (Eastern Quebec) & Youth Program Coordinator

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Steve Parent owns the farm, and his two eldest children also help out. Eugénie (20) is studying Animal Production and Louis-Philippe (16) is in grade 10 and would like to become a veterinarian. Steeve's parents also occasionally lend a hand.

**# OF YEARS AS A HOLSTEIN CANADA MEMBER:** Five years in December 2016.

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 33 milking cows

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 500 acres

**FACILITY TYPE:** Tie-stall

**FEEDING SYSTEM:** Round bales and TMR.

**OTHER BREEDS:** No

**HOLSTEIN CANADA SERVICES USED:** Registration and Classification



**WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND IN DAIRY, AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO TAKE THE BIG STEP IN STARTING UP ON YOUR OWN?** 30 years ago, my parents had a dairy farm, but had sold the quota and the cows, and switched to beef production. Today, we manage two herds: an 85-cow/calf beef herd and the Lescal Holstein herd. For almost 20 years, I worked as a consultant for the Coop. My passion for Holstein cattle grew at work while spending time with breeders. My passion was also fuelled by cattle shows. The children liked shows, so I bought a few heifers for them to participate in the local 4-H competitions. We had a *Goldwyn* before we even had quota! I later developed a business plan to enter the Quebec Federation of Milk Producers' (FPLQ) start-up contest. That's how I got started producing milk, and also became a breeder.

**FROM THE TIME YOU DECIDED TO BECOME A NEW ENTRANT, HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR YOU TO BE UP AND RUNNING?** It took us a year to write the business plan for the FPLQ's start-up contest. When we got the news that I would receive the 12 kg loan from FPLQ, it took us seven to eight months before we started milking cows.

**HOW DID YOU ASSEMBLE YOUR HERD?** I am fortunate to have a very supportive environment and, within the framework of the FPLQ contest, several local breeders gifted me animals. Thus a little more than half of the herd was given to me and the rest was purchased locally.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SUCCESS AND WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE SINCE STARTING AS A NEW ENTRANT?** My biggest challenge was to transform an old beef barn into a barn suited for Holsteins. It took a lot of work to renovate the barn to give the cows as much comfort as possible! My greatest achievement is to have quickly reached an 11,000 kg production average.

**SIMILARLY, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF STARTING A FARM IN RURAL QUEBEC?** Entering the FPLQ contest was a real challenge. I had to write a good business plan and talk to people from the industry, while also working full-time and raising my four children with my wife, Marie-Josée. Both my family and people from the industry motivated me to see it through.

**FOR YOU TO BE SUCCESSFUL, AND TO ENSURE THE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO HAVE NEW ENTRANTS LIKE YOURSELF, WHAT DO YOU NEED MOST FROM HOLSTEIN CANADA AND YOUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS?** For me, advisory services and support are two key elements. I was lucky, because when I started my business, I had some experience in agriculture and dairy production. However, a young person without ag experience and without guidance is more likely to make major mistakes that could put his farm at risk.

**ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO OTHERS LOOKING TO BECOME NEW ENTRANTS?** It takes courage, perseverance and passion. If you do not like breeding and cows, you won't get very far. I did not just want to produce milk, I wanted to be a Holstein breeder.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HERD OBJECTIVES?** To reach 45 kg of quota, to continue exhibiting at shows, to build a homebred cow family and, one day, to become a Master Breeder. I currently have three animals out of the renowned cow families of *Idee Lustre*, *Boulet Lheros Chaly* and *Jacobs Spirit Valsie* in my herd, and I intend to use them to achieve my breeding goals.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR HERD IN 10 YEARS?** We continuously aim to have very good production, durability and strong cow families. We also want to produce show cows every year.

**WHAT DOES THE IDEAL COW LOOK LIKE ON YOUR FARM?** The ideal cow has three things: a good udder, durability and a deep pedigree.





**WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND IN DAIRY, AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO TAKE THE BIG STEP IN STARTING UP ON YOUR OWN?** I grew up on small Ayrshire farm in Ontario. After university, I worked as a herdsman for Haldrey Farms and Skipwell Farms. When we decided we wanted to have our own herd and farm, and be at home more with our young family, we tried to get started in Ontario under the New Entrant Program, but couldn't get on the list. So, we decided to sell the family farm in Ontario and purchase a farm here in New Brunswick.

**FROM THE TIME YOU DECIDED TO BECOME A NEW ENTRANT, HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR YOU TO BE UP AND RUNNING?** Three years. We applied for the New Entrant Program in Ontario for two years, and then bought this farm in New Brunswick.

**HOW DID YOU ASSEMBLE YOUR HERD?** We came to New Brunswick with 24 animals from Ontario – two cows and 22 heifers. We then picked the best animals from the two herds that the seller had owned, plus bought some new animals from our neighbour here in New Brunswick.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SUCCESS AND WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE SINCE STARTING AS A NEW ENTRANT?** Our biggest success

since taking ownership of this farm is that we have doubled the milk production from what it was when we arrived. Our biggest challenge is that when we purchased the farm, it really needed some TLC!

**SIMILARLY, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF STARTING A FARM IN RURAL NEW BRUNSWICK?** One of the biggest challenges is the lack of infrastructure compared to Ontario, including having custom work done. Also, we have no hired help and our family is far away, so we are really on our own and can't really lean on them for help from time to time.

**FOR YOU TO BE SUCCESSFUL, AND TO ENSURE THE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO HAVE NEW ENTRANTS LIKE YOURSELF, WHAT DO YOU NEED MOST FROM HOLSTEIN CANADA AND YOUR INDUSTRY PARTNERS?** Our industry partners need to ensure there are less hoops and red tape to go through to get going as a new producer in the industry.

**ANY ADVICE YOU WOULD GIVE TO OTHERS LOOKING TO BECOME NEW ENTRANTS?** Stay positive and write down your goals. Try not to get stuck on one path so that you are always able to keep your options open. Listen to and learn from industry experts and other farmers. And finally, allow yourself some cushion with cash flow and debt in case something goes wrong along the way. A contingency plan is always good!

**WHAT ARE YOUR HERD OBJECTIVES?** Our objective is to have a productive herd that also gives us the ability to market genetics from our animals as well.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR HERD IN 10 YEARS?** In 10 years, we would like to have show animals that we can compete with, and have at least a 36 kg herd average for milk.

**WHAT DOES THE IDEAL COW LOOK LIKE ON YOUR FARM?** The ideal cow is clean boned, with a good sweep of rib and a well-attached udder.



## FARM PROFILE

### New Entrant

## Creek Home

Salisbury, New Brunswick



By Barb Christie, HC Field Service Business Partner

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Henry, Adrienne, Juliene & Tycen Helder

**# OF YEARS AS A HOLSTEIN CANADA MEMBER:** 16 years

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 50 cows

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 150 owned and 50 rented – of those, 180 are cleared.

**FACILITY TYPE:** Tie-stall barn for the milk cows and a pack barn for heifers.

**FEEDING SYSTEM:** We feed a TMR to the milk cows. Dry cows and heifers are fed round bale haylage.

**OTHER BREEDS:** Yes, Ayrshires.

**HOLSTEIN CANADA SERVICES USED:** Classification, Registration and Genomic testing.





# Planning for proAction<sup>®</sup> Animal Care Assessments

**ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING** is a high priority for the Canadian dairy industry. Producers are continuously investing in new technologies and equipment, and are working with industry experts like veterinarians, nutritionists, and on-farm consultants (classifiers, AI reps, etc.) to improve cow comfort, animal health and functionality. Through proAction<sup>®</sup>, Canadian dairy producers will be able to collectively demonstrate responsible stewardship of their animals and the environment, and sustainable production of high-quality, safe, and nutritious food for consumers through the six pillar initiative made up of: 1) Milk Quality, (2) Food Safety (Canadian Quality Milk), (3) Animal Care, (4) Livestock Traceability, (5) Biosecurity, and (6) Environment. Each of these modules has a set of requirements and is being (or will be) implemented over time.

Every farmer knows a healthy cow is a productive cow. At Holstein Canada (HC), our Conformation Assessment (Classification) system aims to select cows with optimal workability that are easy to work with, more resistant to breakdown or disease, trouble-free and lower maintenance. Also, our classifiers are experts in dairy cow conformation and are recognized for providing a world renowned service across Canada. DFC has approved HC to provide cattle assessments as part of the Animal Care module of proAction.



The Animal Care module is based on the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle, and the program highlights 5 categories of criteria, including: housing, feed and water, animal health, handling and shipping of animals and finally training and communication with workers.



As part of the Animal Care module, producers will be required to meet the criteria outlined in a self-evaluation questionnaire, and keep up to date standard operating produces (SOPs) for (1) shipping cattle, (2) euthanasia, (3) animal health practices and branding, and (4) colostrum management and calf feeding. Producers will also be required to develop a corrective action plan for downed cows and have an assessment of animal-based measures evaluated on a sample of their cattle (i.e. the cattle assessment) every two years.

The cattle assessment must be conducted by a DFC-approved assessor, someone other than the producer and the validator. The assessment must be completed within the 12 months prior to the farm's validation date. The assessor will evaluate a random sample of cattle in the milking herd for (1) body condition score, (2) lameness, and (3) hock, knee, and neck injuries. The assessment is designed to provide farmers with a benchmark of how their cattle score so that they can track their own improvement over time, and also provide them with a comparative analysis to their peers. It should highlight what they are doing well and areas that potentially could use some improvement.

Starting late 2016/early 2017, HC (classifiers and other on-farm consultants) will be the sole provider of the cattle assessment service for DFC for a period of two years. Having a sole provider of the service will help DFC in setting national benchmarks for each of the animal-based measures. As of November 2015, HC staff has been receiving ongoing training in preparation for providing cattle assessments. At our June 2016 semi-annual Classifier Conference, DFC will be training each staff member to provide cattle assessments, and, upon successful completion of the course requirements, approving them as assessors. DFC and HC are also planning follow-up training to maintain consistency between assessors.

So what does this all mean to you? Every dairy producer in Canada has a CQM validation date, and starting in September 2017 the validations will also include the requirements for Animal Care and Livestock Traceability. From that point on, when producers are due for a validation, they will have to demonstrate to a validator how they meet the requirements. As it relates to the Animal Care module, the

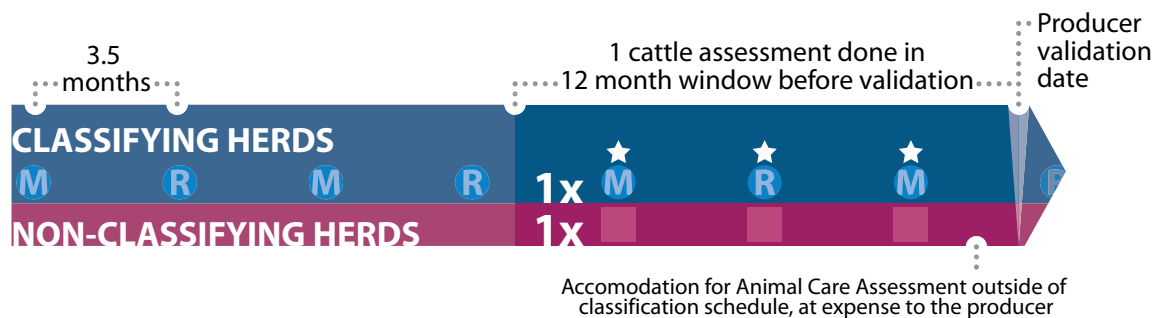


cattle assessment must be completed in the 12 months prior to the official validation.

For the non-classifying herds, HC office staff will be calling in advance of the producer's validation date and suggesting two to three potential time frames that classifiers or other on farm consultants are slated to be in the area prior to the validation. Once producers have indicated their preferred time frame for a cattle assessment, they will be added to a call list for when HC staff are in the area, accommodating their indicated preference for time of year whenever possible.

For a classifying herd, they will also have the opportunity to indicate which time frame works best for them. Using the timeline graphic, consider a producer that only participates in regular round. In this case, the producer may only have one opportunity to have the assessment done during the regular round conformation assessment. At the time of the official Animal Care cattle assessment, animals must be selected at random, therefore some of the animals presented for classification will be used for the assessment but additional or "extra" animals will be required.

## Animal Care Cattle Assessment Frequency - 2 Year Intervals



### ● Classification visits

Any animal that gets classified will also have the proAction animal care assessment done, but no extra animals will be assessed for animal care.

### ☆ Classification visits eligible for cattle assessment

Any of these visits can be used for the producer's validation, though the producer needs to indicate when they would like the official cattle assessment done. During the official assessment visit, the classifier will complete assessments on all classified animals AND additional randomly selected animals.

### ■ Potential times for non-classifying herd cattle assessments

Non-client assessments will coincide with the work unit's classification schedule, so a herd may have multiple opportunities to book an animal care assessment.

**For a classifying herd, no additional costs will be incurred to receive a cattle assessment at the time of conformation assessment. The costs associated with the assessment and reporting will be absorbed through the fees of conformation assessment. For a non-classifying herd, there will be a \$100 herd visit fee and a \$6 fee for each animal assessed.**

For more information on Animal Care, please visit [www.dairyfarmers.ca/proaction/resources/animal-care](http://www.dairyfarmers.ca/proaction/resources/animal-care) OR contact your provincial dairy farmer association. For specific questions about the on-farm Animal Care cattle assessments, please contact Holstein Canada's Extension and Education team Jeanette Van der Linden ([jvanderlinden@holstein.ca](mailto:jvanderlinden@holstein.ca)) or Laura Donkers ([ldonkers@holstein.ca](mailto:ldonkers@holstein.ca)).



# CETA Nears Ratification as Compensation Package Remains Uncertain



**ON FEBRUARY 29TH**, Minister of International Trade, Chrystia Freeland, announced that Canada and the European Union have completed the legal review process and made final revisions to the English text of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), including changes to the investment chapter designed to strengthen provisions on the right of individual governments to regulate. Now that the legal review of the agreement is completed, Minister Freeland noted that the government is confident the deal will be signed this year and enter into force in 2017.

When asked for more details on which affected sectors would be compensated, Minister Freeland remained non-committal, telling reporters that it is important to recognize that this only represents the completion of the legal stage, and that the government will continue to discuss these issues with the sectors that could be affected by the deal, including the provinces and farmers, to see how they will be impacted, and what the government can do.

## **UNCERTAINTY REMAINS REGARDING COMPENSATION TO INDUSTRY**

In 2013, when the previous government concluded negotiations on CETA, they promised compensation to mitigate the loss of 17,700 tons of Canadian cheese as a result of the agreement – which, they

said, would only be delivered after the industry could demonstrate those losses, after the agreement came into force. DFC opposed the government's proposition to stall the compensation package until the industry shows losses; the losses to the industry as a result of this agreement are a foregone conclusion – a fact the government is well aware of.

At the conclusion of the TPP negotiations in 2015, DFC was reassured when the government chose to take a more constructive approach by committing to a compensation package to mitigate projected losses in advance of the deal coming into force and throughout its implementation. Unfortunately, the new government has yet to make a clear commitment to the promised compensation package – which includes mitigation for losses from both CETA and the TPP agreement. As Minister Freeland stated, CETA is almost certain to be signed this year, and to come into force next year – at which point the dairy industry will incur losses.

## **DFC CONTINUES TO SEEK COMMITMENT FROM GOVERNMENT**

In its discussions with Canadian government officials, including Minister Freeland and Minister MacAulay, DFC has been seeking a clear commitment on the part of the Canadian government to the promised \$4.3 billion package over 15 years for supply managed sectors, including a re-allocation of the funds attached to the quota value guarantee program. "It is critical that the government commit to the promised compensation package as soon as possible", said Caroline Emond, DFC Executive Director. "Canadian dairy farmers need to know that the government will keep its promises and provide the support needed to mitigate the inevitable losses that will come with CETA ratification. We will continue to monitor next steps and maintain pressure on the government", she added. Dairy Farmers of Canada will keep its members updated as new information is received. 🇨🇦



# Young Leader Corner



Holstein Canada is always looking for new and innovative ways to connect Holstein youth from across the country. As our vision states, our goal is to cultivate a group of passionate and unified future leaders for the industry, who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic advocates for Holstein Canada and ambassadors for the industry.

The most well-known aspect of our program is the National Young Leader Convention held every year in conjunction with the National Holstein Convention. This is a great opportunity for young dairy enthusiasts from across the country to gather in one place. It allows for great discussions, sharing of ideas and offers an opportunity to see how dairy farming can differ across the nation.

For those still in school, Holstein Canada rewards up to six exceptional undergrads and five Canadian Veterinary students with a \$1,000 Education Award to help ensure educational success.

Another Young Leader opportunity is the European Young Breeders School, held every year in Belgium. Each year, Holstein Canada sends six deserving young leaders from across the country to take part in the event where they learn valuable skills such as judging, preparing animals for shows, and marketing genetics. This is a great opportunity for these young people to learn how the dairy industry operates in Europe and to make lasting connections with like-minded people from around the world.

Every four years, much like the Olympics, the World Holstein Conference takes place, with countries taking turns hosting the event. Canada was lucky enough to hold those honours in 2012!



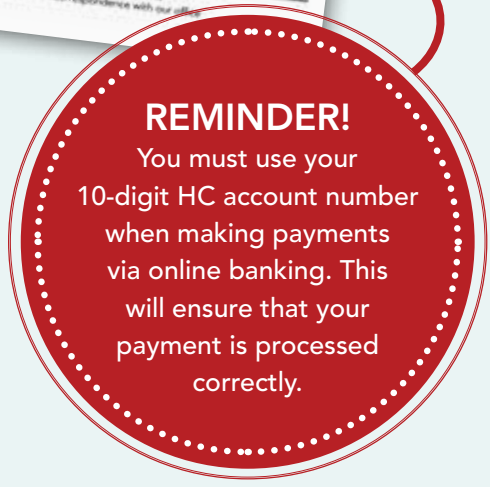
This year, Argentina hosted the event and Holstein Canada sent two enthusiastic youth delegates to represent Canada at the youth portion of the conference – an opportunity Holstein Canada looks forward to pursuing again for future conferences.

**In addition to events, Holstein Canada is proud to have a number of trained staff who are experts on a variety of topics such as our services, proAction® and classification. If you are hosting a barn meeting, workshop, educating a class or just curious to learn more, let us know! We would be more than happy to customize a presentation to fit your needs!**

New events and initiatives for Young Leaders are always coming your way. Keep your eyes on our social media channels, sign up for our newsletter and join the Young Leader Facebook group to keep up on what's happening. Want to learn more, get involved, or have an event that you would like Holstein Canada to sponsor or speak at? Please contact Holstein Canada's Programs Coordinator, Kelly, at [kvelthuis@holstein.ca](mailto:kvelthuis@holstein.ca). 

# Statement Changes with Mailing Efficiencies

OUR MEMBERS HAVE ASKED FOR IT LOUD AND CLEAR, and Holstein Canada is pleased to deliver on your request! With the launch of our new Herdbook, you will now notice a big change in the amount of mail you receive from us. In an effort to become more efficient, we will now be mailing documents, such as statements, invoices, registrations and classification letters, together in the same envelope rather than everything separately. Additionally, financial statements will no longer be printed on yellow paper, so be sure to keep your eyes peeled for them when you receive mail from Holstein Canada. Here's what the new statements look like.



.....  
**We want to hear from you!**  
 .....  
 As we continue to tweak and roll out the new features of the Herdbook, your feedback is important in ensuring our services continue to meet your needs. Please send any feedback to [customerservice@holstein.ca](mailto:customerservice@holstein.ca) or call 1-888-756-8300 ext. 410.





Left to right: John Buckley (HC President), Robert Chabot (HC 1st Vice-President), Bob Reck (AB), Jason Porteous (MB), Harry Van der Linden (HC Director), Luke McLellan (NS/NL), Tymen Vanzessen (SK), Doug Peart (HC Director), Matt Langelaan (BC), Sandy O'Hara (ON), Willem Vanderlinde (AB), Fred Vanderkloet (PE), Lorraine Allen (NB), Karen Versloot (NB), Ben Cuthbert (HC Director), Brian Masters (NS/NL) Mitch Schultz (SK), Roland Dubois (QC), Valérie Tremblay (QC), Harold Sweetnam (MB), Georges Sirois (QC), Hank Hazeleger (ON), Amber Craswell (PE), Brian Hamming (BC), Peter Brand (ON)

## 2016 Joint Branch Meeting

**OUR ANNUAL JOINT BRANCH MEETING** was held March 8 & 9, 2016 at head office in Brantford. The Joint Branch Meeting is an opportunity for representatives from each of the nine Branches to share their successes, challenges and ideas with each other, as well as the Holstein Canada Board and management team. These meetings are a great way of maintaining our grassroots connection to the membership and bringing more member voices to the table for important topics and discussions. 🇨🇦

## TOP SIRES ACCORDING TO AVERAGE FINAL SCORE OF 1ST LACTATION DAUGHTERS

Based on 1st Lactation Classifications from January/February 2016

**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	Avg. Daus Score	Avg. Dam Score	Sire	Daughters Classified	Avg. Daus Score	Avg. Dam Score
AFTERSHOCK	299	81.95	82.42	GOLD CHIP	99	82.52	82.46
DOORMAN	161	81.84	81.91	BRADNICK	54	82.30	82.19
DEMPSEY	241	81.71	81.34	MCCUTCHEN	87	82.17	82.51
WINDBROOK	562	81.66	81.75	LADD P-RED	39	81.64	82.05
SANCHEZ	135	81.45	81.76	HERO	43	81.53	81.42
NUMERO UNO	173	81.08	81.35	CHIPPER-P	61	81.49	82.28
ZELGADIS	103	81.02	80.59	DARYL	32	81.47	80.97
BRAXTON	106	81.00	81.72	EXPLODE	56	81.45	82.13
CHELIOS	147	80.99	80.47	GUTHRIE	75	81.39	80.69
GILLESPIY	131	80.85	81.37	WINDHAMMER	83	81.02	81.07

**NOTE:** 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. Sires listed must have >=50% of daughters that improve in score over the dam.

## CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

MID-ROUND **MR**

FIELD SERVICE **FS**

### MAY

ON **MR** Northern Ontario, Glengarry, Stormont, Dundas **EARLY**

QC Bagot, Drummond, Nicolet, Yamaska

**FS** NB

ON Leeds, Grenville

ON **MR** Prescott, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk **MID**

QC **MR** Beauce, Levis

BC

**FS** PE

ON Lanark, Renfrew

ON **MR** Wentworth, Niagara

QC Rouville, Richelieu, Saint-Hyacinthe, Chambly **LATE**

QC **MR** Beauce, Frontenac

**FS** NS, AB

### JUNE

ON Grey, Bruce, Huron

ON **MR** Middlesex, Lambton, Elgin **EARLY**

QC Témiscamingue, Abitibi

QC **MR** Dorchester

ON Peel, Halton, York

ON **MR** Russell, Carleton

QC Montcalm, L'Assomption, Maskinongé, Berthier **MID**

QC **MR** Montmagny, L'Islet, Bellechasse

**FS** NS, MB, SK

ON Simcoe

QC Laviolette, Champlain, Joliette, Saint-Maurice **LATE**

**FS** PE, BC

### JULY

ON Dufferin, Ontario, Peterborough, Victoria

QC Portneuf, Lac Saint-Jean, Chicoutimi, Roberval **EARLY**

QC **MR** Kamouraska

MB **MR**

AB **MR**

## Check out our Top four finalists from Theme #3 – iFarming!



*Erika Riddell and her family love the automatic calf rail feeding system they installed this past summer. The Delhome calves are thriving with this new technology! – submitted by Debbie Riddell, Milverton, Ont.*



*Ultrasound is a key tool in managing the reproductive health of our herd. – submitted by Serge Blanchette, La Presentation, Que.*



*The girls of Maple-Ain enjoying a snack from the automatic grain feeder. – submitted by Lyndsay Dickson, Smiths Falls, Ont.*



*Yorellea Planet Over the Moon is a big fan of the automatic calf feeder at Yorellea Farms. – submitted by Kristin Leroy, St. Eugene, Ont.*

## #FrameTheHerd Photo Contest

Great photos are still rolling in for the #FrameTheHerd Photo contest! Thank you to everyone for your submissions!

### THEME #5 IS: FARM SCENES

While we are all in the business of producing milk, our farms are as diverse as our country's landscape, and there are many ways to do the same thing the right way. In the spirit of the changing seasons, we want to see your favourite scenes from around your farm. Fire up your cameras and smart phones and send us your best photos of your operation, both inside and outside, with cows or without cows! As always, bonus points if you can get a Holstein Canada logo in the photos somehow (hats, jackets, etc.)! And of course, we also don't discriminate against colour, so send us those all-breed photos as well!

**DEADLINE JUNE 30, 2016**

### THE DETAILS:

- Photos should be high-res digital images (300 dpi is preferred)
- There is no limit to the number of entries person
- Any visible animals MUST be properly tagged to be considered

Entries are to be emailed to [socialmedia@holstein.ca](mailto:socialmedia@holstein.ca) and should include the names of any people and animals, as well as the prefix when possible. \*If you do not have access to email, but wish to participate, call Jennifer at 1-855-756-8300 ext. 234 to make alternate arrangements.



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