

SELECTIONS

FALL 2024

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YOUR SUCCESS *Our Passion.*

WHICH COWS GENERATE THE MOST PROFIT IN YOUR HERD?



David C. Thorbahn,
President and C.E.O., Select Sires Inc.

The term “cash cow” isn’t commonly used in the dairy industry as it feels a bit too literal. Although, other industries use it often to describe a profitable endeavor or business opportunity. It creates an interesting visual, one that Select Sires brought to life this year at World Dairy Expo. If you didn’t see the life-sized cash cow in person, check her out on social media. Throughout the week, team members enjoyed talking with dairy

farmers about which cows they considered to be the “cash cows” in their herd. If we compiled those conversations, there would be many similarities but also some interesting and unique differences.

Let’s begin by talking about those differences. As you know, World Dairy Expo attracts dairy farmers from around the world and understanding the environmental, societal and management pressures of those herds is important. High-producing cows that have a lower carbon footprint, Slick gene for heat tolerance and Polled were among the traits valued by international dairy farmers when describing their cash cows.

The Select Sires genetic development team and board of directors have been focusing on boosting the genetic quality and quantity of sires that offer these genes. Learn more about the newly launched, industry-leading Polled lineup on page 12 and visit the Advanced Sire Search on the Select Sires website to sort for Slick sires.

The similarities that farmers shared will sound familiar – components, efficient feed conversion, highly fertile and healthy. Creating these cash cows is very dependent on sire selection, which prompts me to ask readers three questions regarding their genetic selection index:

- ❶ Does your index align with your dairy’s goals?
- ❷ Was it designed to address your herd’s challenges?
- ❸ Is it built on economic values that are relevant in today’s dairy industry?

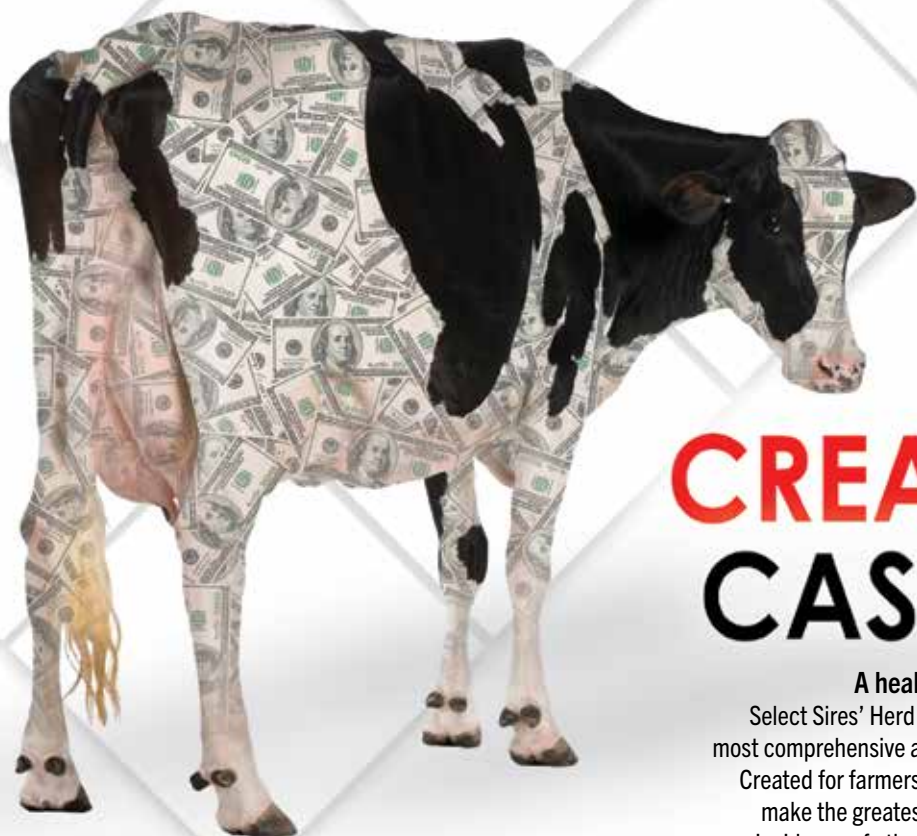
Select Sires continues to emphasize the Herd Health Profit Dollars® (HHP\$) index in genetic development because we have seen the genotypic, phenotypic and economic influence that this index has on dairies around the world. Amber Vander Poel shares more about HHP\$ and the on-farm, economic impact on page 10.

Cash cows on the colored shavings, cash cows in the milking parlor

The fall shows and industry gatherings always bring a renewed sense of community and a reminder to take a break and enjoy some great cows. Whether you are closely tied to the show business or not, we all love to talk cows and admire generations of thoughtful matings.

On the cover of this edition, you’ll see two tremendous 7H015085 PERFECT daughters from Siemers Holsteins that are popular bull dams. The black cow is the dam of 7H016570 REAPER, 7H016744 CARROT and 7H016594 BELOUR, each extreme health and wellness sires that deliver components and fertility. The cow on the right is the dam of Slick sires, 9H016849 ICE CUBE-S and 9H017089 INTHEFIRE-S.

Share your cash cow description with your local Select Sires representative today and begin creating a customized strategy to make your cash cow vision a reality. ♦



CREATE MORE CASH COWS.

A healthy herd drives profitability.

Select Sires’ Herd Health Profit Dollars® (HHP\$®) index is the most comprehensive and measurable economic index in the industry. Created for farmers, by farmers, HHP\$ prioritizes the traits that make the greatest impact. Boost mastitis resistance, lower incidence of other health challenges and breed long-lasting, healthy cows that improve cashflow.

GRADUATE

CLASS OF 2024



Herby Lutz, Jersey Development Manager, Select Sires Inc.

In August, 7JE1939 GRADUATE made his debut in the daughter-proven lineup with a top-30 JPI™ ranking. While his milking daughters confirm his genomic data and his popularity grows, there's another story to be told regarding GRADUATE's influence on the industry. In support of the Jersey Youth Academy, GRADUATE was donated by the late Bob Bignami of Brentwood Farms in Orland, California.

Bignami was a friend of the Jersey cow and an esteemed breeder. I visited Brentwood Farms the day before GRADUATE's genomic test results were released and I fell in love with his dam. At the time, she was a beautiful young cow with a tremendous mammary system and she was making an impressive record backed by a strong pedigree. Five of GRADUATE's six closest dams are scored Excellent, with the third dam scored Very Good (89%).

When the genomic results were released on Tuesday morning, I called Bob to talk about this impressive young sire that would soon be known as GRADUATE. Bob was excited for Select Sires to be involved but he had a vision for GRADUATE to be part of something bigger. The young sire sold in the All-American Jersey sale in November of 2020 for \$90,000 and \$60,000 of that total was donated to the Jersey Youth Academy. The balance was used to help fund All-American events in Louisville, Kentucky. The buyer was known as the Graduate Syndicate and an agreement was made for Select Sires Inc. to house and market the semen. Every unit of GRADUATE semen sold has a royalty, and to-date

more than \$60,000 in royalty money has been returned to the syndicate owner. Some of those also chose to have their royalty returned to the Jersey Youth Academy, so the fund continues to grow.

Jersey Youth Academy was established in 2008 by the American Jersey Cattle Association Board of Directors to help motivate and educate dairy youth who are high school juniors through 22 years of age. Since its inception, there have been eight classes of talented, young Jersey enthusiasts and Select Sires Inc. has hosted each class for a half day of tours, networking and educational opportunities from nearly every department. As an organization, we believe it's paramount to support our industry's youth and encourage their professional and personal development. There is no doubt that Jersey Youth Academy is making a tremendous impact on the future of the dairy industry and Select Sires is proud to work with Academy graduates including Tyler Boyd, general manager of Jerseyland Sires, Brad Barham, regional manager for Premier Select Sires, Carly Meyer,

7JE1939 BW GRADUATE

CHROME x JX Got Maid {5} x Isaac
BBR 100 JNS-TF JH1F A1A2 BB

+120 GJPI +15.2 JUI™ +1.9 Type
+794 Milk +82 CFP



S-S-I Victory Graduate 63573-ET (VG-88%)



Clover Farms Graduate Fern 10438 (VG-82%),
Clover Farms, Olney, IL

dairy program specialist for Select Sires Member Cooperative and Skylar Buell, communications specialist at Select Sires Inc.

If you know of youth with a passion for Jersey cattle, please visit www.usjersey.com for more information. The application period for Class IX is currently open and will close on December 1, 2024. ♦



Class VI



MYTHBUSTERS

LONGEVITY EDITION

BUSTED

The popular television show MythBusters aired for 15 years and viewers watched as the hosts tested the validity of common myths or rumors using scientific methods. The episode topics were relatable and often polarizing as viewers confidently believed, or didn't believe, in the theory that the hosts were testing. Oftentimes, what many considered as fact was actually a myth.

Could the dairy industry be influenced by myths?

Select Sires compiled seven comments or concerns that are often shared by farmers. Each statement was assigned to an expert and they were asked to assume the role of myth buster. Using their research and experiences, they provided sound and insightful responses that might influence decision making on your dairy.

MYTH NO. 1

**Producers are keeping their cows around too long.
Longevity equates to old cows that are past their prime.**



Mitch Breunig, Owner/Operator, Mystic Valley Dairy

The oldest cows on our farm are the most profitable, as long as they are healthy and producing well. Older cows do probably require a little more work around calving time, but if you have good protocols I think it is a non-issue. The art of farming is figuring out when it is more profitable to cull the cow and replace her with another cow or continue to keep her in the herd.



Kevin Jorgensen, Senior Sire Analyst, Select Sires Inc. and Partner at Mystic Valley Dairy

We look at the high lifetime production cows each month after test day and it is amazing what these cows can accomplish. Many are now in their sixth and seventh lactation, the oldest being in their 10th lactation, and despite their age they are some of the top performers in the herd.

Interestingly, there are 33 cows at Mystic Valley Dairy that are over 200,000 pounds of lifetime milk to date and all but three are scored Very Good or Excellent, with the remaining three classified Good Plus. Meaning, conformation still has a place in making high-lifetime performers.

Mystic Valley Dairy is a progressive herd in Sauk City, Wisconsin with more than 400 lactating cows. They prioritize component yield and health traits, along with functional type to create longer-living, profitable cows.



“ The art of farming is figuring out when it is more profitable to cull the cow and replace her with another cow or continue to keep her in the herd. ”

— Mitch Breunig

MYTH NO. 2

Longer-living cows drive down sustainability achievements.



Chuck Sattler, Vice President of Genetic Programs, Select Sires Inc.

Using a life cycle assessment, we can evaluate the impact of culling rate on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from a commercial-scale 2,000 head Holstein dairy. Keeping all other model parameters constant, we compare the industry average cull rate of 37% to a cull rate of 30%.

The reduced cull rate lowers the total number of cows and heifers at the dairy and shifts the demographics to include more cows that are third lactation and greater. Because the older cows are more productive, the total energy-corrected milk (ECM) yield of the dairy is about 1% greater for the reduced cull rate herd, and the enteric methane emissions are reduced due to having fewer animals in the system (Table 1). By combining these impacts, the enteric methane GHG intensity is reduced by 3.1% and total GHG intensity is reduced by 4.2% for the herd with a reduced cull rate.

There are tradeoffs when you consider managing a herd of older cows. It is paramount that herds adopt a genetic strategy that emphasizes traits like mastitis resistance, lameness resistance and fertility. Using an index like Herd Health Profit Dollars® (HHP\$®) will help generate cows that are less prone to these older cow issues and continue to be profitable producers later in life, therefore creating opportunities for reduced culling and reduced methane emissions.



	ECM (lbs/day)	Enteric Methane GHG Emissions, Not Allocated (tons CO _{2e} /yr)	Total GHG Emissions, Not Allocated (tons CO _{2e} /yr)	Enteric Methane GHG Intensity, Not Allocated (lb CO _{2e} /lb ECM)	Total GHG Intensity, Not Allocated (lb CO _{2e} /lb ECM)
Herd 1: 37% CR	151,939	11,680	22,303	0.421	0.804
Herd 2: 30% CR	153,652	11,442	21,982	0.408	0.770
Difference	+1,713	-238	-704	-3.1%	-4.2%

Table 1: Methane emissions, total GHG emissions, methane intensity and total GHG intensity for two herds with 37% and 30% culling rates, respectively. Emissions are not allocated among output products.



MYTH NO. 3

Once a cow reaches her breakeven point, she should be replaced by a heifer that has better genetics.



Dr. Gavin Staley, Ruminant Technical Specialist, Diamond V

If you look at the production curves by parity for any normal, healthy individual cow, you see immediately that a cow produces significantly more milk as she matures. She continues to grow approximately 15% from her first calving until reaching mature body weight in her third lactation. She also produces approximately 15% more milk when comparing her first and third lactations. Genetic improvement of younger stock alone cannot make up a 15% increase.

Older cows have 'paid off' their raising costs and should be allowed to express their genomic potential. Replacing a healthy, productive older cow with a heifer with the 'latest genetics' makes as much sense as trading in a vehicle every year to get the latest 'bells and whistles.' This does not mean keeping an unproductive animal in the herd because culling criteria applies to all parties. Strategically increasing the productive life of a healthy herd allows lucrative options to market beef on dairy offspring or raise additional heifers for sale. These profit-boosting opportunities are not possible with high culling rates in herds with short productive life.

“ Replacing a healthy, productive older cow with a heifer with the ‘latest genetics’ makes as much sense as trading in a vehicle every year to get the latest ‘bells and whistles.’ ”

— Gavin Staley, DVM

MYTH NO. 4

Cow longevity is only influenced by good management.



Jeff Ziegler, Vice President of Dairy Cattle Breeding, Select Sires Inc.

Management versus genetics is an argument as old as time. In my experience, it is not one or the other, but rather a combination of management, genetics and careful planning that drives performance and profit. Consider these simple calculations:

Good Management	+	Poor Genetic Selection	=	Wasted Opportunity
Poor Management	+	Elite Genetics	=	Wasted Genetic Investment
Good Management	+	Elite Genetics	=	Enhanced Cow Longevity



On-farm management, nutrition and health protocols are critical to achieve gene expression. Without the right environment cows will not express their genetic potential for production, fertility, health and more. In today's precision breeding era and considering the limited heifer replacement pool, there is no room for wasted opportunities. To enhance your herd's cow longevity, capitalize on good management with the best foundation of elite genetics.

MYTH NO. 5

Older cows don't produce as much milk as first and second lactation cows.



Ethan Haywood, Genetic Specialist, Select Sires Inc.

Holstein dairy cows reach their maximum size and physical maturity at 48-54 months of age, which for most breeding programs is in their third or fourth lactation. Until that time, they are allocating energy from their dry matter intake to growth and therefore have not reached their genetic potential. In the best environment, these mature cows begin expressing their genetics and have the opportunity to maximize both milk production and feed efficiency, making them the most profitable individuals in the herd! Strategically building our herds to have more cows in their third, fourth and fifth lactation, where individual animal profitability is maximized, will help improve the farm's bottom line and efficiency.

MYTH NO. 6

Salvage value covers raising costs.



Dr. Albert De Vries, Dairy Management and Economics Professor, University of Florida

Historically, salvage value of cows is about half of the cost of raising a heifer. On average, there is a loss of value of more than \$1,000 over the course of a cow's productive life. This depreciation

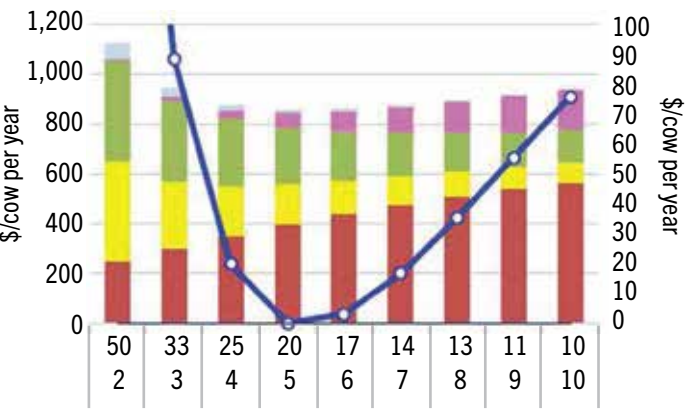
is an important factor to keep a healthy, productive cow in the herd for many lactations because the depreciation is spread out over more time.

The value of the calf has less of an effect than depreciation because both the replacement heifers, and the healthy, older cow produce a calf. The daily depreciation, which is a cost to the dairy, is therefore less when cows stay in the herd longer. Older, healthy cows on average also produce more milk than first lactation cows.

However, this does not mean that low producing, non-competitive, young cows should not be replaced soon.



“ The daily depreciation, which is a cost to the dairy, is therefore less when cows stay in the herd longer. ”



Top: Annual cull rate (%) | Bottom: Average number of lactations

Calf value opportunity cost Lack of maturity cost Genetic opportunity cost
Aged cow cost Herd replacement cost Opportunity from optimal

The five drivers of total cost of maintaining herd structure include: genetic opportunity cost, herd replacement cost, lack of maturity cost, aged cow cost, and calf value opportunity cost. The optimal productive lifespan (number of lactations; one lactation is set to be one year) is the one in which the total cost is the lowest. The optimal productive lifespan is five years in this example. The blue line goes with the right axis, and the bars go with the left axis.

MYTH NO. 7

Longer-living cows lead to a shortage of replacements.



Greg Collins, North America Select Dairy Solutions Data and Training Support, Select Sires Inc.

Longevity goals shouldn't influence a herd's availability of quality replacements. Each herd should have a breeding strategy customized to their operation that meets their replacement needs.

There's immense value in good reproductive efforts and longer-living cows when it comes to options and opportunities for the herd. While one herd might be breeding 38% of females to dairy and the rest to beef, another herd is breeding 58% of females to dairy and these percentages are determined by factors like reproduction metrics, herd health and culling rates, and ultimately, the herd's goals. Longer-living cows are actually a step toward opportunities for producers to design their herd's makeup to best fit their situation.

Select Sires offers tools to investigate animal inventory scenarios, test breeding strategies and track genetic progress. These tools were designed to provide routine evaluations of animal inventories at strategic phases and to guide future decisions. Whether a producer is looking for a more general approach to inventory and genetic monitoring or interested in maximizing the utilization of genomic information to make the desired number of female replacements and drive genetic progress, Select Sires has a tool to meet those needs.



“ Longevity goals shouldn't influence a herd's availability of quality replacements. ”

— Greg Collins



HELP THEM DREAM BIG

Calf health has a tremendous impact on the day-to-day tasks of a dairy, as well as long-term influence on mature cow performance and productivity. Have you considered how calf wellness genetics can influence your herd? Boost completion rates by selecting elite calf wellness sires.



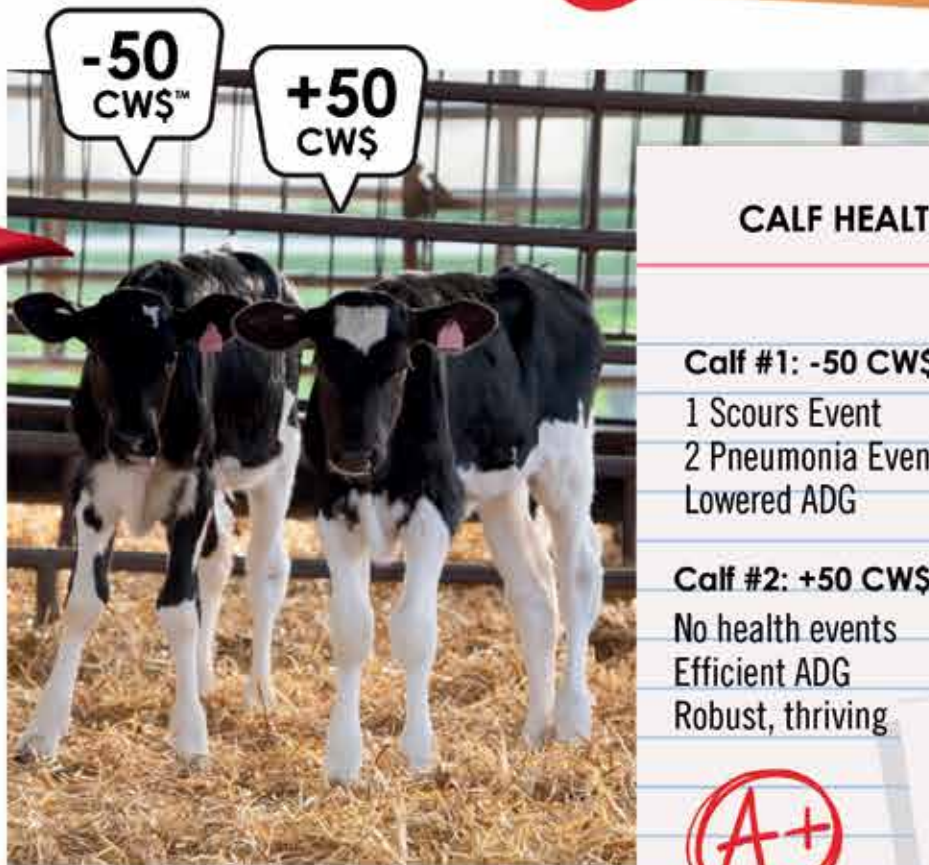
What do calf loss rates look like on U.S. dairies?

4-30%

Research from 300 progressive U.S. dairies averaging 2,000 lactating cows.

[Should your herd consider calf wellness traits?]

If you checked one or more, consider leveraging calf wellness traits to improve the next generation.



CALF HEALTH REPORT

Calf #1: -50 CW\$

1 Scours Event
2 Pneumonia Events
Lowered ADG



Calf #2: +50 CW\$

No health events
Efficient ADG
Robust, thriving



LISTEN TO VICTORY FARMS' KEVIN SOUZA TALK ABOUT HEIFER COMPLETION RATES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CALF WELLNESS TRAITS ON THE SELECT SIRES PODCAST.

TUNE IN AND SUBSCRIBE VIA YOUR PREFERRED PODCASTING PLATFORM TO RECEIVE THE LATEST NOTIFICATIONS WHEN A NEW EPISODE IS RELEASED.

PAVE THE WAY FOR A MORE PROFITABLE NEXT GENERATION



Amber Vander Poel, Senior Genetic Analyst and World Mating Service Coordinator, World Wide Sires Ltd.

We can all agree that the dairy industry offers no shortage of genetic indexes for selecting sires and sorting females. Many indexes are designed to boost profits by focusing on where and how a dairy makes money. But just as quickly as components and fertility contribute to the dairy's profitability, health events like mastitis and lameness can take away those profits. The index that considers profit drivers and profit takers and balances those attributes based on economic factors will take your dairy to the next level.

The Herd Health Profit Dollars® (HHP\$®) index is based on practicality. It includes an increased focus on mastitis resistances, additional weighting for fertility and the necessary emphasis on components. The index reflects industry statistics, therefore directly addressing challenges and improving the dairy cow from the inside out. When we look at the U.S. dairy industry, reproduction and mastitis are the second and third most prevalent reasons for cows leaving the herd. It's also worth noting that mastitis is the costliest disease impacting the global dairy industry at an estimated \$22 billion.¹ Considering this industry data, leveraging HHP\$ to make genetic decisions would fundamentally address the most pressing concerns of longevity, production, environmental and economic sustainability.

While reviewing the index formula is important, knowing that the index influences real profits on the dairy is paramount. Using genomic information from Fir Ridge Dairy, we compared genomic HHP\$ and NM\$ by separating first lactation females into the top and bottom quartiles for those indexes. We see that both indexes can easily separate out the top and bottom cows for energy corrected milk (ECM), days open and mastitis. But the most interesting point in this audit is actually seen when comparing the difference between the top and bottom quartiles of mastitis and days open for both indexes. In these comparisons, we can see the increased weighting of fertility and mastitis playing a role. There is more disparity between the top and bottom quartile for days open and mastitis in the HHP\$ comparison than in the other index, therefore showing the power and balance of the HHP\$ index in creating healthier, more fertile cows.

When comparing these two groups and making a few considerations, you can expect to profit \$70 more per cow over their lifetime when using HHP\$ as compared to NM\$.

Considerations:

- Cost per cow per day open: \$4
- Current price per hundredweight: \$23.34
- Cost per case of mastitis: \$300

At the end of the day, what type of cow do you want to create? Who are your favorite cows? You want the good keepers, the high lifetime producers that breed back quickly, remain healthy and trouble-free. By using HHP\$ to make genetic decisions and selecting the best HHP\$ sires, you are paving a way for a more profitable next generation. ♦

¹(Rasmussen, 2024)



Figure 1: Index comparison

	NM\$	HHP\$
Milk	1%	0%
CFP	48%	45%
Mastitis, SCS	3%	15%
Fertility	6%	9%
Other Cow Health	21%	15%
Calving Ability	3%	1%
Calf Health	1%	0%
Conformation	4%	11%
Size/RFI	-13%	-4%

Figure 2: Reasons why cows leave the herd

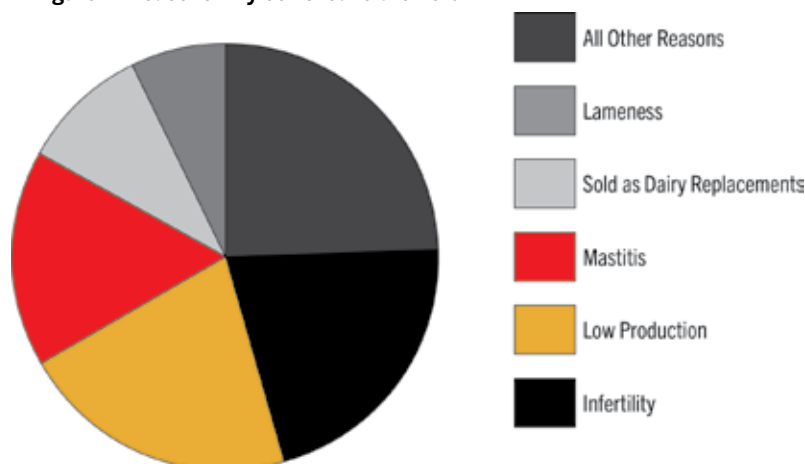


Figure 3: Genomic comparison of first lactation animals at Fir Ridge Dairy, Scio, OR

NM\$	Avg NM\$	No. of Cows	Age (Months)	Avg ECM	Avg DOPN	Lifetime Mastitis
738 to 1,077	806	115	28	27,416	115	9
195 to 518	433	115	32	26,109	144	17

HHP\$	Avg HHP\$	No. of Cows	Age (Months)	Avg ECM	Avg DOPN	Lifetime Mastitis
788 to 1,032	863	115	28	26,490	116	5
225 to 542	460	115	32	26,169	156	21

*Days open excludes DNBs and fresh cows that have not entered eligibility

SHIFTING POLLED PERCEPTIONS

It was not long ago that the concept of a high-performing, profitable, Polled cow was far from standard reality. Historically, Polled sire lineups have been limited in quantity and quality. Visionaries of their time, breeders David and John Burket of Burket Falls Farm in East Freedom, Pennsylvania, were among a core group of Polled promoters in the mid '70s. Today, their passion for Polled genetics is shared by dairy producers around the world and to meet those needs, Select Sires' genetic development team set out on a new mission. In collaboration with breeders throughout the U.S., Select Sires has developed and launched an unprecedented Polled lineup that far exceeds industry standards.

Where We Came From

In the early 1960s, David Burket began transitioning Burket Falls Farm to a purebred Holstein herd. In doing so, he purchased a group of Registered Holsteins from Wisconsin. Within that group of animals was Princess Fayne Houwtje (GP-80), known as Princess, a heifer who was later found to be naturally Polled and who would go on to make 11 consecutive records over 1,100 pounds of fat and become the dam of the first Polled sire available in A.I., Burket Falls ABC.

"Dad didn't pay a lot of attention to the fact that Princess was hornless, until she turned out to be the best cow in the herd," recalls John. "Dad hated to dehorn calves, and he was enough of a visionary to put a high value on the Polled gene back then. He always said, 'Don't ever throw that gene away. Some day there will be a need and demand for Polled genetics.'" Today, roughly one third of Polled Holsteins in the United States can be traced back to Princess.

The Burket's primary goal has always been to breed a profitable cow. "Polled was secondary to breeding a good cow," says John. "We didn't breed Polled for the sake of breeding Polled. We wanted a correct mating for the animal, then second priority was Polled, but we certainly didn't want to lose that gene if we could avoid it."

Where We're Headed

John believes the future for Polled Holstein genetics is bright and continues to incorporate the gene into the farm's breeding philosophy. "We don't look at horned or Polled sires any differently. We have our set of criteria and utilize sires that fit our needs. We rarely end up using horned bulls though, because Polled genetics continue to advance so rapidly. The old excuse that Polled sires are inferior to horned is irrelevant. What Select Sires has released is evidence of that."



Daughters of Polled sire, Burket Falls ABC 1564322, at Burket Falls Farm during the mid-1970s.



Daughters of 7H014160 LUSTER-P at Grass Ridge Farm in Pittsville, WI, representing a new era of Polled genetics.

Compared to available Polled sires across the industry, Select Sires' lineup has a hefty genetic advantage, with greater lineup averages for GTPI®, NM\$ and CM\$. Continuing the mission to emphasize health and wellness traits, the 61-sire lineup averages +971 HHP\$* with 250H017298 HABULOUS-P (+1,311 HHP\$) topping the list. HHP\$ is a true economic index that offers the right balance of production components and health traits to drive profitability back to the dairy.

There's no lack of Polled production power in Select Sires' lineup either. The industry average for Combined Fat and Protein (CFP) value for both young and proven sires, including non-Polled sires, is +132. The newly released lineup includes 40 Polled sires above +132 CFP with 250H017202 BULLONEY-P leading the list at +204 CFP, closely followed by 14H017052 NELVIN-P at +198 CFP.

Even the most discerning Type breeders will find Polled sires to fit their genetic strategy. 250H017560 PARIAN-P (+3.70), 7H016387 HANX-P (+3.42), 7H017158 HOLY-P (+3.35), 250H017297 HANTASTIC-P (+3.30), 7H017162 HALIANT-P (+3.14), 7H016493 HAKAN-P (+3.11), and 250H016388 HANSKE-P (+2.99) rank within the breed's top-20 Polled sires for Type. ♦

“ We have the tools to do something really positive in the dairy industry,” says John Burket, the current president of Holstein Association USA. “I have no doubt, in time, the Holstein breed is going to be 100% Polled. There’s money to be made in Polled genetics. Back in the day, Polled wasn’t as enticing compared to Red genetics, and as a result the industry embraced Red first. It’s time to embrace the Polled gene and eliminate the consumer and welfare concerns while continuing to breed a highly profitable cow.”



STEP YOUR HERD IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Select Sires offers the most complete, competitive and profitable lineup of Polled sires in the industry. Maximize your genetic potential while adding Polled genetics to your herd by leveraging our elite Polled sires.

+971

LINEUP AVERAGES AN IMPRESSIVE +971 HHP\$

14

MASTITIS RESISTANTPRO® DESIGNATION CARRIERS

61

SIRES FROM 36 DIFFERENT SIRE FATHERS

53

A2A2 SIRES



ProfitSOURCE®

YOUR SOURCE FOR PROVEN CARCASS QUALITY



This summer, Select Sires sent four loads of ProfitSOURCE-sired fat cattle, all born, raised, and finished on one dairy, to a packing plant for a cutout test to quantitatively evaluate their performance. The results were just as impressive as the many thousands of commercially collected carcass records in Select Sires' ProfitSOURCE database. Lauren Kimble, manager of ProfitSOURCE supply chains, talked with Texas Tech University Professor and Gordon W. Davis Regent's Chair in Meat Science and Muscle Biology, Brad Johnson, Ph.D., who assisted with the study, to break down the carcass cutout results.

Most beef on dairy cattle are marketed by a feedlot to a packer on a pricing structure called a grid. These grids bolster or deduct from the overall price for the load based on individual recorded carcass performance. Grid marketing of fat (finished) cattle is often the most economically heavily weighted when it comes to the Quality Grade component of carcass evaluation. With this background in mind, check out Lauren's conversations with Dr. Johnson.



LAUREN

What do you notice about the ProfitSOURCE group's performance?

These cattle far surpassed the industry standards. This lot of 131 head was superior for USDA Quality Grade specifications. The base on this particular grid was Choice. This lot averaged 32% (42/131 head) USDA Prime, which is well above industry norm. We would expect native beef cattle to grade up to 10% Prime, calf-fed Holsteins about the same and unknown genetics of beef on dairy cross around 10-20% Prime.

The net effect was that the premium for Prime netted an extra \$17.56 per hundredweight (cwt) of hot carcass weight (HCW). This was equal to more than an extra \$50 per head marketed, just for Quality Grade!

For young cattle like this lot, marbling score, defined as the amount of intramuscular fat, is the major criteria for determining USDA Quality Grade. These cattle were exceptional for marbling!



DR. JOHNSON

CUTABILITY CONVERSATIONS

LAUREN: As for Yield Grade (YG), most fell within YG 1 and 2 which earn premiums on this grid. What are some considerations with beef on dairy when it comes to YG?

DR. JOHNSON: USDA Yield Grade is a predictor of the amount of red meat in the carcass that can be marketed at retail. The lower the number, generally the more muscle and less fat on the carcass.

This lot resulted in approximately 42% YG 1 and 2 carcasses, netting a \$5 per cwt of HCW premium. The base would be a YG 3. This group of cattle only had nine head (6.87%) that were YG 4 or 5.

Overall, these cattle were fed to a very desirable end point, had above average muscling and low subcutaneous fat (backfat). We want a high degree of intramuscular fat (marbling) and low amounts of backfat. Dairy-influenced animals are known for having less backfat, and with backfat being the biggest driver of change for Yield Grade, beef on dairy cattle are genetically primed to deliver that.

LAUREN: Looking at the photos of the carcasses and ribeyes provided by the plant, they appear to be nearly identical. Why is this important?



DR. JOHNSON: The degree of muscling as indicated by Ribeye Area at the 12th rib and amount of backfat was extremely consistent in the group of 131 head. This becomes very important to the packer and eventually retailer who wants consistency in steak dimensions. In addition, there was only one light HCW and one heavy HCW, speaking to the uniformity of these cattle. These cattle provided exceptional consistency!

LAUREN: Consistency is of key importance! So, when we genomically tested this group, there were seven ProfitSOURCE sires represented, and yet the group achieved very tight results.

DR. JOHNSON: This would indicate that regardless of sire, known genetics relate to increased consistency. This is critical to feeders and packers.

LAUREN: Another hot topic in beef on dairy seems to be liver abscesses. We were told that this group had only 6% liver condemnments, and that this was far lower than the plant average. What does this mean?

DR. JOHNSON: The industry average for liver abscesses in beef on dairy cattle is more than 40%. The presence of liver abscesses creates many issues and discounts. Not only is the value of the liver lost (\$6-8/liver), other parts of the carcass like the skirt steak can be adhered to the liver and need to be trimmed off. This can cost both the feeder and packer close to \$50 to \$60 per head.

Also, operational efficiency is compromised at the packing plant with cattle loads that have a high amount of liver abscesses. This has become a huge problem in our industry. These ProfitSOURCE cattle were remarkably low on liver abscesses. The feeder included the ionophore, Rumensin, in the diet. But no other feed additives, such as Tylosin, which is approved to lower liver abscesses in feedlot cattle, were fed in this group of cattle.

The exceptionally low liver abscess rate speaks to the nutrition and management throughout the lifetime of these cattle. The cattle were raised on the dairy of origin from day one through finish. We have learned how critical high-quality colostrum intake is to set calves up for lifetime success and improved health and performance. This dairy obviously did a great job in the calf hutch, weaning pens and finally finishing pens to get these kinds of results.

LAUREN: Overall, what is the direct benefit to the dairy farmer of producing high-quality beef on dairy, even if they are selling them far before their endpoint?

DR. JOHNSON: To realize superior carcass genetics, cattle need to be marketed on an appropriate grid. Even if dairy producers choose not to finish the cattle, the use of ProfitSOURCE genetics and placement of ear tags lets future owners of these cattle know they can market on a grid-based system to realize the advantages of the known genetics for superior carcass quality. ♦

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