

# *info* **Holstein**

May - June 2021 issue no. 169

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





HOLSTEIN CANADA PRESENTS  
A MULTI-BREED FIELD SERVICE PROGRAM

# CONNEXION

**A modern program that connects herds, breeds, and people**



An efficient system that fits the needs of the dairy farms of the future

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Fills the gap between the decision-making process and your herd's bottom line

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**ABOVE:** On page 5, read all about Young Leader Casey Morey; our Field team talks to Canadian producers who have Start-Up farms starting on page 7; and Alison, Audrey and JJ from Customer Service answer questions about Compass on page 18!

**ON THE COVER:** Photo by Sheila Sundborg. Stephane Roberge from the Holstein Canada Field Service team at Ferme Blondin, Ste. Placide, Quebec.

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# President's Message

*Gerald Schipper, Holstein Canada President*

**AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING**, we are still very much in an “events being canceled or postponed” atmosphere thanks to Covid-19. All the special occasions we look forward to have been affected in one way or another. Our AGM this year will change to a new format, even from last year's scaled back Virtual Event.

As the saying goes, change is inevitable, and we certainly have seen enough of it. The pandemic has perpetuated history at lightning speed, forcing us to break out of our comfort zones and adapt to new and different ways to conduct life and business. In order for Holstein Canada to remain relevant in how we deliver our services, we need to hear from you.

During my time as President and Western Ontario Director, I had the chance to be in contact with members from all provinces over the years, and this experience showed me the differences that exist, and that these differences are not obstacles. These are opportunities for Holstein Canada to demonstrate its ability to adapt to all types of businesses. To do this, we want to hear from ALL members on what they want from their Association.

A new survey will be sent out, one exclusive to your experience with Holstein Canada - please fill it out. This is a way that you, as a valued member, can be part of our growth and future. The message we want to drive home is that the producers in Canada want to have a say in the future of our industry, and now is your chance!



It's hard to believe that my term as Director representing Western Ontario's Holstein Canada members is coming near to completion. It has been truly an honor and a privilege serving you. 🇨🇦

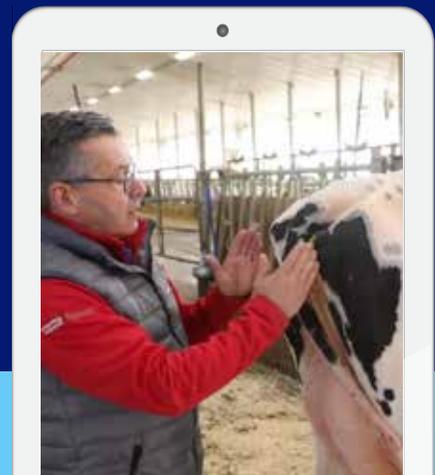
*Gerald Schipper*

CANADA/ITALY CLASSIFICATION DEMONSTRATION ON:

## Functional Conformation & World Harmonization



A joint webinar was hosted by Holstein Canada and ANAFI (Italian Holstein Breeders Association) on May 14th, to illustrate the Functional Conformation System each country uses and discuss world harmonization for type classification.



If you missed the live webinar, you can access the recorded version on Holstein Canada's YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/channel/Canadaltaly](https://www.youtube.com/channel/Canadaltaly)



## Entrepreneur Casey Morey: Making the most of her education

*Talking with Casey Morey, Owner of Unique Valleystream Genetics*

**CASEY GREW UP NORTH OF EDMONTON**, on the family farm where she helped milk 300 cows. Growing up, she was a huge 4-H advocate, completing 12 years as a member and three years as a Provincial representative at the National level; she currently serves as volunteer leader. Casey grew up loving photography, drawing and painting, interests that she still pursues today. But her biggest interest is travelling, particularly volunteering while travelling!

So far, Casey has traveled to Ireland, UK, Scotland, Cuba, India, Ghana, Peru, Australia, and New Zealand. Ultimately, Casey's goal is to see 50% of the world and volunteer while doing it. All of Casey's trips involved volunteering and touring the dairy industries of other countries.

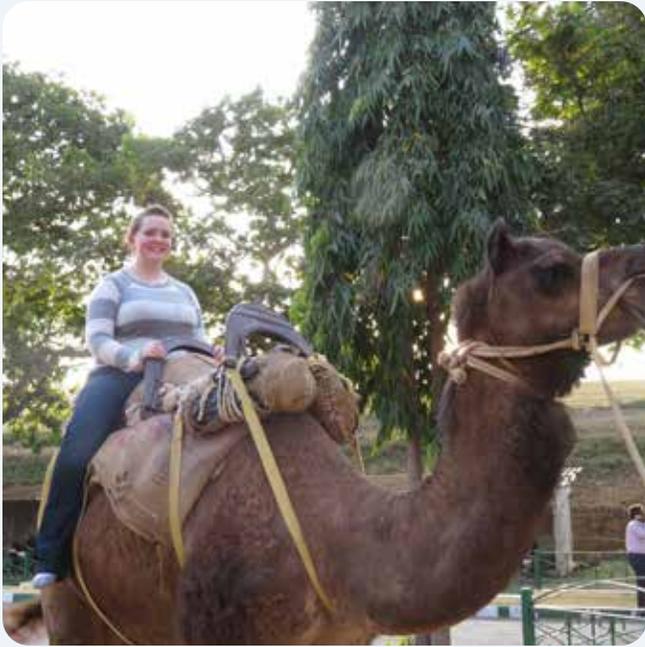
Casey actively attends agriculture conferences to improve her knowledge, and she is actively involved in Agriculture Youth groups and events. Her ultimate goal is to one day become a Nuffield Canada Scholar. This is a prestigious rural leadership program available to anyone mid-career who is involved in agriculture.

Casey obtained her BSc in Agricultural/Food Business Management from the University of Alberta in 2016 and returned full-time to the farm after completing her studies. Her jobs on the farm include young stock management, cropping and feed management, bookkeeping, and office work. She became a full partner in the family dairy farm in 2019.

When Casey graduated from university and returned to the farm full-time, she was looking for a way to better use her education and for something that was solely hers. She had started taking over the farm paperwork, proAction®, registration, and other aspects of the farm and found that she really enjoyed it. This led her to the idea of starting her own consulting business and helping other producers. Casey started her consulting business in the spring of 2017 after the farm was a part of the initial proAction Pilot project; she now works on her business part-time from her home office.

### Creating her business

Casey knew she needed a clear line of thought on what she wanted to do. She asked herself: do I have the ability to work with time constraints? Do I have good communication and



people skills? Do I understand the industry to which I want to provide services? She also needed to make sure she knew all of the requirements for every project she was going to undertake.

When Casey first started her business, she found it very challenging to get her first client. It takes time for people in the industry to have confidence in someone as young as she is to be able to do the job effectively.

Casey was extremely lucky to have a mentor – one of her 4-H leaders – give her her first job. From there, she gained more opportunities, built a rapport with the milk board, and was able to earn more clients. Casey offered her services through in-person meetings, email and phone conversations, and via video chats. This ensured that her client base would not be limited strictly to those living in a relative proximity. She is able to work with clients across the country and utilize the resources available to provide them with the best service possible.

### Facing the realities

Starting out, Casey faced the fear of rejection. Before Casey started accepting clients, she was very careful to determine a pricing strategy so that it was fair, represented her abilities and education properly, and was easy to understand.

Like any business, there are people who will complain about your pricing strategies, who want discounts, or they won't use your services at all. In the beginning, it made her second guess herself, but the more clients she worked with, the more confident she became in her abilities and price point.

Soon, it didn't bother her that potential clients would say no - she realized what matters the most is the people who say yes. "You have to make sure that you provide them with a service that will result in them giving you glowing reviews that ultimately lead to more clients."

Initially, when Casey started, she focused solely on proAction requirements. Rolling out new proAction modules every two years affected how much work she had and the business finances fluctuated significantly.

While she knew it is good to have a primary focus, she also knew she would have to be able to adapt to the needs of her clients. She expanded her services to include environmental farm plans, grant applications, and event planning. Casey realized that she really enjoyed event planning and is actually pretty good at it!

### Expanding her network

What surprised Casey the most when she started her business was the number of dairy producers she had never met in her own province. In her first year of business, the majority of her clients were producers with which she had never had contact. Casey spent the first year travelling to the Lethbridge area (a one-way trip took six hours) once a month to meet with clients, update their records, and complete their validations. She was amazed with the operations she was able to visit and how different every producer's management style can be.

### Advice for others

Casey's advice to other Young Leaders is simple: Just go for it!

*"You can spend all of your life wishing, dreaming," she says.*

*"You'll never make those a reality unless you take a leap of faith."*

Casey knows that if she hadn't gotten beyond her fears, she never would have built connections, gained the knowledge, worked with the producers she has, or created the passions and interests behind her business. She also notes the importance of using the resources available to you. "Whether it's your breed association, milk board, community groups, friends and family. They all want to watch you succeed and will do whatever they can to help you get there!" 🐄

# Start-Ups

By Morgan Sangster, Field Service Business Partner, Western Canada; Amanda Comfort, Field Representative, Holstein Ontario; Marilie Pelletier, Advisor for Central Quebec; Natasha McKillop, Field Service Business Partner, Maritimes

## West: Fijala Dairy

Fijala applied to DFM's new entrant program in the fall of 2017, a springboard to help Manitobans become part of the dairy industry. Fijala proved to the board of directors why he would be a great candidate to begin a dairy farm, and it did not take long for the board to sense his passion and green light the application and thorough business plan.

**“It’s exciting to have my own barn and cows because I didn’t have any livestock prior to building the barn.”**

For Fijala, working on his dairy farm and helping with his family’s grain farm keeps the young entrepreneur busy from morning ‘til evening. The barn itself is high-tech, as cows are milked in an automated system, which allows cows to come and go to the milking station as they please.

The key to his continued success has been the commitment, drive, and determination from everybody involved and taking care to do everything properly. “A few keys from the start were purchasing cows from a well managed herd and working with an excellent crew to build the barn and install milking equipment.”

“My goal is to purchase a second robot and double my herd,” says Owen. “You don’t have to be raised on a dairy farm

to become a dairy farmer. You just have to be determined and willing to work hard for it.” That is what motivated him through the start up process – seeing his dreams and goals come to life.

Owen’s biggest challenges were detecting heats and getting his cows pregnant. “We purchased cows from all stages of lactation, and some had issues transitioning to the new barn after the initial move”. Another initial challenge was getting the butterfat to where they want it within the herd but purchasing cows from a very well managed herd with consistent genetics was a huge asset to get things started on the right path.

Owen takes his expertise to others, too; recently, he participated in the Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba program, where he spoke with children at the Manitou Elementary School about dairy farms.

His advice to others?

**“Good management and be willing to put the effort into every job, everyday. Take the time to learn, ask questions and be ready for the curveballs that come with any business start-up.”**



## West



**FIJALA DAIRY**  
Manitou, Manitoba

**PREFIX:** FIJALA

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Owen Fijala and family

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 55

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 4000

**FACILITY TYPE:** Free-stall with one DeLaval Robot

**HERD PRODUCTION AVERAGE (L/COW):** 40L

**WHAT IS YOUR FEEDING SYSTEM?**  
Stationary mixer with conveyors

**ARE THERE OTHER BREEDS IN YOUR HERD?** No

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



## Ontario

**BRICKYARD DAIRY INC.**  
Ontario

**PREFIX:** BRICKYARD

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Cole & Amy Dortmans

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 220 currently 140 of my own, 80 for disaster relief

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 850 acres

**FACILITY TYPE:** Freestall/ parlour

**HERD PRODUCTION AVERAGE (L/COW):**  
35L/cow

**WHAT IS YOUR FEEDING SYSTEM?** TMR

**ARE THERE OTHER BREEDS IN YOUR HERD?** About 5 original crossbreds

**HOLSTEIN CANADA SERVICES USED:**  
Registration, some classification, and some genotyping.

### Ontario: Brickyard Dairy Inc.

When buying the farm four years ago there were many challenges, mostly with overall farm management. The farm was a complete crossbred herd for a number of years with a wide variety of breeds. When Cole took over, he entered the herd into Dairy Comp 305 to track and record events. He also did two DHI milk tests to establish where the cows were in regards to production. This combined data was used to determine which animals to cull and he ended up shipping around 80 animals. Before taking over the farm, it was decided that he would slowly transition over to a purebred Holstein herd and this is still a work in progress with a few crossbreds still around. Another challenge was just the overall condition of the farm and the amount of repair and maintenance that needed to be done. Over the course of the first few months, Cole worked really hard on doing repairs focusing mainly on cow comfort, and the flow of cattle within the milking facility. With these changes, came increased production and allowed for the quota to be filed without purchasing any new animals.

Cole notes that running a farm on his own was and is vastly different from many of the farms he had worked on in the past. He would advise anyone considering going through this to surround themselves with a great management team. Simply being able to bounce new ideas off someone else within the industry is a huge help. It is impossible to do and know everything on your own, so you need to have an open mind and be willing to trust in the experts in the industry. They can also act as someone to hold you accountable. The second piece of advice was to plan out your project financially. What projects cost the least and have the biggest return on investment. A project does not need to be new and shiny, sometimes it simply a couple days of labour or a few new gates.

Currently, Cole along with his wife Amy, are continuing to focus on the herd. There is still a lot of growth that can be made to

increase profitability by improving the herd and focusing on cow comfort. Another area of focus is the agronomy side of the business; focusing on feed quality and consistency in the bunks. This has allowed for significant increases in milk production, but they continue to learn more and more every year.

Looking back, Cole wishes he had spent the money needed to upgrade the parlour frame and update the milking equipment. At the time, he decided he would just fix what was broken, however it continues to be a struggle every week and they are hoping to make it last until they can build a new facility.

With all the challenges faced over the four years, their greatest pride is the overall presentation of the farm: there was a lot of clean up required to make it more presentable. They are also very proud of the increasing milk production per cow. The farms profitability has drastically increased, and the farm continues to run more smoothly every day. Production has doubled and overall herd health is improving which keeps them motivated to keep going. "Our goal has never been to milk more cows but rather to milk fewer cows, better."

Cole credits their success to setting goals and continually reviewing and adjusting them based on the results they achieve. Some goals can be quickly evaluated but others are more difficult to evaluate or take longer periods of time. Having a plan in place allowed them to better focus their time and energy on projects that needed the most attention and would provide the biggest gains first.

Change is an ongoing part of every business. "It does not matter where the change is coming from; being open to new ideas can drastically improve your operation. Continuing to adapt your farming operation with the current times and new research, is what I think is going to set farms apart".



**Quebec: RightStar Farms**

Dave and Sophie are currently milking 52 cows in a tie stall barn in Quebec, but getting to this point has not been without its challenges. Financing has been their biggest hurdle to overcome because in the beginning, they owned no land or buildings of their own. With cows and quota only, combined with lots of ambition, after renting three farms they finally accessed the financing they needed to buy their own farm. Building their assets by acquiring more land early on is something they would change if they had the chance to do it all again.

With current classification of 10ME, 5EX, 38VG, 12GP, their greatest pride is having the herd they have. "To see the number of excellent cows in our prefix and to see the cows that pass the 60,000kg mark." This has also been their greatest motivation. They have invested a lot of time, money and energy in improvements to cow comfort and creating an environment that allows the cows to reach their full potential.

Deciding on which projects to pursue has been a team effort. They avoid making rash decisions and prefer to

closely examine all aspects of a project. Bringing others in to the decision making process to help guide and advise them was an important factor in their decision making especially when considering their recently completed barn to house replacement animals. In the future, Dave and Sophie would like to acquire more land.

Their advice to others who are considering going through this?

**"You have to ask yourself if you're really doing it out of passion. You also have to be patient because it takes a long time to reach the desired business model. Surround yourself with people who believe in your project and your vision."**

**Quebec**



**RIGHTSTAR**

Saint-Germain-de-Grantham, Quebec

**PREFIX:** RIGHTSTAR

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Dave Tourigny & Sophie Leblanc

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 52

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 53 acres

**FACILITY TYPE:** Tie Stall

**HERD PRODUCTION AVERAGE:** 10,800 kg

**WHAT IS YOUR FEEDING SYSTEM?** TMR

**ARE THERE OTHER BREEDS IN YOUR HERD?** No

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





**East**

**VALLEYSIDE HOLSTEINS**  
Upper Stewiacke, Nova Scotia

**PREFIX:** VALLEYSIDE

**PEOPLE INVOLVED:** Alex & Rebecca Archibald

**# OF COWS MILKED:** 34

**# OF ACRES FARMED:** 110 croplable, 50 pasture

**FACILITY TYPE:** Tie-stall

**HERD PRODUCTION AVERAGE:** 9,900 kg, 4.2 F

**WHAT IS YOUR FEEDING SYSTEM?**  
Round bale silage, custom pellet, pasture

**ARE THERE OTHER BREEDS IN YOUR HERD?** No

**HOLSTEIN CANADA SERVICES USED:**  
Registration, Classification, NLID

**East: Valleyside Holsteins**

Alex came from a dairy farming family and Rebecca is from a beef farm, so cows and farming were in their blood. When they were presented with the opportunity to purchase Rebecca's grandfather's farm, with the help of the New Entrant Program, the couple were excited to start a new path forward. Alex was able to work with Rebecca's grandfather for 18 months before the purchase of the farm, which allowed for a smoother transition. The herd was crossbred and milk production was low. In order to be profitable, with the debt load they took on, and to move towards the type of herd they wanted, they made many changes. The first year they spent a lot of time and attention on the barn and crop systems. This very quickly paid off as the milk production more than doubled. They made many renovations to the barn to improve cow comfort; making the stalls longer and wider and adding a bedding keeper so that they could make a deep bedded stall. They installed tunnel ventilation to improve airflow and LED lighting with a timer. Not only did the atmosphere in the barn improve but reproduction as well. Now they are focusing on maximizing production while lowering input costs with crops and silage they can harvest themselves and buying in what they need. The original herd in 2017 consisted of mainly angus/jersey crosses but now boasts a purebred Holstein herd with a classification of 2ME, 3 EX, 19 VG and 10 GP.



quota has prevented the growth of the operation that they hoped for, so for now, they are focusing on improving efficiencies: doing more cropping and harvesting themselves to avoid the constraints of custom work and reducing the expense of raising heifers by using more beef and sexed semen. Seeing the small changes that they made yielding big results and seeing those results quickly, helped to keep them motivated, particularly when they first started. Now, having goals to work towards keeps them focused on continuing to make improvements.

For anyone that is thinking about going through this and getting started, Alex and Rebecca feel it is really important to have a good mentor or two to be able to talk to and bounce ideas off of. It is equally important not to get overwhelmed with the greater industry and what everyone else is saying or doing.

"Know where you are at and where you want to be and don't be afraid to try new things. No one is an expert in everything so it's really important to surround yourself and work closely with people who are experts in their area and will give you sound recommendations. If something doesn't work use it as a learning experience to build on and grow."

This has been key to their success: working together, open communication, business planning and lots of support from family and neighbours. 🇨🇦

The biggest challenge to getting started was the debt they took on to purchase the farm. Thankfully, the New Entrant program made it possible, with a loan of additional quota. Now, they are focused on cow comfort, and with cash flow tight, they have to find ways to do economical renovations. The first couple of years, they were short on feed and they needed to balance trying to get the feed they wanted with what they could afford.

The challenge of obtaining additional



## Inbreeding depression and the tools available to manage it

*As inbreeding steadily increases year over year, more members of the dairy industry are making it a focal point of discussion. Although each herd uses information to make decisions in distinctive ways inbreeding is something that should be considered in those decisions.*

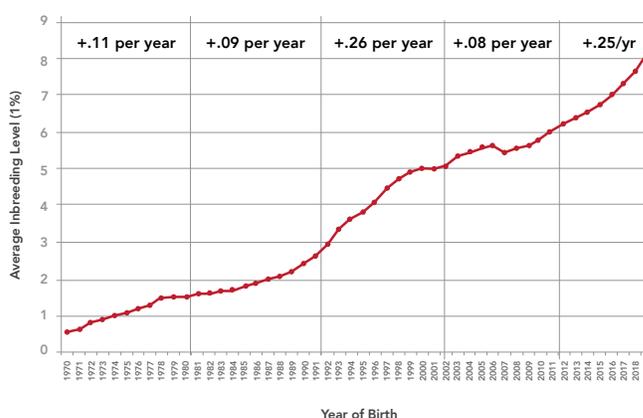
We can define the inbreeding level as a measurement of how closely related the dam and sire lines are to each other. However, mating closely related animals was a common practice in the past. If you would like to read more about inbreeding concepts, see page 15 of the May/June 2020 issue of *InfoHolstein*.

### Inbreeding Trend – recent increase raises concern

Looking at the inbreeding trends since the 70s, we can see two decades with a drastic spike in inbreeding rates. The first spike was during the 90s; the second, since 2011, coincides with the beginning of the genomic era. Moreover, concentrating on the last few years, we observe a steeper increase that exceeds the 0.25% average for the decade.

The fast rate of genetic gain made since genomics entered the picture leaves no question, but it is necessary to point out that some of the gains may be restricted because of the simultaneous increase in inbreeding levels; health and fertility traits could be used as an example. Therefore, it is crucial to balance between pursuing extensive (and fast) genetic gain and controlling inbreeding levels.

Inbreeding Trends in Canadian Holsteins



### The losses from inbreeding – Inbreeding depression and abnormalities

It is not new that mating closely related animals can result in progeny affected by abnormalities and decreased performance. When one animal carries a gene that is not desirable, it will likely occur in the gene sequence of a close relative. When those lines are bred together, it increases the opportunity for that gene to double, resulting in the potential for poorer performance, particularly in fitness and production traits.

Another aspect of higher inbreeding that producers should watch closely is the higher chance of abnormalities. An animal may carry a "silent gene" that is not expressed; however, if both the dam and the sire carry this same gene and pass it to the progeny, it can cause severe health effects. This is the case for recessive genes and haplotypes such as HCD, HH, Brachyspina, and DUMPS. When transmitted from both parents, the pregnancy may not come to term or the calf may not be viable. If an animal is a carrier of one of these genes and its descendants are mated together, it is likely that some of the progeny will be negatively affected. In the case of abnormalities, it is easier to control because it is easy to identify, so the producers avoid mating the animals that are transmitting the abnormality.

	Trait	Impact of 1% Genomic Inbreeding increase	Yearly economic loss to a 100-cow herd	Yearly economic loss in Canada (950,000 cows)
<b>Production (305d 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation)</b>	Milk Yield	-48.7 kg	\$3,400*	\$33 million*
	Fat Yield	-1.75 kg		
<b>Fertility in Heifers</b>	Age at Conception Conception Conception	+0.66 day	\$40**	\$380,000**
<b>Fertility in Cows</b>	Day Open	+0.89 day	\$400***	\$3.8 million***

\*Average milk price of \$0.72. \*\*Average cost of extra day open of \$1.93. \*\*\*Average cost of extra day open of \$4.50.

Adapted from Makanjuola et al. 2020. BMC Genomics, 21:605. doi: 10.1186/s12864-020-07031-w

## New research on inbreeding depression

Extensive research shows the negative effects of high inbreeding. Older studies found that inbreeding levels of 12.5% or higher are associated with at least 25% higher risk of culling. Recently, a publication from the University of Guelph examined the effects at the genetic level, which is even more precise than traditional pedigree inbreeding. The research calculated the average production and fertility decrease for first lactation cows and fertility in heifers due to a 1% increase in inbreeding level.

It is important to note that the researchers made clear that the losses, although calculated for first lactation cows, are still present in later lactations. Therefore, the economic losses can be expanded for the lifetime of the cow. The table summarizes the results of the estimations; we included some yearly monetary losses due to 1% raise in inbreeding levels for a 100-cow herd scenario and for the whole Canadian dairy industry.

## Inbreeding x line breeding – can inbreeding be good?

It is common to hear that line breeding is inbreeding that ended up producing outstanding progeny. In fact, this practice had a positive impact on the genetic selection of cattle in the first half of the last century. The elite animals back then were much more superior compared to the average, so mating animals from a few elite lines would increase the chance of having elite animals and a more homogeneous herd. Today, the chase for top index genomic numbers causes a similar effect – most of the elite animals come from very few bloodlines. The difference is that today every producer has access to high-end genetics, and they

can use different technologies and sources of information to make genetic gains on their farm. It's meant that line breeding is not a great strategy anymore.

The consequence of the broad availability of superior genetics is a smaller gap between elite and average animals compared to how it was in the past. Especially with the availability of genomic selection, herds are much more homogeneous these days, with animals that do not have different severe faults in their production, conformation, and fitness traits. Therefore, the gains made by mating closely related elite animals may be limited due to the decrease in performance observed when inbreeding levels raise.

## Summary

It is obvious that the inbreeding level is rising at a concerning rate in the Holstein breed. Maintaining this pace may result in worsening the genetic gains achieved in fitness traits, such as health and fertility. From the producers' side, striving for a balance between strong genetic gain and inbreeding control should be part of every breeders' breeding strategy. Registration and accurate pedigree information is the most affordable and efficient means to manage it.

Along with practical tools such as Compass and Lactanet's Inbreeding calculator, Canadian producers can boost the return to their genetic improvement program. Avoiding the use of bulls that come from bloodlines that compose the herd can be a simple strategy to apply. This may mean not using the very top bulls for some traits; you can still achieve good progress for these characteristics while avoiding long-term economic losses. 🇨🇦

# Major Type Traits Move to Composite Indexes



The April 2021 official genetic evaluation release by Lactanet brings changes to the evaluations for Conformation and the four major scorecard traits: Mammary System, Feet & Legs, Dairy Strength and Rump in the Holstein, Ayrshire and Jersey breeds. While these new evaluations are to be used and interpreted in the exact way as before, they are now a result of composite indexes. The move to composite indexes is an optimal way to maintain a consistent trait definition across all animals in the breed and provides a means for a more immediate response at a genetic level to changes in the Classification program.

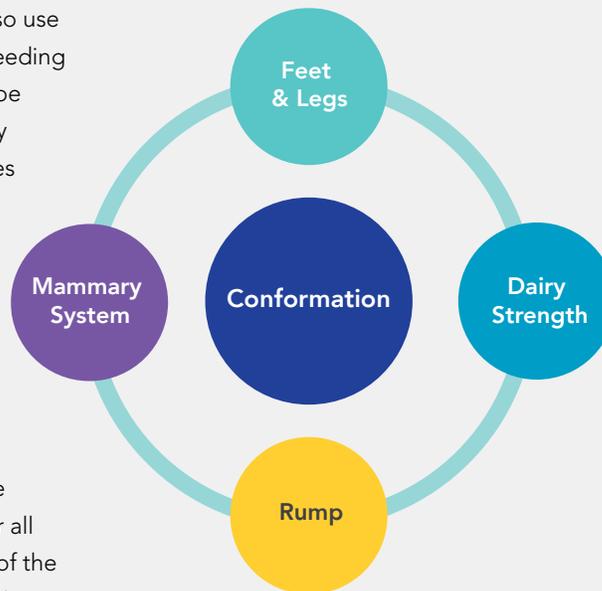
## Deriving the Composite Indexes

Selection indexes are commonly used in genetic evaluations and are clearly represented by LPI and Pro\$. We also use indexes for biologically complex breeding goals that require multiple traits to be measured, such as Daughter Fertility and Hoof Health. All of these indexes combine the evaluations of many individual traits of interest to form a new single value. Such indexes can then be used to select for multiple traits at once and move toward a more comprehensive selection goal.

In this same way, the new composite indexes combine the evaluations for all of the descriptive traits within each of the respective four major scorecard sections of the Canadian Classification system. The evaluations for Mammary System, Feet & Legs, Dairy Strength and Rump are then combined into the animal's composite index for Conformation. This is in contrast to the previous method, which directly

estimated genetic evaluations using the actual scorecard scores and overall Final Score from Holstein Canada's Classification system.

The weightings for the index formula were derived to best reflect today's Classification system and attempt to best replicate the former proofs of proven sires whose daughters were all classified in recent rounds. Consideration in the formula is also made for intermediate optimum traits, such as Teat Length. Modifications occur to the Classification system over time, including the contributions of descriptive traits to the major scorecards or even the addition of new traits.



While it would normally take several years for such changes to infiltrate the genetic evaluation system, composite indexes bring updates at the Classification level into genetic evaluations almost

immediately and reflect them in the evaluations of all animals regardless of their age or when they may have been classified.

## Added Adjustments for Chosen Traits

In the Holstein breed, the average stature of first lactation cows continues to increase slowly and various measures have been put in place at the Classification level to minimize this trend. To support this desired industry direction at a genetic selection level, Stature has been adjusted in the composite indexes for both Mammary System and Feet & Legs. Previously, selection for improved Mammary System or Feet & Legs would have inadvertently resulted in some selection toward taller cows. Now, you'll be able to improve these major scorecard traits without affecting Stature in any direction.

The shift to composite indexes can also help to address other emerging concerns that the industry is seeing in terms of the frequency of short teats and straight rear legs. With a similar concept to Stature, the weighting of Teat Length within Mammary System was modified to promote selection for longer teats. Within the new Feet & Legs composite, the weighting of Rear Leg Side View was also increased to have the composite neutral with this trait and help prevent an increased frequency of straight legs in the breed. The presence and degree of these trait adjustments within the various composite indexes will be routinely assessed to best reflect the needs within the breed.

## Expected Response

When considering selection based on these new type composite indexes, it is the expected response of the individual traits within each scorecard section that should be the central focus (Figures 1 and 2). For example, when selecting for Conformation, you can also expect a very strong response for improved Mammary System, given the correlation of 78%, and then relatively less correlated response for the other scorecard traits (Figure 1).

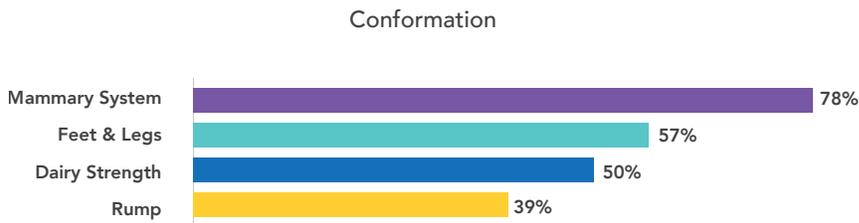
The correlations presented in Figure 2 can be interpreted in a similar way. In general, selection decisions using these new composite indexes for major type traits can be done as before and will result in a greater consistency with the objectives set by the current Canadian Classification system. In addition, the benefits of including the extra trait adjustments can also be visualized by the correlations in Figure 2, especially noting the near zero correlation between Stature and both Mammary System and Feet & Legs.

## Changes Observed

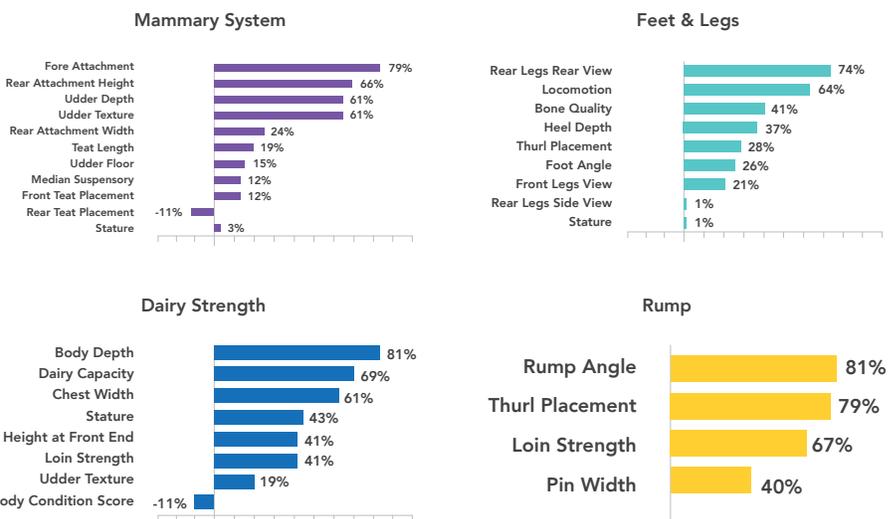
Some degree of change is expected due to the transition to composite indexes alone and then furthermore with the Stature, Teat Length and Rear Leg Side View adjustments included. While there will be minimal change for the average animal, some may experience more notable decreases or increases in their evaluations for major type traits. In general, older bulls are more likely to have greater change in their proofs due to their daughters having been classified in rounds that may not include the same trait scoring definitions and weights as more recent years. Bulls that have more extreme proofs in either direction for the scorecard traits will also experience greater change with the move to composite indexes.

Genomic young bulls garner much of the attention for selection to produce the next generation and are also inclined to see changes, especially in the top genomic

**FIGURE 1: Proof correlations (%) between Conformation and each of the major scorecard traits to reflect the relative weight of each scorecard trait and its expected response.**



**FIGURE 2: Proof correlations (%) between each of the major scorecard traits and their respective descriptive traits to reflect the relative weight of each individual trait and its expected response.**



Conformation bulls. High end GPA Conformation bulls generally experience some degree of drop in their ratings due to the composites and the associated trait adjustments.

## Summary

The April 2021 genetic evaluations for Conformation and the four major scorecard traits have changed to be composite indexes. This change brings consistency to all animals within the breed and reflects the modernization of trait

definitions for overall Conformation and the four major scorecard traits. The change also serves to address, at a genetic level, emerging issues and unfavourable trends in the breed as indicated by the industry. There are some considerable changes to published evaluations for these major type traits during this initial transition to composite indexes, but this move brings gainful advancements for the continued genetic progress and achievement of goals established for the breed.



# New Classification Changes for 2021

As a member of Holstein Canada, you are accustomed to annual updates to the classification program. For those not completely familiar, every year the classification advisory committee, made up of producers, HC board members, an AI rep, and a veterinarian, meets to discuss what can be improved in the way we evaluate conformation.

2019 witnessed some extensive changes that have yet to be implemented. These include the separation of the Feet and Legs section into two major score-card sections: Foot and Mobility. In addition to that, Locomotion and Front Leg Front View – which had been previously classified as research traits (not weighted in the scorecard) for a few years – will be included in the Mobility section. We expect to have these changes implemented later this year or early 2022. Also important to note that the two new scored traits, along with Udder Floor, were incorporated into the conformation Genetic Evaluations last December using the data Holstein Canada has been recording during the last several years.

## Changes concerning young 1<sup>st</sup> lactation cows

Heifer raising management has improved tremendously over the last decade to decrease the average age at first calving getting animals into production and generating income earlier. According to Lactanet data, the breed average for age

at first calving is around 24.5 months of age – consequently nearly half of the heifers in Canada are calving under 2 years of age. Although well-grown, these young heifers still require additional time to develop before being fully mature. To address this while continuing to promote production functional conformation, the Holstein Canada board decided in favour of the following changes **for heifers that calved under 24 months of age and are under 60 days in milk:**

- The discriminations for codes 4 and 5 for Body Depth were reduced while code 6 is now considered ideal alongside code 7 for these heifers. Consequently, the point reduction for this trait is going to be less severe if the cow has Body Depth scored 4 or 5.
- The ideal codes for Chest Width will be 5, 6 and 7 (previously 6 and 7 only). Also, the discrimination for code 4 was reduced, similar to Body Depth.

The committee believes these changes

better reflect the development stage of younger heifers, and recognize the animals that are scored with these codes are still functional and productive, as long as they have adequate openness and spring of rib.

## Revisit for VG-89 2<sup>nd</sup> Lactation

The Board also decided to endorse that all animals considered for a score of 89 points (second lactation) must have a revisit. If the acting classifier is Junior level, there must be a second classifier accompanying the Jr. classifier on the revisit, however, if the classifiers are of the intermediate or senior level, the revisit can be completed by them, on their own.

Altogether, the approved changes reflect the awareness Holstein Canada, through its' committees, have about the reality and challenges in the dairy industry. The producers keep the Association progressing, so it is essential to adapt to the progress made at the farm level to keep the operations sustainable and profitable. 🐄

# DFC President Pierre Lampron named one of the Top 50 in Canadian Agriculture



ON FEBRUARY 23RD, Dairy Farmers of Canada's (DFC) President, Pierre Lampron was named one of the Top 50 in Agriculture by Canadian Western Agribition in their Designated Hitters category. This prestigious award recognizes Lampron as a "go-to" leader and champion of the Canadian dairy industry.

"I am extremely honored to be part of such a prestigious group," said Lampron. "My commitment to promoting Canadian agriculture is largely inspired by the passion and hard work of our producers to feed the nation."

Lampron epitomizes the qualities of the Designated Hitter award category as a staunch advocate for the dairy industry and a true motivator.

Lampron is a known consensus builder who believes in the power of speaking with one voice. A mobilizer, he was instrumental in securing \$1.75 billion in compensation for the dairy market concessions made under the Comprehensive Economic and Trade



Agreement and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. He has also worked to bring producers and processors closer together, integrating processors as part of DFC's strategic planning while forging closer ties with retail and foodservice and guiding the expansion of national marketing efforts.

"Understanding languages and embracing uniqueness builds bridges. It is the fastest way to bring the world closer together and to the Truth. Through understanding his fellow producers, Pierre sees their similarities before their differences," said Gerald Schipper, Chair of Holstein Canada. "His dedication and his work advocating on their behalf will have lasting impacts on the industry's approach to achieving our common goal of supporting the families who feed the nation."

Above all, Lampron is a mentor for young farmers, inspiring them to continue this proud agricultural tradition. His family has been producing dairy for seven

generations, embracing tradition while adopting the latest technologies. His son now co-owns the family farm, alongside Lampron and his brothers.

Lampron was first elected to the Board of Directors for Les Producteurs de lait du Québec in 2000 and became President of DFC in 2017, where he works tirelessly to secure the sector's future. He has also participated in numerous committees, namely proAction's animal care committee and DFC's promotion and research committees. In addition, he has served on many boards, including the National Farm Animal Health and Welfare Council and the Executive Committee of the Canadian Animal Health Coalition. He currently sits on the boards of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and Lactanet Canada.

The Top 50 in Agriculture award will be presented at the 50th edition of the Canadian Western Agribition Show in November 2021.

# The Resolution Road – Every Member has a Voice

You are chatting with your neighbour, solving the world's problems or at least the ones that impact your farm. But when the conversation is over, what do you do with that idea?

You take it to your local club to be developed into a resolution and make your voice and opinions heard. Holstein Canada is a member driven organization that values your input and ideas but there is a process to have a resolution presented to the membership.

Last year we had amazing resolutions come forward to our AGM and there continues to be valuable input and suggestions being put forward for discussion at this year's AGM. Ideas and proposals from members just like you; that followed the process, starting at your local club meeting, to the provincial branch and then on to the Holstein Canada AGM. The resolutions for consideration this year will be available to view on our website in late June with results of the voting posted following the AGM.

**Every member has a voice; every member has a vote. Make yours count.**





Dear Customer Service Team



Alison



Audrey



JJ



In this edition Alison, Audrey and JJ are going to answer 3 common questions on the Compass Program

### 1. How can I add animals that I've bought and transferred into my ownership to the Compass program?

They are added once transferred with Holstein Canada and included in your herd with Lactanet. You can add animals manually under: **HERD GENETICS → MY HERD INVENTORY → ACTIVE**. Click on **ADD NEW ANIMAL**, enter the registration number and hit + to add to your herd. If you add several animals, it is recommended you log off and log in again so the system can redo the calculations.

### 2. When I'm making my breeding decisions (sexed, conventional or beef) why aren't any animals assigned to conventional semen showing up in the list?

Animals assigned to conventional semen don't show up in the Strategy & Profitability tab. This is to keep that list as short as possible – so only animals that should receive non-conventional semen are shown. You can check the Conventional semen list on the **ACTIVE LIST** under **HERD GENETICS**.

### 3. Why are the genomic numbers different between the sections **PAST BREEDING SUCCESS → GENETIC TRENDS → TRAIT TRENDS AND HERD GENETICS → GENETICS VS PERFORMANCE?**

Past breeding success considers the animals born during a specific year, while **HERD GENETICS → GENETICS VS PERFORMANCE** uses the information from all current 1st lactation animals. Therefore, the animals born between 2 and 3 years ago should have similar numbers to the one shown at Herd Genetics.



Compass is a free, online software that is an interactive guide to genetics and profitability for producers. If you have not checked out Compass take a look at [www.compasscan.ca](http://www.compasscan.ca). To create an account all you need to get started is an email address.

If you have questions related to Compass, give us a call at 1-855-756-8300 at ext. 521, email - [compass@holstein.ca](mailto:compass@holstein.ca) or text at 1-226-401-8305. 🐾



## Exciting new career opportunities available

Holstein Canada is looking for dynamic individuals to join our team! Head to our career page on the Holstein Canada website or send an email to [hr@holstein.ca](mailto:hr@holstein.ca)

[holstein.ca](http://holstein.ca) → About Us → Careers



### Top 10 Sires for Health and Fertility with 100+ Daughters Classified in Two-Month Period (Feb. 2021 - Mar. 2021)

Sire	Daughters Classified	Sire Health & Fertility	Avg. Final Score of Daughters
ALTAROBSON	119	683	79.7
NUMERO UNO	100	628	81.2
ADAGIO-P	130	627	80.4
RAMBO	130	599	80.6
PORTER	187	590	80.6
RIGEL	166	562	79.9
SOLOMON	249	553	82.3
ALTATOOHOT	115	552	80.9
LIGHTHOUSE	176	552	80.6
BLOOMFIELD	235	552	80.3

### Top 10 Sires for 305d Fat Production with 100+ Daughters Classified in Two-Month Period (Feb. - Mar. 2021)

Sire	Classified Daughters (100+)	Avg. Final Score	Average 305-Day Fat
FUEL	181	81.4	430.1
BLOOMFIELD	151	80.4	425.4
MIDNIGHT	188	80.5	422.0
DELTA	157	81.2	421.9
LAUTRUST	424	80.9	409.2
DELTA-LAMBDA	176	82.3	407.8
BREWMASTER	232	80.6	406.5
MOGUL	106	80.9	403.4
THOREAU	307	81.3	395.4
RUMMY	119	81.1	394.1

NOTE: Daughters are included in the statistics if they had their last milk test in the last three-month period (Jan. 2021 to Mar. 2021).

# CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

MID-ROUND **MR**

## MAY

ON Renfrew, Grey, Huron  
 ON **MR** Russell, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk  
 QC Pontiac, Bagot, Richelieu, Vercheres, Rouville

ON Lanark, Halton, York, Dufferin  
 ON **MR** Niagara, Wentworth  
 QC Abitibi, Temiscamingue, Labelle, Argenteuil, Papineau & Gatineau, Terrebonne, Deux Montagnes, L'Assomption, Montcalm, St-Maurice  
 QC **MR** Bellechasse

ON Peel  
 Simcoe 1  
 Simcoe 2

## JUNE

ON Peterborough, Victoria, Durham, Northumberland

QC Lac-St-Jean, Roberval  
 Portneuf 1, 2, 3  
 Champlain 1, 2  
 Montmagny 1, 2  
 L'Islet

BC  
 MB

This schedule is subject to change within a 1-2 week period.

For the full Field Service schedule, see the Field Services section under Services on our website, [holstein.ca](http://holstein.ca).

# Holstein Canada

# Annual General Meeting



## Hybrid from Ottawa, Ontario, the 2021 AGM will offer:

The global situation of the past year has changed many plans and events but it has also made us more creative and focused in our planning!

The hybrid AGM is a more inclusive event – regardless of where you are located, you can connect to the meeting, participate in discussions and have your vote count.

From your seat in the tractor, from the milking parlour, or from the kitchen table, all members are able to join in and be part of the process.

The resolutions from 2019 and 2020 will be discussed, debated and voted on.

The same rules for voting will apply, every voting member will register by prefix and have one vote. The robust virtual platform will allow for secure voting.

The decision to hold the AGM in July was made to give the best possible chance to have an in-person event. In order to comply with our by-laws this is the latest we can push the meeting date.

We understand the importance of members gathering together and that a virtual meeting does not replace that connection. In the future we will be together again but the experience gained in offering virtual solutions is valuable for these events to remain inclusive for all members going forward.

Join in July 8th for discussions and voting on the path of your Association along with some celebrations and award presentations. 🇨🇦



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