

2017

Star of the Breed



**Smith-Crest-TW SH Virgie-ET EX-95 2E**

**6-04 2X 305D 44,710M 4.0%F 1,784F 2.9%P 1,296P**

**4th place 150,000 pound cow – 2017 International Holstein show**

**Bred by: Matt and Travis Smith, Watertown, Wis., and Anthony W. Whitehead, Conway, Mo.**

**Owned by: Paul Grulke, Mayville, Wis.**



# 2017 Star of the Breed

**"S**he's got the strength, a beautiful high, wide rear udder and you have to love her open rib," commented Judge Adam Liddle during the 2017 International Holstein Show, as Smith-Crest-TW SH Virgie-ET left the colored shavings.

During the world's most competitive dairy show, this elite Registered Holstein® stands out. She is among the breed's finest in the milking parlor, too.

That's why Holstein Association USA is pleased to recognize Smith-Crest-TW SH Virgie-ET as the 2017 Star of the Breed. The highest honor presented to a Registered Holstein cow, Star of the Breed recognizes outstanding performance in the showring and at home on the dairy.

At the time of recognition, Smith-Crest-TW SH Virgie-ET was owned by 21-year-old Paul Grulke of Mayville, Wis.

Her balance, depth of body and front-end strength are attributes Paul says he admires about Virgie. He began working with her as a Junior Holstein project alongside Matt and Travis Smith of Smith-Crest Holsteins.

"We call Virgie 'The Tank' since she is small but powerful," Travis says. "She always has a huge appetite and a deep fill on her—rarely a cow to have any problems. She stays at her peak most of her lactation. She knows exactly where she lives in the barn."

During her last lactation, calving in at six years and four months of age, on two-time a day milking, Virgie produced 44,710 pounds of milk, with 1,784 pounds of fat and 1,296 pounds of protein.

Travis explains that Virgie's impressive milk record doesn't come as a surprise. This lactation, Virgie is on track to produce 46,000 pounds.

Born in December 2009, Virgie is sired by Picston Shottle-ET, out of Willows-Edge Durham Virgo Excellent-91 3E. She placed fourth in the 150,000-pound cow class at the 2017 International Holstein Show and second in the 2017 International Junior Holstein Show, both held in conjunction with the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis.

Classified Excellent-95 2E, Virgie is a cow to be admired by any Registered Holstein breeder.

## Top performance

When selecting animals, Paul focuses on proven sires that bring high type, sound milk production, with strong feet and legs.

Virgie fit his selection criteria perfectly, Paul says: "Above all else, Virgie has the will to milk."

He first noticed Virgie during the 2015 Mid-West Spring National Holstein show where she placed second.

"Before acquiring Virgie, I worked with her at different shows throughout the year," Paul says. "I always admired her from a distance. During 2015, she calved in and looked really great and caught my attention even further."

The cow family garnered international attention, too.

Smith-Crest Holsteins exported many embryos from Virgie's dam to Japan. Keeping hold of the number two embryos resulted in Virgie herself and three full sisters on the farm.

"Virgie was always ahead of her sisters, development-wise," Matt says. "In 2011 we sold Virgie as a two-year-old in our sale, and through other circumstances we ended up getting her back, and we couldn't have been happier."

Virgie currently has one daughter, MS Smith-Crest F Vanna, that scored Very Good 86 as a three-year-old.

## Preparing for the future

Currently a junior at University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Paul is majoring in dairy science with a minor in agriculture business. He enjoys finding the best mating for each cow, while learning how genetics evolve over time.

After graduation, he plans to pursue a career in genetics. His aspirations include being a herdsman or owning his own dairy farm where he could focus on breeding high-type animals.

Paul has been active in a variety of Junior Holstein activities, competing at the local, state, and national level in shows and other youth competitions.

"The Junior Holstein Association has really affected my life," Paul says. "I've been a part of our Junior Association here in Dodge County, showing at our State Fair, as well as being part of our dairy judging and dairy bowl teams. I learned a lot through those teams and the Association."

What's next for the 2017 Star of the Breed?

"Being a part of this cow for the past three years has been an honor and watching her develop is a neat experience," Paul says. "It's a cool start to hopefully a long career in the dairy industry."

Today, Virgie is owned by Matt and Kate Smith. As they look to Virgie's future, an extensive IVF program will begin.

## About the award

The Star of the Breed recognition is given annually to one Holstein cow that exemplifies outstanding production combined with exceptional type. To be eligible for the Star of the Breed award, a cow must place in the top five in her class at a National Holstein Show, be in a herd enrolled in the TriStar<sup>SM</sup> program and have an official classification score.

Once the eligible cows are determined, the following calculation is used to determine the award recipient: Combined Mature Equivalent (ME) Fat and Protein + Age Adjusted Classification Score x (Breed Average ME CFP/ Breed Average Age Adjusted Score).

Smith-Crest-TW SH Virgie-ET and Paul will be honored during the 2018 Holstein Association USA's Annual Meeting, July 2-3 in Acme, Michigan. Registration is available at [www.holsteinusa.com](http://www.holsteinusa.com).