

Gold Medal DamSM and Dam of MeritSM

Traditional recognitions still have value in today's fast-paced industry

In the ever-changing world of genomic evaluations, it is worth noting there are still recognition programs at Holstein Association USA which identify elite brood cows in more traditional ways. Gold Medal Dam (GMD) and Dam of Merit (DOM) recognitions are two excellent awards still being used to recognize these cows that produce high quality offspring.

Gold Medal Dam: Recognizing Outstanding Brood Cows

The Gold Medal Dam recognition began in 1957 in an effort to identify superior brood cows. The program was designed to award cows with at least three offspring that met certain production and type performance levels. Since the beginning of the program, over 23,000 cows have been awarded the status of Gold Medal Dam.

There have been minor adjustments to the Gold Medal Dam recognition over the years, but the award criteria has remained largely the same and still has the same purpose. To be eligible, a cow and at least three daughters must be classified. There is equal emphasis on production and type, as well as equal emphasis on the dam and her daughters. In order to receive the recognition, the cow and her daughters must all meet the criteria in several categories, with minimum values determined by the dam's year of birth. The cow herself must meet cut-off levels for average Mature Equivalent (ME) Milk, average ME Fat, average ME Protein, and Age Adjusted Classification Score. All lactations over 270 days in milk are included in these averages. The cow also must have at least three daughters with lactations that meet a set of cut-offs for ME Milk, ME Fat, and ME Protein, and daughters meeting an average cutoff for Age Adjusted Score. All daughters and all lactations over 270 days in milk are included in the production averages. All classified daughters are used in calculating the average Age Adjusted Score. It is important to note that the award is not based on just the best three daughters, but all daughters with available performance data.

As an example, a cow born in 2006 must meet these requirements to receive recognition as a Gold Medal Dam:

- Dam Average ME Milk of 30,377
- Dam Average ME Fat of 1,061
- Dam Average ME Protein of 880

- Dam Age Adjusted Score of 83
- Daughter Average ME Milk of 30,877
- Daughter Average ME Fat of 1,081
- Daughter Average ME Protein of 895
- Daughter Average Age Adjusted Score of 83



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If a cow meets the classification criteria and has daughters that meet all the criteria, but she does not meet the ME production criteria herself, she can still be eligible by meeting one of these lifetime production levels: 200,000 pounds of milk, 7,200 pounds of fat or 6,400 pounds of protein.

Dam of Merit: Transmitting Superior Genetic Merit

A much newer recognition, the Dam of Merit award was first awarded in 1988. This recognition honors cows that transmit elite genetics, as measured by the Total Performance Index (TPI). Since the beginning of the Dam of Merit Award, over 43,000 cows have been recognized.

To receive Dam of Merit recognition, a cow must have a CTPI or GTPI above a cut-off level based on her year of birth, and have three offspring with PTA values for production and type. In addition, the CTPI or GTPI must be calculated using a required classification score. As an example, a cow born in 2006 must have a CTPI or GTPI over +1991 when she has at least three offspring with PTA values for production and type included in her evaluation.

Viewing Recognition Lists

All cows born in the last 25 years, at least 87 percent RHA, in herds enrolled in the TriStar program are automatically evaluated twice a year for both Gold Medal Dam and Dam of Merit. Both awards are permanent recognitions.

If you have a cow that qualifies for recognition, you will be notified by the Association. If you are interested in individual animals, there are a few ways to tell if a cow has already been recognized. GMD and DOM recognition is designated on pedigrees, found next to the cow's classification score. You can also search for an animal via the Animal Search on the web site homepage, or visit the Awards section, under Animals, to search for animals that have been recognized in a given year, by state if you would like. There, you can also find cut-off values for additional years and more information about the awards.

Four daughters of Scientific Debutante Rae-ET EX-92 GMD DOM, owned by Matt Nunes, Scientific Holsteins, of Chippewa Falls, Wis. Scientific SS Dede-ET VG-87; SS Debut-Red-ET EX-90; SS Destiny-ET EX-91; and Roy Delicate-ET EX-91.

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