

THE PULSE

Spring 2023 • Holstein Association USA, Inc.



U.S. REGISTERED HOLSTEINS[®]

THE WORLD'S PERFECT COW

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President's Message

A REASON TO BE PROUD...

As your Holstein USA President, I am fortunate to travel domestically and internationally on behalf of the association. Through these travels, I am always filled with pride in the strength of our Holstein USA Junior programs. Our U.S. dairy industry is losing farms, but in many cases the Junior programs are as robust and dynamic as when I was a Junior member.

Dairy youth in other countries do not have the same opportunities as youth in the U.S. Our Holstein USA youth programs are the envy of many. From Young Dairy Leaders Institute, dairy bowl, dairy jeopardy, speech contests, interview competitions, informational sessions and beyond, the programming provided is impressive. The next generation will have tremendous opportunities to learn more about dairy and agriculture, and to do so while meeting kids that share a similar interest.

The Young Dairy Leaders Institute (YDLI) is the flagship program for the Holstein Foundation. This two-year long program recently graduated 49 young adults from North America, preparing them as future leaders in agriculture. From learning how to best advocate for agriculture to making networking contacts, the YDLI program has provided leadership and occupational skills for over 500 young adults to date to help better prepare them for a career in the dairy industry.

The Holstein Association's Distinguished Junior Membership (DJM) program and National Junior Holstein Shows also have a positive impact on young Holstein enthusiasts. The DJM program provides the opportunity for youth to be recognized for their hard work, while learning how to craft a professional application and gain experience with an interview process. National Junior Holstein shows offer an array

of life lessons – hard work, early morning and late-night chores, camaraderie within the dairy industry, and winning or losing with grace.

Most Human Resource representatives will tell you that farm kids are at an advantage for employment offers due to their work ethic and moral values. Our Holstein USA youth programs provide a significant opportunity to help youth develop these desirable traits.

The Holstein USA President and Vice President serve on the Holstein Foundation board, providing input with fellow Foundation board members to help direct Holstein USA staff on the direction of youth programs. Please know the Holstein Foundation Board, Holstein USA board, and staff at Holstein Association USA take this role seriously. We are committed to not only sustaining these programs but fostering growth and evolution for continual improvement.

The life lessons, friendships, work ethic and more learned through Holstein Association USA and Holstein Foundation programs will serve our junior members throughout their life. If you have donated to the Holstein Foundation, thank you. If you have not, please consider doing so by visiting www.HolsteinFoundation.org. Your support in developing the next generation of dairy leaders is both important and appreciated.

Sincerely,



**Jonathan Lamb, President
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**



“Our Holstein USA youth programs are the envy of many.”





HIGH STANDARDS ENSURE A QUALITY PRODUCT

In this column, I'll provide an update on a couple of important national agricultural matters that are of significance. In April, we sent a letter to USDA during their comment period on a proposal to strengthen animal disease traceability regulations. In particular, they were looking for comments on the Proposed Rule for Use of Electronic Identification Ear Tags as Official Identification for Cattle.

Following are excerpts of our communication to USDA on this issue.

The Holstein Association USA is a pioneer in animal traceability. Twenty years ago, we started a pilot project with USDA called National Farm Animal Identification & Records (FAIR) that proved the concept on 24-hour animal disease traceability using electronic RFID ear tags in cattle, and RFID readers in cattle markets and slaughter plants nationwide. Our involvement in the State of Michigan as part of their Tuberculosis eradication program was a successfully proven blueprint for a national animal identification and traceability system. We lobbied hard for national, mandatory animal disease traceability program and believe strongly in its need today.

COVID-19 has given us pause to think about our preparedness should a foreign animal disease outbreak hit the United States. The Holstein Association has championed the need for a national mandatory animal identification program in this country for years.

In 2004 and 2005, bills were written in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House called the "FAIR (Farm Animal Identification and Records) Act". Three bills in the House and one in the Senate calling for national mandatory animal identification, were sponsored by Senators Patrick Leahy (VT) and Arlen Specter (PA), Senate Bill S. 2008; Congressman Collin Peterson (MN) introduced H.R. 3787, H.R. 1254 and H.R. 1256.

While those bills never came to fruition, animal identification initiatives have taken place. Each state is to have their own plan in place with regard to how to handle an animal disease emergency. We question if the United States at large is adequately prepared to contain and eradicate a future animal disease outbreak.



"Accurate animal identification is the first step in creating a healthier and more efficient cow."



Fortunately, the State of Michigan has, what we believe is, an outstanding cattle identification mandate that could and should be the model for a national program. Michigan's mandatory cattle traceability system has been in effect for over a decade and has been highly effective.

Today's dairy farmers embrace data, which would not be possible without accurate animal identification. Almost all dairymen put ear tags in calves as soon as they are born. More and more are using an official electronic 840 RFID ear tag as one of the tags applied. The on-farm equipment automation utilizing RFID ear tags continues to grow – milking parlors, calf feeders and robot milkers. The 840 RFID number is the primary, official ID used in genomic testing in dairy cattle, and we have millions of dairy animals tested. We use it in collecting milk testing records and type evaluation data which help drive an accurate genetic evaluation system. Major dairy cattle shows have gone to requiring 840 RFID ear tags because it makes the health check-in and record keeping process much easier.

Dairy farmers care about our environment and sustainability. Animal identification has a very important role in that conversation. Accurate animal identification is the first step in creating a healthier and more efficient cow.

To move our national animal disease traceability program forward, we need leadership to provide clarity and consistency with rules. Our global trading partners are years ahead of us, and we'll be left out of the market if we don't level up. The health of our domestic herd continues to be at risk too, if the COVID pandemic has taught us anything.

It's clear to Holstein Association USA and the dairy farmers we serve that traceability has always been and will continue to be foundational to the success and sustainability of our entire food system. The use of electronic identification ear tags as official identification for cattle is an extremely important building block for animal traceability.

Also in April, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made a call for comments on the draft guidance of "Labeling of Plant-based Milk Alternatives and Voluntary Nutrient Statements: Guidance for Industry," that recommends that a plant-based milk alternative product that includes the term "milk" in its name (e.g., "soy milk" or "almond milk"), and that has a nutrient composition that is different than milk, include a voluntary nutrient statement that conveys how the product compares with milk based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service fluid milk substitutes nutrient criteria. For example, the label could say, "Contains lower amounts of Vitamin D and calcium than milk."

Following are excerpts of the comments we sent to FDA on this topic.

The DAIRY PRIDE Act first introduced in the U.S. Senate (S.130) and the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 778)

in 2018 would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take action against misbranded, plant-based beverages that are inappropriately using dairy terms, especially "milk."

Following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's proposed draft guidance, which would allow nut, oat, soy, and other non-dairy products to use the name "milk," Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Jim Risch (R-ID), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Peter Welch (D-VT) re-introduced this bipartisan legislation to combat the unfair practice of mislabeling non-dairy products using dairy names.

As written, the Defending Against Imitations and Replacements of Yogurt, milk, and cheese to Promote Regular Intake of Dairy Everyday Act (DAIRY PRIDE Act) of 2023 would require non-dairy products made from nuts, seeds, plants, and algae to no longer be mislabeled with dairy terms such as milk, yogurt or cheese.

FDA regulations (CFR 131.110) define "milk" as a lacteal secretion obtained by the complete milking of one or more healthy cows, with similar definitions for yogurt and cheese products. Though existing federal policy is clear on this subject, the FDA has not challenged the labeling practices of imitators made out of nuts, beans, seeds and grains, which have been branding themselves with dairy-specific terms.

This practice misleads consumers into thinking these products provide similar nutritional qualities found in real milk and other dairy products, when in reality, they do not.

The lack of enforcement on proper dairy labeling terms in the United States differs from that of similar nations, which police the matter closely. For example, in Canada, you will find the same brand of almond beverage labeled as "almond milk" in the U.S., but the word "milk" cannot be found on the product's label in Canada.

Dairy farmers work hard to provide consumers with nutritious food, and ensure they meet FDA's high standards. These bills uphold the high standards and integrity that farmers practice every day to produce wholesome, high-quality milk, and support consumption of real dairy products.

The Holstein Association USA strongly encourages FDA to challenge the labeling practices of imitators made out of nuts, beans, seeds and grains, which have been branding themselves with dairy-specific terms and to require all non-milk products including all plant-based beverages be labeled as such and not as "milk".

We'll keep you updated on any outcomes that may develop as a result of these comment periods. Quite simply, a national mandatory animal identification program in the United States is long overdue, and beverages derived from almonds, oats, soybeans, etc. should be classified as "almond water", "oat water", or "soybean water" and not Milk.



**John M. Meyer, Chief Executive Officer
Holstein Association USA, Inc.**

2022
Star of the Breed



Image © Cybil Fisher

SHOW-MAR CRUSH EVERYONE EX-92

3-02 3X 365D 60,240M 4.1%F 2,470F 3.1%P 1,866P
4th place Four-Year-Old - Northeast Spring National Holstein Show in 2022



Owned By: Wesley Brantner, Saegertown, PA

The 2022 Star of the Breed has eye-catching dairy character, an incredible udder, and impressive milk production. To top it off, her owners say she has the style and personality to match. With credentials like these, Show-Mar Crush Everyone is truly the complete package.

Crush Everyone is owned by Wesley Brantner of Saegertown, Pennsylvania. Wesley works on his family's farm, Show-Mar Holsteins. The 70-cow herd is owned by his parents, Mark and Jelena Brantner. To the Junior Holstein member, having a cow receive the prestigious Star of the Breed Award means a great deal.

"Winning the award means a lot because it shows you that you are on the right track to better cows," Wesley explains. "I appreciate that the Star of the Breed award looks at both the way she is classified and the way she's milking."

Show-Mar Crush Everyone has a lifetime production record of 108,990 pounds of milk with 4,165 pounds of fat and 3,421 pounds of protein. She's also classified Excellent 92. The outstanding cow earned a fourth-place finish in the Four-Year-Old cow class at the Northeast Spring National Show in 2022.

IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY

Like all the cows in the Show-Mar Holsteins herd, Crush Everyone traces back to one of the original five cows Mark Brantner bought when he began his dairy farming career in the 1990s. Since his start, Mark and his family have worked hard to develop a high-type herd of Registered Holsteins®.

"She completes eight generations of Very Good and Excellent cows," Mark says.

A Maverick Crush daughter, the 2022 Star of the Breed is true to her pedigree. Her dam, Show-Mar Ivy 1342, was also classified Excellent 92. Aptly called "Milk Truck" by the Brantner family, 1342 was a high producing cow with a wide front end.

"She is out of the same cow family as our cow that went Excellent 95, and she has a sister that went Excellent 94," Mark explains. Crush Everyone has had two daughters so far, including Show-Mar Warrior Hazel VG-87, and a fall calf.

SHOWRING SAVVY

Crush Everyone also performs well in the showing. In addition to placing competitively in her classes, she's a fun cow to parade around the ring because of her easy-going personality.

"She is one that I've always enjoyed showing because she doesn't fight you or anything," Wesley shares. "She leads nice and likes to be shown."

"Crush Everyone has that trust, and she doesn't always need one person," Jelena adds. "If we need another person to lead her, she's more than willing to go with them."

Wesley has fond memories of showing Crush Everyone as a yearling, when he competed against his older brother Dylan. Throughout shows that summer, Crush Everyone consistently placed above Dylan's yearling, a heifer that had taken home a third-place finish at the International Holstein Show the year before.



Left-Right: 2022 Pennsylvania Holstein Spring Youth Show Reserve Grand Champion Show-Mar Crush Everyone, 2nd 4-Year Old, Wesley Brantner, Grand Champion Cherry-Lor Dback Raven, 1st 4-Year Old, Cael Hembury. Image© Cowsmopolitan.

However, it's not necessarily winning every class, but highlighting his family's homebred animals Wesley appreciates. "I enjoy the competition and showing your heifer or cow off to other people," Wesley remarks.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

At five years old, the Brantner family believes Show-Mar Crush Everyone has a promising future ahead. "She's youthful and she has a lot of maturing to do too, in a good way," Mark explains. "I think she'll be my next 95-point cow."

Wesley also has big goals for the future. He's been honing his clipping and fitting skills and hopes to take home the top honors at the fitting contest at World Dairy Expo or the North American International Livestock Exposition in the future. The recent high school graduate is also a competitive showman and hopes to perform well in showmanship competitions.

Wesley's favorite task on the farm is milking cows, and the 2022 Star of the Breed certainly catches his eye when she walks through the parlor.

"Crush Everyone has an incredible udder, with a high, wide rear udder, a good tight seam, and it attaches really well," Wesley shares. "She's got a lot of style, and is really dairy with a nice pretty head, wide pins, and good feet and legs."

ABOUT THE AWARD

The Star of the Breed recognition is given annually to one Registered 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 Show, be in a herd enrolled in the TriStarSM 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.)

★ Herds of Excellence ★

Congratulations to the 2022 Herds of Excellence award recipients! These ten herds have achieved extremely rigorous criteria to qualify for this honor. Each of these outstanding herds has a unique story highlighted in the following pages. It's evident each farm family shares a love for U.S. Registered Holstein® cows, and are dedicated to providing consistent, high-quality care to their impressive herds.

The award is broken down into three herd size divisions based on the number of cows included in production averages. Each herd size division has specific criteria that must be met to qualify for the award.

Herd Size Division

Division 1: 500+ cows



Production Criteria

15 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent for milk, fat and protein

Division 2: 100-499 cows



20 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent for milk, fat and protein

Division 3: 10-99 cows



25 percent above breed average Mature Equivalent for milk, fat and protein

All herds receiving the award must meet the following criteria:



Have classified within the last year and have an age adjusted classification score of 83 points or higher



At least 70 percent of the herd is homebred



Be enrolled in Holstein Association USA's TriStarSM program

Division 1: 500+ Cows



Back row (L-R): Dan, Janina, Jordan & Connor Siemers.
Front row (L-R): Josh, Lauren, Jake, Jenny & Paul Siemers.

Siemers Holstein Farms Inc.

The Siemers Family • Newton, WI

Staying true to their focus of “making genetics for cow people,” is a team effort for the Siemers family. There are several team members involved on the farm, including Dan and Janina Siemers and their son Jordan, Paul Siemers and his sons Jake and Josh, and Tyler Schafer.

“Being named a Herd of Excellence is a nice honor for our team,” Jordan Siemers says. “We are very team based in everything we do, and it is nice to share with our team that everybody’s hard work is paying off.”

The family runs an IVF program and believes in combining genomic data with real performance when making breeding decisions. They say Holsteins are the right breed for their business because they provide many marketing angles, have the most pounds of combined fat and protein, and have a large herdbook, allowing for faster genetic improvement.

The family also appreciates the strong youth programs offered by the Holstein Foundation and Holstein USA.

“They did a really nice job educating and getting the next generation at Siemers Holstein Farms interested in dairying and genetics,” Jordan explains. “The programs were also a great gateway to meet other young, like-minded people who we are still in contact with.”

79.8% Homebred

Milk: 35,673 Fat: 1,553 Protein: 1,101
Average Classification Score – 84.3

Bomaz Inc.

The Zwald Family • Hammond, WI

Two overarching genetic goals guide the team at Bomaz Inc. First, the Zwald family strives to produce profitable, trouble-free Registered Holsteins® cows. Bob Zwald says he appreciates a good, high-producing cow that’s healthy and lives a long time. They also aim to produce high genetic bulls for AI.

“Registered Holsteins have been a part of our success,” Bob shares. “I do like working with Registered Holsteins rather than just producing milk. It adds a little more excitement.”

Whether working towards improving their herd’s efficiency or genetic progress, the family uses a variety of tools available in the industry. This includes programs from Holstein Association USA.

“We regularly classify the large percentage of the cattle, we are on Holstein COMPLETE®, and on TriStarSM for production testing,” Bob explains. “We utilize those programs to the best we can.”

Reaching the goals they have for their farm is a team effort for the multigenerational farm. Bob and Kay Zwald farm with their daughter Annette and her husband Steve Schalla, and son Tom and his wife Ashley. “It’s gratifying for my wife and I that we have another generation to carry on the farm,” Bob says.



Back Row (L-R): Steve & Annette Schalla, Kay & Bob Zwald, Ashley & Tom Zwald, and Claire.
Front Row (L-R): Abby, Matthew & Katelyn Schalla, and Hannah, Emily, Luke & Noah Zwald.

94.6% Homebred

Milk: 32,546 Fat: 1,323 Protein: 1,055
Average Classification Score – 85.3

Division 2: 100-499 Cows



Back Row (L-R): Brent Koester, Neil & Bria Bruegger, Lance & Cynthia Koester
Front Row (L-R): Dan and Amber Koester

Koester Dairy Inc.

The Koester Family • Dakota, IL

Providing good cow comfort for their herd of Registered Holstein® cows is important to the Koester family of northern Illinois. Dan and Amber work alongside their three sons, Kyle, Brent, and Lance; daughter Bria; and daughter-in-law, Cynthia, to care for their herd of around 400 milking cows and 400 youngstock.

A seventh time Herd of Excellence recipient, the honor is something they share as a family. “It means a lot, and we’re honored to receive it,” Dan says. “The award includes performance and conformation, which are both very important to us.”

They say it’s exciting to work on improving their herd’s genetics, using tools such as genomic testing and the GTPI® formula.

“We have a young two-year-old Renegade scored VG-86 that is near 3,000 GTPI that we are very excited about and have flushed successfully,” Dan shares. She’s also the dam of their bull in the Holstein Marketplace Sires program, K-Star Aftermath-ET.

A testament to their herd’s genetics, the family has had over 100 cows named Gold Medal Dams. They’re also able to consistently sell over 100 head a year to other farmers, including many repeat buyers.

99.5% Homebred

Milk: 35,283 Fat: 1,518 Protein: 1,114

Average Classification Score – 85.3

Koepke Farms Inc.

The Koepke Family • Oconomowoc, WI

The team at Koepke Farms works each day to make sure their 360 cow Registered Holstein herd reaches its full potential. The dairy is owned by John and Kim Koepke. They concentrate on feeding high quality feed, providing good cow comfort, and moving animals through the parlor in a stress-free manor. Genetics are also an important piece of the equation.

“We select on a balance of pounds of milk and components,” the farm’s herd manager Becky Cook explains. “We tend to lean towards proven bulls.”

They aim to breed moderately sized cows that are mobile and strong with good udder attachments. Programs from Holstein USA, such as RedBook Plus MultiMate and the inbreeding calculator, help them reach their genetic goals.

This strategy has worked well for the six-time Herd of Excellence. They appreciate cows with good longevity, such as Koepke Bruin Lena. The tenth lactation cow has over 365,000 pounds of lifetime milk.

“She is scored Excellent 94, and she’s a powerhouse,” Becky says, adding that Lena is a moderately sized cow. “She also has the ability to pass good genetics to her offspring. She has several daughters and granddaughters in the herd and milking well.”



Left to Right: Becky Cook, Kim & John Koepke.

100% Homebred

Milk: 35,245 Fat: 1,406 Protein: 1,070

Average Classification Score – 85.0

Division 2: 100-499 Cows



Left to Right: Chris holding Lila, Heidi, Deb, Larry, Dane, Kelly, & Max Pollack.

Pollack-Vu Dairy, LLC

The Pollack Family • Ripon, WI

The Pollack family has been milking cows on their Ripon, Wisconsin farm since 1909. Today, their herd of 150 Registered Holsteins® is cared for by Chris Pollack, his wife Kelly, and his parents Larry and Deb. Chris and Kelly's four young children also enjoy life on the farm.

"We've always tried to be very progressive in breeding for production and very respectable type," Chris explains. "While we don't spend our time in the showing, we are very hands on, so we appreciate good cattle."

A first-time Herd of Excellence recipient, Pollack-Vu Dairy focuses on breeding for components. The family has a deep appreciation for old, proven cows that last for multiple lactations with good production. "Those kinds of special cows are the ones we want to see thrive and we want to see offspring out of," says Chris, who places an importance on building good pedigrees.

"I think one of the things I enjoy the most is seeing cows develop and families develop," Chris remarks. "When I can sit down with dad and talk about this cow family and that cow family, and how far back some of those cow families go, that's really kind of special."

99.4% Homebred
Milk: 34,589 Fat: 1,406 Protein: 1,094
Average Classification Score – 85.3

Hilrose Dairy, LLC

The Brantmeier Family • Sherwood, WI

Breeding a herd of balanced cows with high type and good production is a team effort at Hilrose Dairy. Joe Brantmeier farms with his sons, Andy and Jeff, and his wife Chris also plays a vital role handling the bookkeeping of the operation.

"We spend a lot of time with the cows, and at the end of the day, that pays off," Jeff says. "We all enjoy different aspects of the dairy, but in the end, it comes together and it's pretty successful."

The family appreciates the marketability of Registered Holsteins. Their popular cow, Hilrose Advent Anna-Red EX-95, is a perfect example of this. They have marketed her daughters from coast to coast and sold numerous embryos from her.

"Having the ability to have a cow create that excitement and enthusiasm, not only for us but for our kids and other people, is why Registered Holsteins are important for us," Jeff shares.

Andy and Jeff are the fourth generation on the farm and enjoy watching their children's interest in the dairy industry grow. "Seeing the next generation step up and take a little bit of responsibility, or be involved in showing or dairy judging, is exciting for us to see," Jeff says.



Left to Right: Andy, Jeff & Joe Brantmeier with Hilrose Advent Anna-Red-ET EX-95 GMD

100% Homebred
Milk: 36,735 Fat: 1,410 Protein: 1,081
Average Classification Score – 88.8

Division 3: 10-99 Cows



Left to Right: Chris, Gin, Jennifer & Tom Kestell.

Ever-Green-View Holsteins, LLC

The Kestell Family • Waldo, WI

Staying true to their breeding goals year after year has yielded success for the Kestell Family of Waldo, Wisconsin. Named Holstein Association USA's Elite Breeders in 2018, Ever-Green-View Holsteins is a name synonymous with elite Holstein genetics on a global scale.

"We stick to the program – we never throw in low component or low production bulls just to get something to show at the fair," Tom explains.

Tom and his wife Gin farm with their son Chris and his wife Jennifer. Tom appreciates working alongside his son, and everything he contributes to the operation. "He pays very close attention to detail, and he brings that skill with him every day to work," Tom shares.

The family enjoys having a healthy herd of cows that perform well. This means doing things the right way, such as maintaining their facilities, always feeding high quality feed, and breeding for a balanced group of cows with both good components and production.

"We don't necessarily set goals, but we set the goal of doing a good job," Tom says. "You can't cut corners and expect things to work out. Consistency in everything you do on a dairy farm is very important."

97.8% Homebred

Milk: 40,822 Fat: 1,705 Protein: 1,288

Average Classification Score – 88.3

Doorco Holsteins

The Vandertie Family • Brussels, WI

Constantly striving to improve their herd's genetics is a focus for the Vandertie family of Doorco Holsteins. "We always try to make the next generation an improvement from the last, and try to get a little better milk and type on them all the time," Dan Vandertie explains.

Dan and Julie took over the farm from Dan's parents in 1987. Now, they are in the farm transition process with their son Austin, a recent graduate from the University of Wisconsin Madison, who has taken over daily management and the breeding program.

As they look forward to the future of their farm, the Vanderties hope to grow from the impressive base of the 100 percent homebred genetics in their herd.

"We haven't bought a cow or outside genetics in almost 40 years," Dan shares. "I used to say every mating was to try to improve that cow enough to stay in the herd."

This strategy has garnered success for the family. During their last classification, they had 14 Excellent cows in the barn. The herd has also been honored with Holstein USA's Progressive Breeder Registry award for 48 consecutive years and the Progressive Genetics Herd Award for 18 years.



Left to Right: Dan, Julie, Austin & Bridget Vandertie.

100% Homebred

Milk: 36,491 Fat: 1,425 Protein: 1,117

Average Classification Score – 88.7

Division 3: 10-99 Cows



Left to Right: Bret, Brenda & Bruce Long.

B-Long Holsteins

The Long Family • New London, WI

At B-Long Holsteins, the little things add up to make the Long family's herd successful. Bruce and Brenda Long and their son Bret milk 55 cows in a tie stall barn. They focus on breeding for balanced cows with the complete package.

"I breed for cows with good production and type," Bruce explains. "I breed for cows that are deep, wide, and open." In addition to genetics, the way the family cares for their cows makes a difference in the herd's performance.

"I always tell people there are three c's to raising good cows," Bruce Long shares. "You have to have good cows genetically speaking, keep them comfortable, and make sure they consume a lot of high-quality feed." He adds that consistency, which is part of cow comfort, is important for keeping cows healthy and producing their best.

The Long family also finds satisfaction in the small, everyday moments that come along with dairy farming. Things like watching calves develop into nice cows or having repeat buyers come back for show calves make the hard work more enjoyable.

"When you get your cows out on pasture on the first nice day of spring, it's hard to beat that," Bruce adds.

100% Homebred

Milk: 36,168 Fat: 1,452 Protein: 1,166

Average Classification Score – 88.4

Show-Mar Holsteins

The Brantner Family • Saegertown, PA

The past year has brought exciting changes for the Brantners and their 70-cow herd. In August 2022, they moved to a newly purchased farm in Saegertown, Pennsylvania. The cows are now housed in a sand bedded freestall barn and milked in a parlor three times a day.

"I breed for type and strength," Mark Brantner shares. He uses the aAa method to help guide breeding decisions and tweaks it to meet his needs. The Brantner family also enjoys showing and places an emphasis on type.

"I take a lot of pride in my homebred animals," Mark explains. "I don't have to go out and buy something fancy, I can do it myself."

Mark is grateful for the support of his family, especially his son Austen, who drives four hours to come help on the farm, and his daughter Shianne, who is always a phone call away. He is also thankful for the mentorship of his friend Dr. Richard, who taught him about veterinary medicine.

Being named a Herd of Excellence is an honor for the family. "I think it's a nice pat on the back, for a job well done," Jelena Brantner says. "It's the reward of many years of hard work."



Left to Right: Mark & Jelena, Briana holding Presley, & Austen Brantner.

100% Homebred

Milk: 38,394 Fat: 1,562 Protein: 1,181

Average Classification Score – 88.9

DRY COWS DESERVE COMPLETE CARE

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BOVILIS J-5: This product contains oil adjuvant. In the event of accidental self-injection, seek medical attention immediately. For additional information, see the product label.