

# BC Holstein Branch Reports on An Active Year Enthusiasm Even With Tough Economics



## Your 2024 BC Branch Directors

(L-R standing) Carl Barclay, Ridley Wikkerink, Greg Hessels, Clayton Hamming.  
(Sitting) Angela Hamming, Luke Van Huizen (Vice President), Thomas Cuthbert (President), Joan Wikkerink (secretary), Morgan Sangster.  
Missing: Lexi DeJong and Ben Cuthbert (National Director and HC President).

### Tars Cheema

Branch President Carl Barclay had his **activities** together, as he presented the overview of the past busy year with a combination of excitement and relief. It's been a year, as everyone can relate to. His introduction explained that both Holstein Canada President Ben Cuthbert and new CEO Sartaj Sarkaria were absent due to their attendance at the World Holstein Friesian Federation Conference in France. He went on to welcome new Director Morgan Sangster and thanked out-going Director Mike Duncan for his support. He was thankful to have both Angela Hamming and Ridley Wikkerink back for another term. In attendance were past Holstein Canada Presidents, John Blair and Richard Bosma, as well as Past BC Branch President, Martin Hamming.

2023 was certainly packed with Holstein events, beginning with the Dairy Management Seminars in February, stick-handled by Thomas Cuthbert and committee. The support from BC Dairy this year was especially helpful in broad promotion resulting in some 72 people attending. Speakers included Lindsay Ferlito from Cornell University Extension speaking on Cow Comfort in US Dairies and the FARM program (similar to proAction), Nancy Charlton from DeLaval providing perspectives on modern technologies in dairy and Dr. Lisa McCrea from Agwest Veterinary Group, speaking on 'A Fresh Look at Reproduction to Achieve Your Genetic Plan.'

The 2024 Management Seminar is scheduled for February 14, again at the Clarion Hotel in Abbotsford.

Perhaps the Spring Show in March could be considered the *Signature* event of 2023, with the addition of a Jersey show and a staggering prize pool of \$375,000 spread across winners in both breed shows. The kick-off to the entire exciting affair was the Youth Showmanship competition sponsored by Abbotsford Veterinary Clinic. Judged by Kenton Lindenbach of Saskatchewan, winners were Keaton Phoenix of Ontario and Allyson McAvoy of BC. Carl recognized his committee and thanked them all for making the Show a great event – which also would not have been possible without the vast number of corporate supporters who committed substantial funds to the prizes.

The Annual BC Holstein Picnic was back better than ever, hosted by Arendsdaale Dairy Farm in Abbotsford. With a bouncy castle, numerous kids' activities and games, it was truly heartening to see the next generation coming along and having **fun!** Carl recognized the generous support of J&D Farmers Dairy Service, RBC, WestGen and BC Dairy.

The Branch continues to have a 'Social' Committee which looks after the Spring Show dedication (this year – Ken and Debbie Schwaerzle), the annual picnic, awarding of Gold Watches to 4-H Grand and Reserve Champion calves at Maple Ridge Fair and the BC Cow of the Year recognition. Cows are chosen based on points awarded for classification, production awards, lifetime production, show results and brood stars. Four impressive cows were finalists and can be seen on page 4 in this issue. Congratulations to SUNNYHOME SHOTTLE MARILYN EX-91-5E 12\*, owned by the Carlson Family of Salmon Arm. Marilyn descends from the Melody family, responsible for Sunnyhome Milkmaker at BCAIC in the '80's, and her descendants are once again producing sires active in AI!

Greg Hessels took charge of modernizing communications/promotions for the Branch last year and has continued to improve outreach through social media channels. "By doing this, the goal is to raise awareness in BC Holstein Branch, raise the passion for the Holstein breed, and engage with more youth," he explained. Promotion of the Breeders Cup competitions and the Cow of the Year recognition were also major elements of the social media promotions.

Angela Hamming recounted the Breeders Cup competitions taking place in local clubs – NOK, Vancouver Island, and Fraser Valley. In July, Kenny and Lorna McRae judged in the Okanagan – 50 Holsteins and 30 Jerseys. In August, Brian and Jill Hamming judged 94 Holsteins from 23 farms through the Fraser Valley. Also in August, Brian Goertzen traveled up and down the Island to judge 54 entries including a coloured breeds class. "It was especially nice to see such enthusiasm from families who would never take a cow to a show, but were very proud to show us their best cows," shared Angela. Winners were announced in the *WC Dairy News* and on social media channels.

While shows have not been as plentiful as in the past, interest in judging remains

for people wishing to learn and challenge themselves with assessing cattle and expressing their reasons. The Tier 1 judging school/competition has found a suitable home for many years at the BC Spring Show – where good cattle and people are available to put on a first class event. Judging Chair Luke Van Huizen explained that 25 participants from three provinces judged three classes of six animals each. The official judge was Joel Phoenix of Ontario with Ridley Wikkerink and William Wikkerink assisting. Luke thanked the 4-H members who lead the classes – Dominic Hill, Kaycee Meier, Andrea and Logan Vandenbrink.

Treasurer Ridley Wikkerink presented the Financial Report for the year ending September 30th, showing more activity reflecting more events taking place, but resulting in a slight surplus. "It's proved to be challenging to set budgets in recent years as activities have been unpredictable, but it seems things are back on track as we begin another year," he stated. He thanked Barry Remus for reviewing the books with thoroughness and Secretary Joan for keeping things in good order. Lastly, he announced that Tamara Antonsen of Aldergrove is the recipient of the Bursary. She submitted an extensive application detailing her academic record, farm involvement and other strengths. Tamara is currently at BCIT, working towards her Associate Certificate in Marketing, Management and Graphic Design.

### WestGen Update

Recalling the 2021 floods in the Fraser Valley, Paul Meyer reminded the audience that while their buildings are very nearly back to normal, there are other challenges which persist, affecting their business. Paul referred to downward pressure on sales since 2020 peak, with acute effects especially in BC from the difficult current dairy economy. Sales are likely reduced as well from fewer heifers on farm and potentially more 'shopping around' in the market. "The semen mix is radically changing," he explained. His chart showed the 10-year evolution of declining conventional semen, with sexed and beef doses increasing, showing each one with roughly 1/3 market share each.

Their innovative P3 beef program which provides a stable market for 'beef on dairy' calves is struggling against the regular beef calf market at this time – a situation which will normalize in time (calf prices will come down as the market

saturates). "The shift to beef on dairy was costly for WestGen, but it was the right thing to do for producers," he assured.

As a farmer-directed western-Canadian dairy business coming up on its 80th anniversary, WestGen continues to prioritize their support for industry events, including many Branch events, and youth programs from 4-H to WCC. The WestGen Endowment Fund also remains dedicated to supporting the industry from many directions, including dairy community events and youth funding and relevant research such as the recent *M. bovis* study conducted at KPU.

### Paul outlined focus areas for 2024:

1. Continued focus on genetic planning tools
2. Promotion of AI Technician services when farm staffing is short
3. Developing their Customer Relationship Management IT system
4. Improving P3 participation
5. Promoting profitable services of the ARC (Advanced Reproduction Centre)

Paul concluded his presentation, reminding the audience that WestGen will continue to work with clubs, Branches and Holstein Canada and other breed improvement partners/staff to promote programs and services which benefit producers' profitable breed improvement. "As we celebrate 80 years in 2024, remember that we need your support to continue to do things we do."

### Lactanet Update

With the retirement of Richard Cantin last summer, this update was delivered by Jean-Marc Neilson.

### 2023 Highlights

1. To continue supporting Sustainability – through environmental and economic means that reduce waste and enhance efficiency. Services such as MUN, Selective Dry Cow Therapy and Genetic Traits (i.e. Feed Efficiency) are all part of the Sustainability Toolbox.
2. Herd Sustainability Report – this 3x per year report showing 10 key metrics provides national benchmarking – which is being used by Farm Credit Canada for financial recognition.
3. Cow Ranking by Income – ranks based on milk by breed and nationally by age.

Continued on next page ▶



# Klop Equipment

**Top-Quality Brands**

*Performance Guaranteed*

Thank you kindly for your trusted business with us this calendar year. Best wishes for a Wonderful Christmas and a Prosperous 2024 ahead.

- New & Reconditioned Farm Equipment
- Excellent Cleaners & Disinfectants
- Quality Forages

**John Klop**  
604-206-5505  
john@klopequipment.com

**Gord Vande Burgt**  
604-345-7877  
sales@klopequipment.com

4. Herd Performance Index – BC's Top Managed Herds were (1) West River Farm, Country Charm Farms and Rose Gate Dairy Farms.

5. Methane Efficiency Index – a global first, the effects are permanent and cumulative. Report free to DHI customers and available to other herds at \$8/head.

**Stats and Trends**

Nationally, 18% of DHI herds are robot-milked (1031 herds), representing 130,500 cows. In Manitoba, 40% of herds use robots while 30% of herds in BC use robots. eDHI Service includes 145 herds and 24,500 cows – 83% of them have sensor data – both robot and parlour herds.

**Looking into 2024**

BCAs will be calculated and projected based on 280 day lactations – driven by resolutions.

A transition Management Dashboard will visually support identification of multiple areas to monitor performance such as energy status, udder health, rumen health and more.

Bovertime metrics to improve efficiency of robot throughput.

**Holstein Canada Update**

Toby Kleinsasser was on-hand to provide a brief update on HC initiatives.

More production data collected by different milking system sensors is being included in 'publishable' records since January 2023. While Registrations were down about 2000 head in 2022, this year appears to have leveled off at 2022 level. Toby reminded the audience that a very simple registration process is possible through the ConneXXion app. Genomic testing continues to increase across Canada with 2023 reaching nearly 16,000 head up to end of October. Again, the ConneXXion app is designed to support easy submissions of registration applications and genomic tests. Classification in BC is set to continue with the 2-month interval following the Pilot Project, but expect some conditions, such as a minimum 20 head. The regionalization of classification continues to be developed, with a vision to be at 75%.

He closed with a reminder to watch Holstein Canada social platforms for the Master Breeder reveal in January and other events.



WISHING YOU A  
*Merry Christmas*

**AND A VERY SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.**

SELECT SIRES CANADA WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT THIS YEAR, AND OUR TEAM LOOKS FORWARD TO SERVING YOU AGAIN IN 2024.

**Photos above left, top to bottom:**

Garondale Illustrator Fatale (VG-86-VG-86-MS 2YR)  
Ferme Garondale, Saint-Denis-de-la Bouteillerie, QC  
Jeanlu A2P2 Glory-P\*RC | Valiant Dairy Genetics, Woodstock, ON  
Comestar Latinet Perfect (VG-87-VG-87-MS 2YR)  
Bokma Farms Ltd, Shubenacadie, NS & Vector Genetics, Rockwood ON

**Photos above right, top to bottom:**

Dicklands Renegade 3865 (VG-86-VG-86-MS 2YR) | Dicklands Farm, Chilliwack, BC  
OCD Conway Shimmer 64556 (VG-86-VG-88-MS 2YR)  
Crackholm Holsteins, Richmond, QC  
LaFougere Capone Shandre (GP-84-VG-86-MS 2YR)  
Ferme La Fougere Inc, Compton, QC



**YOUR SUCCESS** *Our Passion.* 1-800-265-0043 ♦ www.selectsirescanada.com