

Corlane Holsteins Earns Master Breeder Shield Built on Cor's Foundation

Amanda Poelman

International soccer superstar Pelé once said, "Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrificing and most of all, love of what you are doing." For Holstein breeders across the country, the same is true. The love of breeding great cattle drives our passion forward as we strive for the ultimate mark of success: a Master Breeder Shield.

The award is an enormous accomplishment, the sum of years of hard work and dedication, breeding decisions and longevity, when things tick along seamlessly, and when it's -50 degrees Celsius and you're doing everything you can just to keep things running. Such was the case for Western Canada's newest Master Breeder - Corlane Holsteins, who on one of the coldest nights of the year, were recognized with the highest honour for a lifetime of dedication.

The Modest Origins

Corlane Holsteins was born when Cor Hofstra, who emigrated from the Netherlands in 1954, purchased the current farm in Leduc County in 1968 with a handshake deal. The property came with 40 cows in a relatively new tie-stall barn. Coming up with a prefix proved simple: "Cor" who lived down a long "lane" = CORLANE. Cor, along with wife Joyce, raised their seven boys on the farm, including the youngest one who was born the day that Cor purchased the farm.

Through the years, several of the boys moved off the farm to start their own dairy operations, but Harold and Fred worked alongside Cor, slowly taking over the farm together. The facilities saw many improvements over time, including a calf barn in 2000. The brothers also added to the tie-stall barn twice to get to 86 milking cows. Fred and Cor looked after the genetics side of the business, while Harold focused on the crop work and anything mechanical.

Looking to expand further in order to accommodate their sons in the future, Fred and Harold built a new freestall facility in 2014, equipped with two DeLaval robots. That same year, Fred's son Chance finished his schooling at Lakeland College and returned to the farm full time, with a keen interest in genetics.

After Harold's departure in 2018, Fred and Chance moved into a time of transition, slowly acquiring more land to be able to put up enough feed for their herd. Today they farm 800 acres, handling much of the fieldwork themselves, and growing various crops including corn silage, barley, oat silage, winter triticale and alfalfa for hay. They have



(L-R) Fred, Melissa, Chandler, Josh, Sydney and Chance. While Fred and son Chance handle the main farm operations, wife Melissa manages the farm accounting and paperwork and works full time as a flight attendant. Daughters Chandler and Sydney also pitch in when they can; Chandler and husband Josh work and live in Leduc, while Sydney is currently teaching in England.

also diversified into dual crops such as a brassica/rye grass mix, white wheat and peas, as well as fava beans for protein.

The herd has also grown to about 120 cows milking - mainly Holsteins, but Chance introduced Jerseys, resulting in 10 milking cows under the "Awesome" prefix. Although Chance handles most of the breeding and genetics for the herd, discussions on sire selection are still 50/50. "The focus has always been on higher type," says Chance, "but we've also added more production as feed costs go up." Selections are made to achieve a balanced cow that is not extreme in type or production but has positive milk and fat deviations. Corlane is in the 90th percentile for longevity in Canada and Fred says, "We see the benefit of having older cows in the herd. The longer a cow stays, the better, because raising a replacement animal costs up to \$3000."

With the goal of breeding Excellent cows that hopefully make 100,000 kgs lifetime, a wide variety of bulls are used. "We use about a 60/40 ratio of proven bulls to genomic bulls," says Chance, "and we aren't afraid to go back to a bull that is a little bit older if we start seeing how well he is working in the herd." The foundation of Corlane genetics was built on sires like Inspiration and Lee, followed by Seaver, Bradnick, Jettair, Windbrook and Unix. Today the tank is filled with Delta Lambda and Renegade bloodlines, along with Hulu, Master, Logic, Conway, Victor, Le Magic, Capital and HasItAll. "We've probably gone back to Unix three times now because he really works well here," says Chance, "but we like a variety of bulls from a variety of studs."

Solid "G"roundwork

A large portion of the Corlane herd can be traced back to CORLANE GERDA INSPIRATION EX-90 5E 4* and her sister CORLANE GLADYS HUGO GP-84. Gerda produced over 70,000 kgs lifetime milk and left seven VG and one GP daughter in the herd. Those daughters and granddaughters, including CORLANE GINA JED EX-90 5E 3*, went on to leave many generations of VG and EX animals. Gerda and Gladys, backed by two VG dams that go back to the 1968 purchased Golddale herd, "were incredible transmitters and our current herd shows that,"



Welcome to Corlane Holsteins - Western Canada's newest Master Breeder!

says Fred. The family was so successful that Fred had to switch letters when flushing Gerda because there were getting to be too many Gs!

A current herd favourite from the Gerda line is CORLANE DELTA GUMDROP EX-90 4E 1*. Sired by Mr. Hovden Delta, Gumdrop already has two VG daughters by Airintake and Fuel, one Superior Lactation, and has made over 80,000 kgs lifetime milk. She placed first in the Longtime Production class at the 2023 Alberta Dairy Congress, where Corlane also earned first place Breeder's Herd, and was fifth place Mature Cow at the 2022 National Holstein Convention in Saskatoon.

Another foundation "G" bloodline not related to the Gerdas is CORLANE GWENORE LINCOLN EX-90 5E 3*. Gwenore produced over 100,000 kgs in her lifetime and left two EX, two VG and two GP daughters. The impact of her genetics is still very much felt in the current herd.

An additionally big contributor to the points for their shield is CORLANE SHELLEY BLAZE EX-92 4E 1*. Shelley produced over 70,000 kgs in her lifetime and left four VG daughters. One of her descendants, who Chance is excited about, is CORLANE UNIX SKIPPY VG-86 (87 MS). Backed by six VG and EX dams, Skippy was fresh in November with a flashy Goliath heifer calf and is projected to almost 10,000 kgs.

Sell the Best, Milk the Rest

Unafraid to sell their best cows, the Corlane prefix has had several successful animals grace the show ring in the past several years. CORLANE SEAVER MISTY EX-92 was nominated All-American Senior 3-Year Old in 2019 after finishing fourth at World Dairy Expo. She was also Reserve Intermediate Champion at the Midwest Fall National Holstein Show in 2018. The Misty bloodline originated from Heatherbrae Holsteins in Alberta and has left several solid "M" cows in the herd. CORLANE GOLDCHIP LEMON EX-93 was Reserve All-Western Senior 3-Year Old in 2019, as well as Reserve Intermediate Champion at the California State Show and Honourable Mention Intermediate Champion at the BC Spring Show the same year. Both Lemon and Misty are owned by the Borba Family in California.

CORLANE ENTRANCE DELANEY EX-92, a sixth-generation descendant of the Gerda family, was Honourable Mention All-American Senior 2-Year Old in 2020. Sold as a Milking Yearling in the fall of 2019 to T&L Cattle Ltd., and later resold to Elmvue Farms in New York, Delaney was named Intermediate Champion at the Northeast All-Breeds Fall Holstein Show, already a second-calf Senior 2. Her sister, CORLANE MIDNIGHT DESIRE EX-92, still calls Corlane home and has a VG-85 Mirand and a GP-83 Arrow daughter so far, as well as a Delta Lambda daughter that will be a Milking Yearling this fall and looks promising.



The Hofstras farm roughly 800 acres, seeded in a variety of crops.



(L-R) Martin Staub, Fred Hofstra, Chance Hofstra, Joel Phoenix. Cows (L-R) CORLANE HANIKO MINI WHEATS VG-86, CORLANE MADMAX ACADIA VG-87, CORLANE UNIX SALISBURY VG-89.



CORLANE DELTA GUMDROP EX-90 4E 1*, 1st Longtime Production Cow, Alberta Dairy Congress 2023. Gumdrop goes back to foundation cow, CORLANE INSPIRATION GERDA EX-90 5E 4*.



A sixth generation descendant of Gerda, CORLANE MIDNIGHT DESIRE EX-92, has two daughters milking in the Corlane herd, and a promising Delta Lambda daughter due in the fall.



Maternal sister to Desire, CORLANE ENTRANCE DELANEY EX-92 is now owned by Elmvue Farms, NY. She was Honourable Mention All-American Senior 2-Year Old in 2020, and Intermediate Champion at the Northeast All-Breeds Fall Holstein Show.

Sold through the 'Quality of Corlane' sale that the Hofstras hosted online in June 2021, CORLANE UNIX SALISBURY VG-89 was sold to Wendon Holsteins. "Salisbury was definitely a standout 2-year old," says Chance, who was excited to see her head to Wendon. Salisbury made her mark in 2023, finishing second in the 4-Year Old class at the BC Spring Show and then capturing Reserve Grand Champion at both Alberta Dairy Congress and the Westerner Dairy Showcase. Not just a pretty face, Salisbury has produced over 30,000 kgs in two lactations and has a GP daughter by Milano at Corlane.

A Full Toolbox

Both Fred and Chance are big supporters of using genetic tools to benchmark their herd's progress and profitability. The long-time use of milk recording and Classification has really helped the marketability of their best genetics. "We don't sell cows we wouldn't want to milk ourselves," says Chance, "and with that comes repeat customers." Fred agrees, "Having our prefix out there at shows is a huge part of marketing our herd." The Hofstras bring cows out to most of the Alberta shows, including Dairy Congress, Red Deer and the Northern Alberta Holstein Club show in Millet. They also loan out 4-H calves that compete in the Alberta 4-H Provincials and WCC.

Adding more genomics to their breeding program, Chance says, "It's a good way to gather more information for breeding." Currently all the heifers are being genomic tested, and Chance is excited about a Ranger granddaughter from Delaney that is polled, as well as a Renegade Red Carrier that is their highest LPI daughter and is pregnant to Ranger.

The Big Reveal

The night of the Master Breeder reveal had been a "super fun" day at Corlane. It was -50 degrees outside, and Fred and Chance were in the middle of chores and doing everything they could to keep the barn thawed. Chance laughs, "It was kind of funny, my mom was watching the live feed on Facebook, and I told her she should go on the Zoom call just in case. While she was switching over to Zoom is when they called our name, so she missed it!" Chance was shocked when he started getting messages on Snapchat with pictures of the reveal screen showing their name. He immediately located Fred and simply

CORLANE UNIX SALISBURY VG-89, sold in the 2021 "Quality of Corlane" sale and made a splash in the show ring in 2023, capturing Reserve Grand Champion at Alberta Dairy Congress and the Westerner Dairy Show.



said, "We won!" When Fred was finally able to connect to the Holstein Canada feed, he said, "I'm literally in shock. I never in 100 years thought we would win; you don't know what this means to me!"

This is the first year that Corlane has been in the Top 10 of the 60+ registrations group, so winning was definitely unexpected. "We were in the top three or four of the 40-59 registrations group a few years ago," says Chance, "but we just never could quite get there." Fred admits that it's a little bit bittersweet in some ways with Cor having passed away in 2019. "My dad used to talk about being a Master Breeder all the time, so I automatically think of him and wish he could be here for this."

While the Hofstras have had other proud moments, like winning the Northern Alberta Holstein Club 'Breeder of the Year' award twice, Fred says, "Becoming Master Breeder is such a big deal. We've had so many messages and it really hits you that you've finally achieved the recognition - you're in the conversation now with other elite breeders across the country. It still gives me the chills. I don't think it hit me until I read 'Corlane Holsteins - Master Breeder' when we were looking up a cow on Holstein Canada. That will be there forever."

Setting New Goals

While there are no big plans on the horizon as far as building projects are concerned, Chance says, "We want to continue to make the farm more efficient and cost effective - whether that means adding a new feed product or growing a different crop." The Hofstras will also continue to maintain the breeding philosophy that has served them so well and remain profitable doing it. "I'd love to see one of our cows do well at Royal," says Fred, "Seeing cows you've sold do well is exciting." Of course, working on their second shield is also on the agenda.

Blessed to be working as a family and creating a successful and thriving business, Fred says, "It's satisfying to do this together and watch the next generation thrive in this industry." A lifetime of dedication and hard work, punctuated by an incredible passion for what they do, has propelled Corlane Holsteins forward successfully, and there is no doubt that passion will carry them onwards for generations to come.

