

celebrating Longevity

Holstein Canada - promoting Longevity, Profitability & Efficiency!



Quietly Persistent Missiontrail Supersire Lexy

Tars Cheema

Darren Hueging admits his favourite cow in recent years is MISSIONTRAIL SUPERSIRE LEXY VG 87 2*, with 126,478 kg milk over eight lactations and 5657 kg fat. Lexy's lowest lactation was 12,000 kg calving at 1-11 and her best was 17,470 kg in 365d at 6yr. Her BCAs average 296-351-305 with average milk/day of life coming in at 30.4 kg with 4.5% BF and 3.3% P.

Current Holsteins Ltd. in Woodlands, Manitoba, is owned and operated by Darren and Allison, together with their three young children, Jocelyn, Myers and Madden. Their Missiontrail prefix comes from the name of a historic route which runs across their hay land, used long ago by settlers travelling from Winnipeg to Lake Manitoba.

"Lexy is low maintenance, she goes almost unnoticed day to day because of her trouble-free lactations," Allison shares. With four Superior Lactations, a Super 3 and 120,000 kg Lifetime certificate, she's earned their respect. But her cow family wasn't even visible until 2006.

Darren grew up dairying nearby and when they bought his aunt's unregistered, bull-bred 50-cow tie-stall herd in 2006, both the barn **and the herd** got immediate upgrading. They BB recorded the entire herd through Holstein Canada's upgrading registration program (Full Spectrum) which made their first AI sired heifers 50% status, and the next generation heifers 75%, and gradually, the entire herd became fully registered at purebred status. "It was really noticeable how much better the first and second generations were," says Darren of the AI-sired, upgraded cows. They recognize the value of registering, classifying, milk recording and using AI sires with milk, high fat, and strong functional type. Currently, the top 30% of the herd is bred to sexed semen, with the rest getting beef AI.

"The primary goal of the dairy is to efficiently maximize butterfat per stall by optimizing genetics and environment with an emphasis on calf health," Allison states. This approach promotes maximizing healthy, productive older cows. Their 2023 records revealed that 4% of their herd had over 80,000 kg lifetime milk, 2.5% had over 100,000 kg lifetime and 39% had received a Superior Lactation award. Currently the herd classification is 6 ME, 3 E, 50 VG and 46 GP.

Their 2024 herd average was 287-341-301 BCAs on 84 records, with fat yield an impressive 595 kg BF per lactation, from 60% forage DMI! They are fed high quality dry hay and a customized grain ration 8x/day through their Feedmaster robotic system.

While they farm 4000 acres total, 1200 acres grow forage for the dairy herd and the 300 head cow-calf operation.

Simply Super

"She's not a pet, she's not a boss, she just does her thing - she's always eating," Darren describes Lexy's barn attitude. It's pretty clear that this cow doesn't stumble much.

Her calvings have been quite regular with a couple bumps: 1-11, 2-11, 3-11, 5-03, 6-03, 7-04, 8-10, 10-4. Mostly single service pregnancies, but twice, she needed four services. Bred with conventional semen, except for once to sexed, she produced six heifers, two bulls and no twins. She was a trouble-free calver and didn't stall as she got rolling into eight lactations.

"She averaged 87,000 SCC for her first six lactations, but her last two lactations were higher," Darren admits.

The herd gets hoof-trimmed three times over the year, with all cows trimmed at least once. Lexy hasn't had any digital dermatitis or abnormal trims - she has healthy feet.

Her normal calvings and good appetite probably help with avoiding transition illnesses like milk fever, ketosis or repro tract infections.

The L Family Matron

Lexy represents the first full purebred in her line and with six daughters, (so far, two are 85), her influence in the herd is growing. In fact, Allison's favourite is Lexy's granddaughter HOTLINE LEONIE VG 87, with over 60,000kg in four lactations and BCAs of 314-383-323!

Lexy's sire Seagull-Bay Supersire was generally known for siring easy calvers that held their condition and were pretty healthy. Digging back into his pedigree a couple generations are two iconic longevity supersires - O-Man and Shottle. Both transmitted numerous longevity traits.


Lexy's 85 point dam by AltaEsquire made six solid herd average lactations, showing good consistent calving intervals. Behind Esquire is O-Man again! More round than dairy, the O-Mans earned their admiration

by being **more persistent than pretty**.

But it's the 88 point grandam by Toystory that Darren recalls with respect. Although Electra didn't complete her eighth lactation, she made 100,000kg in seven *near* herd average lactations (BCAs 288-281-270). Toystory daughters were known for being hard-working and hard-wearing. Additionally, they were easy calvers and had good udder health. Her calving intervals suggest good fertility, though she only produced two daughters. The next dam, sired by Tesk

Kodiak made six lactations. Kodiak sired little cows with good fertility and good herd life.

It's not hard to see that when longevity genes meet sound management with low-stress/low competition environments, cows can accomplish much over many lactations.

"It's all been very worthwhile - the herd genetics, building up the farm over 20 years with a vision and following our plans," Darren concludes with satisfaction. 

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