

# Mil-En-Roy Earns 2nd Master Breeder Award

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It was a night for celebration as Lyle Pretty and Shelly Reid heard their Mil-En-Roy prefix announced as one of the new 19 Master Breeders winners by Holstein Canada on January 17th. This is the second Shield to be won by Mil-En-Roy Farms, White City, SK, with Lyle's parents, Roy and Mildred, achieving the farm's first Shield in 1988.

Recognized with a Saskatchewan "Century Family Farm" award in 2000, the Prettys roots run deep in this province. Lyle's grandparents moved to Saskatchewan in 1899 and purchased the present farm the following year. (See WCDN's *Western Dairy Pioneers feature on the Pretty family in the Fall 2024 issue.*) Lyle's father, Roy, took over the farm in 1947 after serving in the military during World War II. He began milking cows and shipping cream. In the early 1950s, Roy and Mildred bought their first Registered Holsteins. They milked 30 cows in a tie-stall barn and enjoyed much success at the local and major shows.

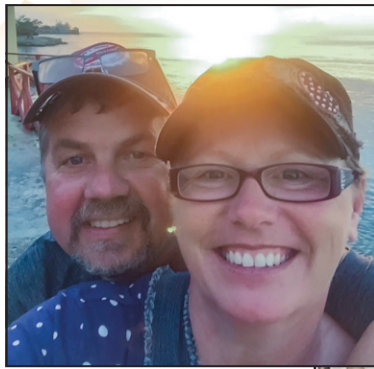
When Roy and Mildred retired in 1980, the Prettys sold all their cows and bred heifers (67 head) to Fred Fornwald & Sons of Lampada Holsteins, Lampman, SK, bloodlines which contributed to the Fornwalds' Master Breeder Shield in 2001. Lyle had been farming with his parents and planned to restart the herd with the 40-50 heifers they had retained. When his older brother Larry wanted to come back home after farming on his own for a few years, the two decided to form Mil-En-Roy Farms (1981) Ltd. and farm together. Lyle was the "cow guy," while Larry was in charge of the land, which at one time totalled 15 quarters. As they incrementally increased the herd, they made improvements and changes by adding on to the barn and then building a new free-stall facility and milking parlour for 160 cows in 2000. In 2015, Lyle bought Larry out. With labour becoming harder to find, Lyle and life partner Shelly, who plays an active role on the farm, retrofitted the free-stall barn in 2016 and installed two Lely robots. They downsized to 120 cows and then as Lyle says, "The push for Beauty and Longevity was really in effect!"



Inside the Mil-En-Roy barn, cows enjoy the benefits of bright, spacious, comfortable freestall housing and Lely robot milking.

Humble and hard working, Lyle and Shelly are very proud of Mil-En-Roy Farms. Over 80% of their herd is VG or better with the present line-up including 28 Multiple EX, 20 EX, 88 VG and 30 GP cows. Earlier this year, Mil-En-Roy was recognized by Holstein Canada for having bred over 100 EX cows coming in at 117, the most in Saskatchewan! In 2022, the farm was honoured as "Saskatchewan Breeder of the Year" by the Saskatchewan Holstein Branch. The Prettys currently farm 960 acres and grow canola, wheat, barley and corn. Cows are fed a TMR based on alfalfa, barley silage and corn silage and average 230-249-249% BCA. They have one full-time and one part-time employee. While Lyle's "show days are over," he still sends the occasional animal to the shows with friends, like last year's Westerner Dairy Showcase in Alberta.

"Winning this second Shield is special," says 62-year-old Lyle. "It took a long time as we basically started from scratch." Lyle is a deep believer in "cow families." Contributing the most points to this latest Shield is the family of DONOVAN SHEIK GLORIETTA ET VG-85-11\*, a Sheik that Lyle bought as a 2-year-old in 1987 from Garth Hockley, Brandon, MB. The Prettys had previously owned her older full sister, DONOVAN SHEIK GLORIETTE EX-94-GBR-21\*, and then exported her to England in 1984 where she had more than 40 progeny. Glorietta proved to be just as incredible a brood cow at Mil-En-Roy having one EX, 10 VG and 12 GP daughters. Over the years there have been many standouts from this great transmitting family. A pair of full sisters, MIL-EN-ROY WINDBROOK GLORIETTE EX-94-2E-4\* and MIL-EN-ROY WINDBROOK GRACELET EX-93-2E-4\*, who complete seven generations EX/VG, are among the best. Windbrook Gloriette made 55,345 kg milk lifetime. She had two EX Chief daughters: MIL-EN-ROY CHIEF GLORIETTA EX-94-2E, who is still in the herd with 15,837 kg milk, 4.0% fat, 3.6% protein (300-327-326) and has young daughters by Lambda and Breakshot; and MIL-EN-ROY CHIEF GLORIETTE EX-90-2E, who has left a



Lyle Pretty and his life partner Shelly Reid - 2X Master Breeders!

For Lyle Pretty of Mil-En-Roy Farms one of the most exciting days of the year is when the classifier comes. Here, from left, Lyle and Shelly share a moment with Holstein Canada Classifier John Beerwort Jr. beside MIL-EN-ROY DOORMAN LUCY EX-92-3E, one of many Excellent cows in this long established Saskatchewan herd.



VG-87 Ashby and VG-85 Astro here. Gracelet made 61,801 kg milk lifetime and had two EX Doorman daughters: MIL-EN-ROY DOORMAN GRACEE EX-91-4E-2\*, who has 77,027 kg milk lifetime and is the dam of EX-91 and VG-86 Crushtimes, a VG-88 Chief and VG-85 Lambda; and MIL-EN-ROY DOORMAN GRACEY EX-90-2E who has a VG-85 Crushtime and yearling Lucky.

Another family leaving its mark with a similar type pattern is WENDON REIM GCHIP KAREN VG-88-3\*, a Gold Chip who Lyle bought as a 2-year-old in 2017 from Wendon Holsteins, Innisfail, AB. Karen's highest scoring daughter is MIL-EN-ROY CHIEF KARINA EX-93. Now owned by Petitclerc Holsteins, Saint-Basile, QC, this sixth generation EX/VG was Reserve Grand Champion at Expo Portneuf in 2023 and second Winter 2-Year-old at the Supreme Show and National Convention Show in Quebec in 2022. The Prettys have two more daughters from Karen: MIL-EN-ROY 1ST GRADE KARENA EX-92-3E, who was still milking at 72 litres per day at 150 days as a 5-year-old and projected to 338-493-427% BCA; and a VG-85 Crushtime.



MIL-EN-ROY CHIEF GLORIETTA EX-94-2E completes eight generations of EX/VG and is a current favourite in the DONOVAN SHEIK GLORIETTA ET VG-85-11\* family that contributed the bulk of the points for Mil-En-Roy Farms' second Master Breeder Shield.

Three bulls have played a significant role in the Mil-En-Roy herd - GILLETTE WINDBROOK, STANTONS CHIEF-ET and FARNEAR-TBR BH 1ST GRADE. "Windbrook sired 11 EX, six VG-88 and five VG-87 daughters, plus eight Star Brood cows with a total of 27 Stars, which shows they have the ability to transmit," says Lyle. "They are big cows with wide open chests, lots of spring of rib, and great feet and legs with a clean bone. Chief had 10 EX, six VG-88 and seven VG-87 daughters. The Chiefs are a little younger, but we are seeing some beautiful cows that are going to be brood cows in the making," observes Lyle. "We are still using Chief pretty heavy in our breeding program. And 1st Grade, while not used as much as the others, has 13 EX, three VG-88 and four VG-87 daughters. Again, they are big-framed cows with lots of chest and great feet and legs," he says.

"When breeding our herd, we look for Beauty and Longevity," states Lyle. "The longevity is on our part, but the beauty

belongs to cow families. I believe that cow families have the ability to transmit through type. I like to see a bull's mother have at least 10 generations VG/EX. We have never bred for LPI. We have always believed in cow families and their ability to transmit. We still factor milk and fat in our breeding decisions, but if we need more milk, we feed for it. We do like to use a bull that is in the teens for type."

Lyle and Shelly feel blessed to have a close knit family of Holstein friends, people they can call on when the need arises. Like May 16, 2023, when Lyle sustained 12 broken ribs, a cracked sternum, punctured lung and brain injury when a quad he was driving rolled over on him, putting him in hospital for nine days. A month later, he broke his ankle when he hit a tree stump while riding the quad side-saddle. Or six months earlier in November 2022, when Lyle was treated for smoke inhalation after pulling a burning tractor out of their machine shop. "Our employees and dairy neighbours and suppliers really stepped up and helped us during this whole period," says a grateful Shelly. "I couldn't imagine getting through this without their help. So many people pitched in. It was very comforting. We really appreciate everything that the dairy community did for us."



MIL-EN-ROY CHIEF KARINA EX-93, a sixth generation EX/VG in Mil-En-Roy's WENDON REIM GCHIP KAREN VG-88-3\* family, is currently owned by Petitclerc Holsteins, Saint-Basile, QC., where she has been a top contender at the shows.

Lyle Pretty's love and passion for the Holstein cow is boundless. For him, the two most exciting days of the year are "when my favourite cow has a heifer and the classifier comes." Why classification day? "For a couple reasons," he replies. "Classification is a good tool that allows you to see the improvement, or non-improvement, of your 2-year-olds over their dams. As owners, we all have some owner-itis, so its nice to get an outside view of what someone else sees as the strong and weak points in our cows. That's what a classifier does. They come in with a different eye and sometime see stuff that we don't see. I have been classifying for over 40 years and I'm still learning something!"

**Congratulations to Mil-En-Roy Farms for their dedication and well deserved second Master Breeder Shield!**

