

# Crestomere's Dream of Master Breeder Realized



Crestomere Holsteins' Master Breeder achievement truly belongs to the entire Simanton family, who over the years have contributed to the success of this Ponoka, AB, farm. From left, back row: Michael Lovich, Jessica Lovich, Reata Lovich, Lisa Simanton, Lee Simanton, Sandy Kingdon and Jon Kingdon. Front row: Renelle Lovich, Raelyn Lovich, Ava Simanton, Everett Simanton, Easton Simanton, Marylee Simanton, Cole Kingdon, Shae Kingdon and Sydney Kingdon.



The Crestomere Holsteins' show team at the 2025 Westerner Dairy Showcase in Red Deer, AB, involved both family and friends. From left, back row: Everett Simanton, Eve Luymes, Andrew Hickey, Phil Sullivan, Joey Folkerts, Morgan Wilson, Gabrielle Cheremshynski, Carson Klugkist and Clara Schlichtmann. Front row: Ava Simanton, Lisa Simanton, Lee Simanton, Easton Simanton and Marylee Simanton.

**Bonnie Cooper,**  
becooper2010@gmail.com

For Everett Simanton of Crestomere Holsteins, Ponoka, AB, achieving a Master Breeder shield was always "a lifelong dream." On January 17th, that dream became a reality for Ev and his family when Crestomere was announced as a Holstein Canada Master Breeder for 2025. "I guess this means we bred some pretty good cows," says Ev with a smile. "But it wouldn't have happened without my wife and three kids."

## Learning the Purebred Business from Scratch

Ev's parents, Ralph and Edith Simanton, purchased the farm that is home to Crestomere Holsteins in 1936. It wasn't until Ev joined 4-H in 1963 that the first purebreds were acquired. Ev's parents never encouraged him to pursue purebreds, but Ev had greater goals for himself. He took over the family farm in 1971 and then with the support of his wife Marylee, who he married in 1981, they began breeding and developing their purebred Holstein herd. "We had to learn everything from scratch," recalls Marylee of those early days. "There was nobody behind us telling us what to do or help us. And there weren't years of breeding behind our herd. We had to start fresh and build. We learned how to clip and fit animals for the shows from our friends and from sitting and watching the fitters." Fellow Alberta Holstein breeders and friends, Joyce and Ray Wedman (Viewridge), Mac and Jim Clark (Acme) and Marj and Norm Atkins (Continental), were great mentors to them. The Simantons began by investing in older cows from good cow families from noted breeders in Alberta, and then from all across Canada, to breed from. The strategy worked, resulting in a herd that is respected far and wide for its successful breeding program and showing achievements.



In 1998, ACME STAR LILY EX-2E-8\* celebrated one of her three Grand Championships at the Royal Winter Fair with her breeders and owners, from left, standing: Dr. David Chalack of Alta Genetics; Ev Simanton of Crestomere Holsteins; Marj Atkins of Continental Holsteins; Jim Clark of Acme Holsteins; and Norm Atkins of Continental Holsteins. Kneeling: Marylee Simanton of Crestomere Holsteins; and Mac Clark of Acme Holsteins.

Marylee and Ev's three children – Jessica, Sandra and Lee – were an integral part of this closely-knit family farm and were very active in 4-H, sports and their church while growing up. "We gave up a lot of things to do everything we did," says Marylee. "We didn't get to travel or go camping a lot. Our holiday was a show somewhere. But it was fun."

## New Generation, New Operation

Lee Simanton, now 38, came back to the farm after graduating from Lakeland College in 2008. Today he and his wife of 10 years, Lisa, who previously worked as a dairy nutritionist, and their two children, Ava, 6, and Easton, 4, are partners in Crestomere with Ev and Marylee. Lisa has a dairy background being the daughter of Doug and Kathy Wiens of Jotims Holsteins, Grunthal, MB. The Simantons own 640 acres of land, growing alfalfa, barley and corn. Over the years they have had more than 30 international students work at the farm.

In 2018, with Lee and Lisa wanting to start a family and Ev and Marylee wanting to step back some, the Simantons decided they needed a "lifestyle change" and reduced their hours in the barn. They transitioned from a 67-cow tie-stall barn to a new free-stall barn with sand bedding and two Lely robots and expanded to 100 milk cows. They have a Vector feeding system with cows getting a PMR of barley silage, corn silage and alfalfa top dressed with a protein commodity blend. The outstanding Crestomere line-up presently includes 14 ME, 3 EX, 58 VG and 36 GP cows and averages 36 kg of milk/cow/day of 4.0% fat and 3.26% protein.

## Road to Excellents

The Simantons never bred an EX cow before 2005. "We started using Gibson and Cousteau and those bulls got us rolling for EX cows," says Lee. And boy did they! From 2005 through 2025, Crestomere has had one or more cows score EX on every classification visit! To date, they have bred 106 EX cows and two at EX-95!

After Gibson and Cousteau, the Simantons purchased several Triumphant daughters and then followed with Dundee. More recently they have been using Lambda and his sons and bulls like Anahita. When doing matings, Lee, who is also an Official Judge, says, "I look for bulls who can sire fore udders and loin strength because the cows will last longer, and then balance. Our herd has enough strength that it is not going to fall apart easily, but if you have a weak loin and bad fore udder your cow families can deteriorate quickly." The Simantons use 75% sexed semen, but not much beef semen because they have a ready market for breeding age bulls.

"Today," Lee says, "we want a balanced cow and are really focused on mammary systems and moderate size in our herd. Cows have to have butterfat. Longevity is the end goal." He goes on to stress, "Consistency is key. We don't bounce around from fad to fad. We use genomics, but we believe in cow families."

## Cow Family Foundations

Several deep-pedigreed cow families lie at the "heart" of this Alberta herd. The first animal to really put Crestomere on the map was ACME STAR LILY EX-2E-8\*, the Starbuck daughter that Ev and Marylee acquired as a calf in 1993 from Acme Holsteins. Lily went on to be Grand Champion at the Royal Winter Fair in 1997-98-99 and Supreme Champion



The kind Crestomere Holsteins likes to breed and sell, CRESTOMERE CELLULAR TWINKLE VG-88 completes 14 generations of VG/EX in the RAVENSWELL LYDIA EX-92-USA-DOM-19\* family and was first Junior 3-Year-Old and Reserve Intermediate Champion at Westerner Dairy Showcase in 2024.



CRESTOMERE LAMBDA VORTEX VG-85-2YR, one of the many descendants of WEEBERLAC TRIUMPH VICKIE VG-88 bred in the Crestomere herd, was first Spring 2-Year-Old at Westerner Dairy Showcase in 2025 for new owners R&F Livestock Inc. (SK) and Walker Dairy Inc. (ON) after also being a class winner earlier at Alberta Dairy Congress.



CRESTOMERE LOU VICTORIA EX-94-2E-9\*, a seventh generation EX/VG in the WEEBERLAC TRIUMPH VICKIE VG-88 family, was Grand Champion at Westerner Dairy Showcase and Reserve All-Canadian Senior 3-Year-Old in 2011 for Crestomere Holsteins and is now the dam of five EX and five VG daughters.



**Crestomere Holsteins was Premier Breeder at Westerner Dairy Showcase in 2024 and contributing points to that award were these three cows who comprised their second prize Breeder's Herd at that show, from left: CRESTOMERE TATOO VEZ EX-95-2E, CRESTOMERE DOORMAN CALLIE EX-93-3E and CRESTOMERE CELLULAR TWINKLE VG-88.**

at World Dairy Expo in 1998 for the Simantons and then partners Continental Holsteins and Alta Genetics (AB). All-Canadian 3X and All-American 2X, Lily had four EX, 12 VG and 11 GP daughters and left great frame and feet and legs in the herd. The Simantons' new 95-pointer, 10-year-old CRESTOMERE G D LILLIE EX-95-5E, is a Lily descendant and has over 88,000 kg milk lifetime to date.

Three Triumphant daughters that the Simantons purchased from Crasdale Farms in PEI in the 2000s have also been impactful like CRASDALE TRIUMPHANT LUSTRE EX-90-2E who traces to the RAVENSWELL LYDIA family. The most influential of these, however, was WEEBERLAC TRIUMPH VICKIE VG-88 who was acquired as a junior 3-year-old in 2004 and transmitted great udders. Nominated for All-Canadian that year, Vickie was carrying in dam CRASDALE DUNDEE VICTORY EX-91-3E-13\* who had seven EX and 11 VG daughters. Among them was CRESTOMERE LOU VICTORIA EX-94-2E-9\*, Grand Champion at Westerner Dairy Showcase and Reserve All-Canadian Senior 3-Year-Old in 2011. Victoria is the dam of five EX and five VG daughters including CRESTOMERE SIDEKICK VALKYRIE EX-93-2E, Honourable Mention All-Canadian Junior 3-Year-Old in 2022, and CRESTOMERE MOST VALUABLE EX-93-2E with 83,150 kg milk in four lactations. Another branch of this family has produced CRESTOMERE TATOO VEZ EX-95-2E

who went 95 in January for Benbie Holsteins (SK) and was first 5-year-old at Westerner Dairy Showcase in 2025.

Another cow whose family contributed many points to the Master Breeder is CRESTOMERE FLORIAN MAGGY EX-90-4E-2\*. Backed by four VG dams, she made 120,557 kg milk lifetime.

**Show. Business.**

Showing is a key part of Crestomere's promotion and marketing efforts every year. The Simantons show extensively across Western Canada and have exhibited at the Royal and World Dairy Expo. They have won a multitude of top rosettes in the individual and Breeder's Herd classes, along with many banners and All-Canadian, All-American and All-Western awards. Recently, Crestomere was Premier Breeder at Westerner Dairy Showcase in 2025 and 2024. At Alberta Dairy Congress they were Holstein Premier Breeder and Exhibitor and Red & White Junior Premier Exhibitor in 2025 and earlier claimed Holstein Premier Breeder honours there in 2024 and 2023. "Showing is a great way to advertise and merchandise Crestomere Holsteins," says Lee. "We are proud to sell animals to other farms, even if they are our competition. My theory is if you are afraid to sell a good one because she is good, then you are not confident that you can breed another one next year."

**Community and Family**

The Simantons generously "give back" to their community and the Holstein industry. Ev is a past director, and Lee a current director, on the Alberta Holstein Branch Board. Lee and Lisa are both on the Central Alberta Holstein Club Board with Lisa the club's secretary and Ev a past president. Marylee was on the Western Canadian Classic Board for 17 years, has been a 4-H leader and was active in the Ponoka Figure Skating Club. Ev, now 75, and Marylee, 70, earned the Marj Atkins Achievement Award in 2022. Crestomere has been "Alberta Breeder of the Year" 4X (1994, 2007, 2011, 2023).

Ev and Marylee's two daughters are very involved in the dairy industry too and have families with multiple interests. Jess and her husband Michael Lovich, and their three daughters Reata, Renelle and Raelyn, own Lovholm Holsteins (prefix Lovhill) at Balgonie, SK, and are the breeders of two World Dairy Expo Grand Champions, LOVHILL GOLDWYN KATRYSHA EX-96-USA-3\* and LOVHILL SIDEKICK KANDY CANE EX-96-2E-USA. Sandy and her husband Jon Kingdon, and their three children Sydney, Shae and Cole, farm with Jon's parents at Charlyn Farms, Warwick Township, ON, where they have a noted Jersey herd and own a few Holsteins.

What are the Simantons most proud of? "That we are a family farm. We are all in it together. We are all still working together and still very tied together," they reply. "The girls may have their own thing," says Marylee, "but they are still included in everything we do," be that travelling and working together at shows, owning cattle together or just supporting each other. And that, states Lee, "We attribute to our parents. They did a really good job."

With all that is going on in their lives and on the farm, the Simantons readily admit that it's usually "chaotic, but fun" around Crestomere Holsteins. It is that deep joy and passion for family and their cows that has kept the Simantons moving ahead and led them to achieving this well-deserved Master Breeder award.

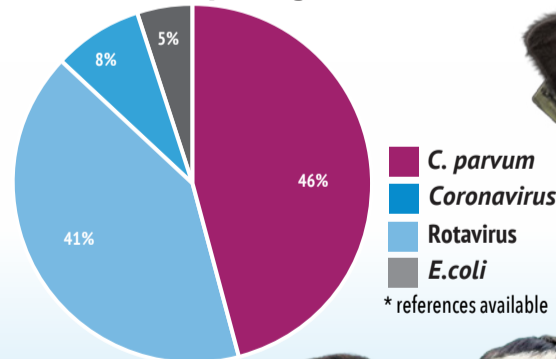
# Would you spend ± \$40 and 10 minutes to PROTECT \$1500? (or more)

In 10 minutes – you will know if your valuable calf has

- CRYPTOSPORIDIUM
- ROTA VIRUS
- CORONA VIRUS
- E. COLI + K99



Calf-diarrhea pathogens



Proven in Europe / CFIA Approved in Canada  
Available from Diamond City Farm Supply or ask your Veterinarian



Layne Van Rhijn  
Phone: 403-715-7482  
441 McKechney Ave (Box 175)  
Diamond City, AB T0K 0T0

info@diamondcityfarmsupply.com • www.diamondcityfarmsupply.com

