

A Master Breeder Shield for Mosnang



Markus and Amanda Hehli and their four children are pictured at the 2025 Western Dairy Expo in Saskatoon with MOSNANG RESPECT DANGER ZONE EX-92 (left), and the show's first 4-Year-Old and Honourable Mention Grand Champion, SILVERMAPLE LIMITED CERSEE VG-89, who they sold at the show.



Bruce Sargent photo

The Hehli family embodies the true spirit of the family farm – three generations working side by side, sharing in the thrill of this Master Breeder recognition. (Back row L-R) Wyatt, Amanda, Markus, Ruth and Heini. (Front row L-R) Sawyer, Georgia and Adair.

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Deservingly on the roster of Holstein Canada Master Breeders for 2025 is Mosnang Holsteins, Rimbey, AB, owned by Heini and Ruth Hehli and son Markus and his wife Amanda and their family. "The award means we are achieving our goals and getting what we want from our cows," they say humbly.

A Swiss Dream. A Canadian Farm.

Heini and Ruth Hehli grew up in Switzerland but weren't raised on a farm. "My Dad was a policeman and Ruth's was an engineer," shares Heini. "I always liked agriculture and helped neighbours who had small farms. My idea was to have an agriculture career." Between a 2-year apprenticeship and going to agriculture school, Heini spent a year working on a farm in Quebec. "I came to Canada in 1974. I was just turning 20. It was then that I realized I could farm here on my own," he says. After finishing school, Heini returned to Quebec for another year and then went to Manitoba. "I got a job with the Holtmann family at Rosser Holsteins. I was there three years. That is where I really became interested in dairy farming and was able to buy a calf or two from them every year," he continues. "I met Ruth on a visit back to Switzerland. We married in 1980. We looked for a farm. It wasn't easy. We had no money. We heard there was free milk quota in Alberta and we found this farm. It was a quarter section, came with 44 Holstein cows and a new tie-stall barn. That was our beginning. Half the cows were purebred. The other half were grades, and we upgraded them through Holstein Canada's National Identification Program (NIP)."

The Hehlis took the prefix "Mosnang" – the name of the Swiss town Heini was born in. "I fed calves and learned how to milk," says Ruth. "It was all new to me. It was quite an adventure. We raised seven children (two boys and five girls). The kids were all involved in 4-H and had their own chores on the farm. I always thought our kids had paradise on earth."

New Generations – New Excitement!

The farm grew and improved in the years to come. "We had very good counsel," says Heini, "from Ernie and Rosmary Naegeli of Roserna Holsteins and Don Chalack of Wendon



Jenna Jongenotter photo

Mosnang Holsteins' winning Breeder's Herd at the 2025 Western Dairy Expo consisted of, from left: MOSNANG ARMY DELIGHT EX-93-3E-2* and her daughter, MOSNANG RESPECT DANGER ZONE EX-92, plus MOSNANG DEMPSEY BELLINI EX-91-2E.

Holsteins, Alberta breeders we looked up to and tried to emulate." Heini became an Alberta Milk director in 2008 and eventually vice-chairman. The Hehlis' oldest son, Markus, came home while Heini was heavily involved in Alberta Milk and assumed responsibility for the herd's breeding and management decisions. In January 2011, they suffered a setback when their barn collapsed from snow load. They lost a dozen cows. Luckily, the milking parlour and holding pen were OK and they moved the remaining cows into a hay shed. By April, the barn was rebuilt.

Markus, 44, and Amanda, 40, who married in 2009, along with their children – Wyatt, 13, Adair, 11, and twins Sawyer and Georgia, 9 – are now partners in the farm with Heini and Ruth. Together this 3X "Alberta Breeder of the Year" winner has developed an outstanding herd. As Heini says happily, "It took us 45 years to get a Master Breeder shield, but I always say Ruth and I bred for 30 years and built a very good base, and then Markus came home and elevated that base the last 15 years." The Hehlis own 320 acres of land, rent another 250, and grow barley, corn and alfalfa. They grow all their own forages and feed a TMR and purchased grain. They have a couple part-time employees and over the years have had students from all around the world work here.

Very Intentional Breeding

"We want a cow that makes a lot of milk for a long time and

looks good doing it," says Markus, a strategy his parents also embraced, plus "Just that extra to be successful at the shows," adds Heini. When choosing a bull, Markus says, "I start with high typed bulls and then look for bulls that have positive production and components. I also look at Herd Life, Mastitis Resistance and a few of the health traits. And then they have to have proven cow families behind them." He continues, "I use less of more bulls. I will end up with three or four daughters of a bull and that might be it. Sometimes I go back and use the bull again, but usually by then I'm using his sons. I feel we still get consistency that way. I have a cow in mind so every mating I make I'm trying to make that cow. Presently I'm using 75% genomic and 25% proven bulls," says Markus. "We don't use much sexed semen and only 10% beef because we sell quite a few breeding bulls."

The Hehlis currently milk 110 Holsteins and 10 Jerseys in a step-up, flat parlour with a free-stall facility. The line-up includes 13 ME, 8 EX, 73 VG and 34 GP and has a Rolling Herd Average of 10,247 kg milk, 464 kg fat, 345 kg protein. In 2025, they had two cows earn 60,000 kg milk lifetime certificates, two at 80,000 kg and one at 100,000 kg, plus had six Star Brood cows recognized. Among them was MOSNANG JACOBY LEGENDAIRY VG-89-3*, a ninth generation VG/EX in the COMESTAR LAURIE SHEIK family, who was formerly #1 for Conformation in Canada and is the dam of BLONDIN LEGEND at Blondin Sires.

Starting with the Right Cows

WESTPRIDE PETULA B EX-9*, a Starbuck owned by Wendon Holsteins, had a big impact at Mosnang. "My parents bought a daughter of Petula, and I bought a granddaughter, and lots of our Master Breeder points go back to her," observes Markus.

A show winning family who contributed many points is the "L Family" who traces to a 2-year-old Brent that Heini and Ruth bought in 1985. A descendant, MOSNANG LIGHTNING BOLT EX-92-2E-6*, was Alberta "Cow of the Year" in 2016, earned a Super 4 award, and had two EX and three VG daughters. The highest scored of these, MOSNANG SALOON LIQUOR EX-94-2E, was Grand Champion at Alberta Dairy Congress and a member of Mosnang's first nominated All-Canadian Breeder's Herd in 2018 in a career that also claimed two All-Western titles and a Super 4 award. Liquor's highly acclaimed

Two instrumental members in Mosnang Holsteins' L Family, MOSNANG SALOON LIQUOR EX-94-2E, at left, and her granddaughter, MOSNANG SOLOMON LIQUIFY EX-95-3E, were pictured together a few years ago in the Hehlis' Alberta barn.



Ella Wright photo

granddaughter, MOSNANG SOLOMON LIQUIFY EX-95-3E, a fifth generation homebred EX and fourth generation with over 81,000 kg milk lifetime, has records to 21,104 kg milk, 4.3% fat, 3.3% protein (351-388-363). She was Grand Champion at Westerner Dairy Showcase and Reserve Canadian Champion Junior 3-Year-Old in 2020. Liquify, and several members of her family, are now owned by Westcoast Holsteins (BC). Under their banner in 2022, Liquify was Reserve All-Canadian and Honourable Mention All-American 5-Year-Old, while her daughter, MOSNANG UNIX LIPSTICK EX-95 was All-Canadian and Reserve All-American Junior 3-Year-Old after winning her class at the Royal Winter Fair, and another daughter, MOSNANG BRIDGESTONE LIVE WIRE VG-87, was nominated for All-Canadian Fall Yearling in Milk. Liquify and her two daughters combined to take second place in the Breeder's Herd class at the Royal (later Reserve All-Canadian) and helped Mosnang to be runner-up for Overall Premier Breeder at that Royal.

Showing Success was No Accident

Markus, who won the Curtis Clark Achievement Award at the Royal in 2023, was 15 when he took his family's



Bullvine photo

Three members of Mosnang Holsteins' L Family combined to take second place in the Breeder's Herd class at the 2022 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and then went on to be Reserve All-Canadian Breeder's Herd that year. From left: sisters MOSNANG BRIDGESTONE LIVE WIRE VG-87 and MOSNANG UNIX LIPSTICK EX-95, and then their dam, MOSNANG SOLOMON LIQUIFY EX-95-3E.



Ella Wright photo

Judge Markus Hehli selects the Champion Calf in the Conformation classes at the 2025 TD Canadian 4-H Dairy Classic held at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair last November.

first showstring all by himself to Olds Fair. Mosnang has been showing ever since at major shows across Western Canada, as well as the Royal and World Dairy Expo. They have been Premier Breeder 5X and Premier Exhibitor 6X at Alberta Dairy Congress and had first Breeder's Herd there in 2024-25. They have been Premier Breeder and Exhibitor at Westerner Dairy Showcase 2X and were Junior Premier Breeder there in 2024 and Junior Premier Breeder and Exhibitor in 2025. "Showing gives our herd lots of exposure and has been a great way for us to merchandise animals. And if we sell a good one, and she does well for her new owner, that's marketing for us too," says Markus.

Showing today is a "family affair" with Markus being regularly joined at the shows by Amanda and their four children who are all in 4-H. It is not unusual to see the Hehlis with 20-30 animals in their showstring. A recent member, MOSNANG ARMY DELIGHT EX-93-3E-2*, was second mature cow last year at Alberta Dairy Congress and Western Dairy Expo. A sixth generation EX/VG, she traces to TOMALYNN LEDUC DELLA EX-95-2E-1*, the 3X All-Canadian. Delight has two EX daughters including MOSNANG RESPECT DANGER ZONE EX-92 who was first fall 2-year-old at Alberta Dairy Congress in 2024.

Finding Time off the Farm

The Hehlis have been very active in the dairy industry and their community. Heini, now 71, was a 4-H leader for 30 years and is currently president of the Wildrose Yodel Club. He and Ruth, 67, were very involved for many years in the local school council and soccer association and did marriage preparation for engaged couples through their church. Markus is an Official Judge and judged the 2024 National Red & White Holstein Show and 2025 TD Canadian 4-H Dairy Classic conformation classes at the Royal. Both Markus and Amanda are 4-H leaders, while Markus is also on the Westerner Dairy Showcase Committee, treasurer of the Central Alberta Holstein Club, and previously served on Holstein Canada's Show and Judging Committee. Amanda is the Alberta Holstein Branch's social media director.

The Hehlis are very proud of their cows, but more importantly that they have done everything as a **family**. Heini and Ruth's drive and ambition, combined with Markus and Amanda's passion, has brought Mosnang Holsteins a long way in 45 years and as a family has made them a Master Breeder!



Jenna Jongenotter photo

In 2024, Markus Hehli (right) had the honour of judging the National Red & White Holstein Show at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and here he congratulates Mike Deaver, leading the show's Grand Champion, PREMIUM APPLE CRISP LILLY.



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