



IN PURSUIT OF PROGRESS AND PROFITABILITY

Taking a Closer Look at Top Performance

We are pleased to present a detailed look at the top Herd Performance Index farm from each western Province.

How are Canada's best managed dairy herds identified?

Each year, Lactanet customers enrolled in milk recording receive a Herd Performance Index (HPI) score along with data from each of the six indicators: Milk Value, Udder Health, Age at First Calving, Calving Interval, Herd Efficiency and Longevity. By analyzing data within these areas that are driving today's dairy farms, and then comparing the information with other Canadian herds, Lactanet can allocate points, calculate an HPI and annually rank each dairy herd. This information helps producers monitor overall herd management performance, track progress, and identify opportunities for improvement.



Sierra Colony Farms Ltd
Shaunavon, Saskatchewan
HPI Score: 861



Sierra Colony Farms is a mixed farming operation spanning broiler production, cow-calf, dairy, and cash cropping. The dairy has been in operation since 2011, beginning with two Lely robots milking 80 cows. Today, Josh and Zach Kleinsasser milk 156 Holstein cows with three robots, focusing on producing high quality milk from happy, healthy cows as efficiently as possible. The farm's strategy is simple: "Do your best every day and leave the rest up to the good Lord."

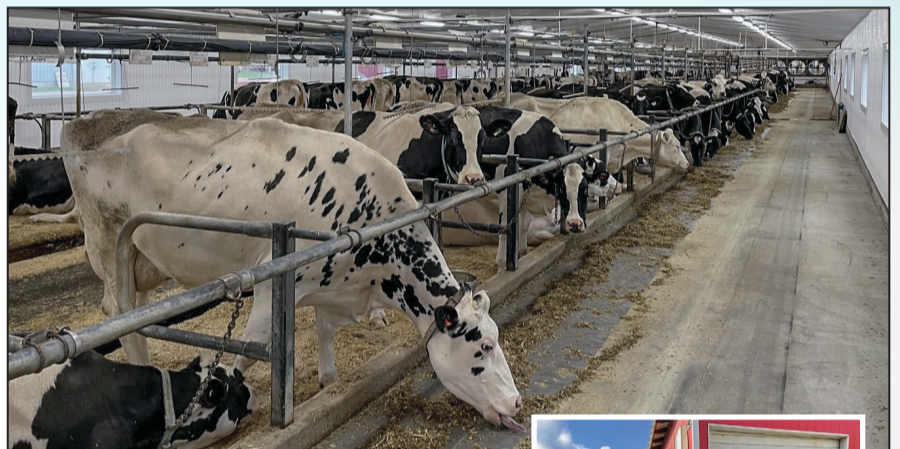
This philosophy has shaped the evolution of the dairy, driving investments that prioritize efficiency, cow comfort, and animal health. In 2019, the dairy expanded to include a maternity barn and four all-in all-out calf rooms equipped with automatic feeders. These improvements enhanced cow comfort at calving and early-life management, resulting in healthier, more robust calves.

Ongoing monitoring supports the focus on cow health. Each robot is equipped with SCC counters, and eDHI is used for real-time data tracking. In addition, Lactanet reports provide an important support for management decisions, benchmarking, and identifying areas for continued improvement.

Cow comfort remains a priority at every stage of production. In the milking barn, cross tunnel ventilation and water beds keep cows cool and comfortable. In 2025, the farm added an inside feeding monoslope barn for dry cows and replacement heifers, which is also used for feeding out crossbreds. This facility further strengthened animal comfort and health while reducing feed waste.

Together, comfortable housing, proper nutrition and attentive management lead to healthier cows with higher conception and pregnancy rates. Breeding decisions follow a balanced approach considering both production and type, with emphasis on good feet and mammary systems. Higher classifying and good BCA cows are bred with sexed semen, while lower ranking animals are bred to beef. Lactanet reports support these breeding decisions, ensuring genetic progress aligns with the farm's emphasis on durability and efficiency.

At the heart of Sierra Colony Farms' success is a strong belief in teamwork. The Kleinsassers place great value on surrounding themselves with a trusted group of industry professionals, including their veterinarian and nutritionist, recognizing that strong partnerships are a key to success. Looking ahead, they hope to continue to be part of a great industry, producing high quality milk while passing the dedication, care, and work ethic required to the next generation.



Isaac Dairy Ltd
Kleefeld, Manitoba
HPI Score: 932



At Isaac Dairy Ltd, excellence is measured by how consistently cows perform over long, and healthy lifetimes. Located in Kleefeld, Manitoba, and owned by Brent and Reg Isaac, the farm has been in the family for over 130 years. Today, the dairy milks 92 cows in a tie-stall facility focusing on high production achieved alongside exceptional animal welfare.

One of the herd's goals is for as many cows as possible to reach 80,000 kg of lifetime milk, while keeping high daily averages. Through precision across all management areas, steady progress is being made, and a growing number of cows are achieving 100,000 kg while remaining ahead of the second lactation group in daily production. This priority begins in early life, with the philosophy that healthy calves set the pace for a long and productive life.

Feeding and transition management are equally important. Working closely with their nutritionist, the farm keeps a good handle on rations using a robotic feeding system, with the milking herd split into two groups to support ideal body condition at dry-off. When cows are dried off with proper body condition, transition periods are usually less challenging, leading to strong lactations and conception rates of 55% to 65%. Lactanet tools, including SCC testing and Transition Management Index, are used to provide insights into dry-off and early-lactation performance.

When it comes to reproductive management, Isaac Dairy prioritizes flexibility and voluntary waiting periods are tailored to each cow. Shorter lactation cows have a voluntary waiting period of 60 days or less, while longer lactation cows are bred at 120 days or more. This individualized approach supports productivity without increasing culling rates.

Mating decisions further reinforce the herd's long-term focus. Approximately 60% of females are bred to beef, with Holstein matings reserved for animals with production evaluations in the top quartile. Close attention is also paid to Mastitis Resistance, Daughter Fertility, and Median Suspensory, aiming to eliminate weaknesses that could lead to premature culling. The Isaacs' philosophy is that the time invested in identifying the right matings is justified by the potential return of a cow capable of achieving 100,000 kg of lifetime production.

While Isaac Dairy consistently ranks among the top herds in Western Canada for 305day milk value, its real strength lies in 365day production and lactation lengths that match cow needs. By managing elite cows as the norm rather than the exception, this Manitoba Best Managed Herd demonstrates how high performance can become routine.



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Based on annual herd averages, herds in the top 10% nationally (90th percentile) achieve approximately:

- Milk Value: \$11,984 (Holstein 305-day lactation) • Udder Health: 101,000 SCC • Age at First Calving: 23.1 months
- Calving Interval: 12.6 months • Herd Efficiency: 89.7% of cows in milk • Longevity: 54.6% of the herd with more than 3 lactations

*BASED ON LACTANET'S 2025 DATA



New Rockport Colony
New Dayton, Alberta
HPI Score: 903



With roots dating back to 1932, New Rockport Colony has built its success on a commitment to doing the simple things well, every day. The current barn milks 128 cows in a Double 6 BouMatic Herringbone parlour. Simon Waldner began managing in 2015 and, building on a strong foundation left by the previous manager, developed a system focused on consistency and attention to detail. In 2023, Joshua Wipf joined the operation, and together, with additional support, they continue to refine herd performance.

A strong commitment to daily routines is a defining strength of the farm. Feeding times for the milking herd remain highly consistent, and all handling is structured around milking to minimize stress. Lactanet's SCC and Mastitis4 reports are used to identify and address issues proactively. Through the use of udder health reports and improvements in milking procedures, the farm managed to significantly reduce the somatic cell count to 100,000 from 200,000 six years ago.

Investments in cow comfort have also delivered results, including rubber flooring in the free stall alleys, reducing falling. Lameness is addressed within 24 hours, and regular hoof trimming supports excellent foot health. These practices have led to measurable improvements across the herd. Over 45% of cows were in their third lactation or greater last year, an achievement considered one of the farm's biggest successes. Classification scores have also strengthened, supporting durability and long-term productivity.

Unlike most farms, New Rockport Colony has fed an all-hay diet for more than 30 years. Supported by their nutritionist, the farm focuses on a simple, high-quality ration with minimal use of feed additives, resulting in excellent intake, with cows achieving 61 lbs of dry matter intake. The dry cow program mirrors this approach, where separate diets are fed to far-off and close-up groups and slightly longer dry periods of 65 to 70 days, are preferred.

DairyComp serves as the main herd management software, supporting breeding, health, and daily management decisions. More recently, genomic testing has been introduced to help refine heifer selection and support long-term genetic progress. Combined with DHI data and classification results, these tools help guide culling and breeding decisions.

The success of this herd comes down to doing every task, large or small, the same way every day. Through a focus on simple, effective management, New Rockport Colony has built a system where health, longevity, and performance work together.



West River Farm Ltd
Rosedale, British Columbia
HPI Score: 944



At West River Farm, the strength of the people and the care they bring to their animals is what defines success. Located in Rosedale, British Columbia, the operation was established in the mid-1970s by Denis and Jill Sache next door to Jill's family farm. The owners, brothers Grant and Gene Sache, along with their families, have transitioned to management 20 years ago, milking 190 cows on four Lely robots.

A defining feature of West River Farm is the level of control the Saches maintain over their herd strategy. The herd is closed, with all replacements raised on-farm in a dedicated young stock facility renovated from a former cow barn. The farm also grows and harvests their own forages, allowing them to manage what goes into the bunks and ultimately fed to the animals. By managing both genetics and feed quality internally, the farm has built a consistent system that supports herd health and performance. The farm approach is supported by DairyComp as the backbone for record keeping, including traceability, registrations, and treatments, while the VAS platform allows for easy access to look up specific animals, particularly heifers.

A strong team plays a central role, ensuring that animals are comfortable, well fed and cared for, while facilities are maintained to a high standard. There is a shared sense of commitment across the farm, with each person taking on a diverse range of roles and responsibilities. That teamwork creates an environment where successes are shared, making the day-to-day work productive and rewarding.

The family is especially proud of the farm's success transitioning to the next generation, and their commitment to continuous improvement. The culmination of a lot of small changes over time have led to great results in all aspects of the operation.

Looking ahead, the future of British Columbia's Best Managed Herd is approached with optimism, recognizing the challenges of farming while embracing the opportunities within the industry. The family remains committed to continuing what they have built, while being excited to see how the next generation may choose to be involved.

Looking for more information?

Lactanet's 2025 Ontario and Western Canada Progress Report is now available online or in print delivered with the May issue of the Milk Producer magazine. The annual report features high-performing herds, inspiring farm profiles, and provides insights into herd performance trends, benchmarking results, and practical takeaways to support on-farm decision-making.

View the report at <https://lactanet.ca/en/annual-reports/>



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