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Winter 2025
Special Features

WestGen's
Western
Pioneers
Pages 8-9

BC Dairy
Conference
Pages 5, 6, 10, 13

Introducing
Master
Breeders
Page 16

Photo by Lisa Simanton, Crestomere Holsteins, Ponoka

COMING UP

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BC DAIRY

FEBRUARY

24

Lactanet Reveals "Canada's Best Managed Dairy Herds for 2025" Tuesday.
For more details go to Lactanet Facebook or www.lactanet.ca.

25

Lactanet Canada Virtual Open Industry Session Wednesday.
See www.lactanet.ca for registration information and agenda.

MARCH

5-6

Ayrshire Canada AGM & Master Breeder Gala Thursday-Friday,
Thetford Mines, QC. Visit www.ayrshire-canada.com for more info.

6

WCDN Booking Deadline for the Spring issue.

7-11

Make a Difference Online Auction Saturday-Wednesday.
See www.givergy.ca/MakeaDifferenceSale to view items and place your bid!

10-13

Western Canadian Dairy Seminar Tuesday-Friday, Red Deer Resort & Casino, AB.
For more info, see <https://wcds.ualberta.ca/>

17

WestGen Antares Alliance AGM Tuesday, WestGen, Abbotsford, BC.

27-29

Jersey Canada AGM Friday-Sunday, Ottawa, ON.
Visit jerseycanada.com/agm for more details.

31

WestGen Endowment Fund Application Deadline Tuesday.
See <https://westgen.com/community/endowment-fund/> for more info.

APRIL

1-2

Canadian Dairy Xpo Wednesday-Thursday, Stratford Rotary Complex, ON.

4

North Okanagan Spring Show Saturday, Armstrong Fairgrounds, Armstrong, BC.

7

Lactanet Canada Official Genetic Evaluation Release for all dairy breeds in Canada.

12-15

Pre-Holstein Canada National Convention Tour
Journey to the Pacific – Calgary to the Coast (through the Rockies).

Coming Up ONLINE – www.wcdairynews.com

While the event dates were confirmed and current as of date printed, changes do happen!
Please confirm event listings on the website and check for changes or updates.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Yes, Winter Can Be
Breathtaking!

MORE INSIDE:

Celebrating Longevity
Fraser Valley Farm Tours
Sumas Prairie Flood
Children's Hospital
Pacific Ag Show
Plus more....

Photo by Henk Vandenbrink,
Sunset at Vandenbrink Dairy, Saskatoon.

Photo by Joanne Vanderlinde,
Lucky Hill Dairy, Lacombe

See more Winter photos from our readers on page 62!

f

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APRIL	
14-17	Best of the West Dairy Showcase Tuesday-Friday, WestGen, Abbotsford, BC.
15-19	National Holstein Convention "Spirit of the West" Wednesday-Sunday, Marriott Burnaby Conference Centre, Burnaby, BC.
*15	Welcome Reception Wednesday.
*15	Spirit of the West National Holstein Convention Sale Wednesday 12:30pm, Chilliwack Heritage Park.
*16	Youth Showmanship Show Thursday 9am, Chilliwack Heritage Park.
*16	BC Spring Jersey Show Thursday 11am, Chilliwack Heritage Park.
*16	Farm and Fraser Valley tours Thursday.
*17	National Holstein Show Friday, 8:30am, Chilliwack Heritage Park.
*18	Holstein Canada AGM (day) and Master Breeder Gala (evening), Saturday.
19-21	Post-Holstein Canada National Convention Tour Paradise on the Pacific – Vancouver Island.
23-24	Western Dairy Expo Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, SK.
AUGUST	
11	Lactanet Canada Official Genetic Evaluation Release for all dairy breeds in Canada.
18-22	40th WestGen Canadian Classic (WCC) Tuesday-Saturday, Brandon, MB.
SEPTEMBER	
29-Oct 2	World Dairy Expo Tuesday-Friday, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI.
NOVEMBER	
6-15	Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Friday-Sunday, Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON.

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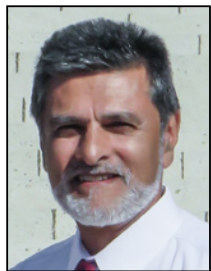
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Tars' Tale-Spins

Ready or Not, Here's the New Year

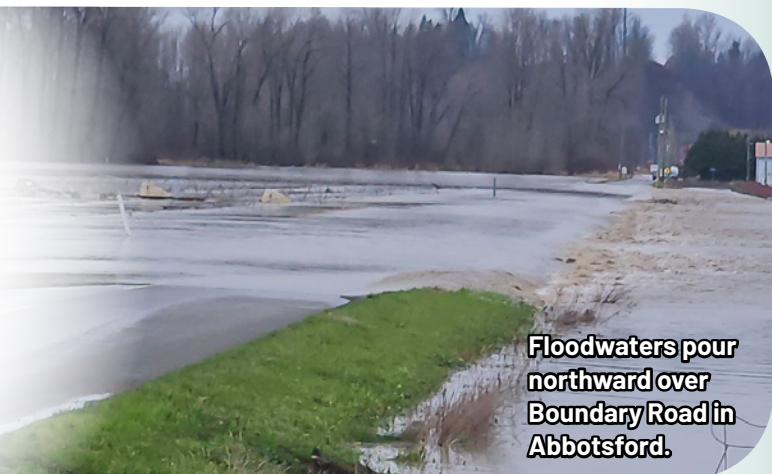


Tars Cheema

Sandbags are NOT a Solution!

The Sumas Prairie flooding in early December was not as bad as 2021 but was still a terrible event, affecting many farms and others who are just trying to live and farm as has been the case for generations. By all accounts, the coordinated response from local governments/agencies and our BC dairy organizations was so much better than 2021, proving that everyone really did work hard to learn lessons and have a plan ready to enact. It went a long way to support our dairy neighbours. Thank you to everyone who figuratively dove into the deep water and never quit paddling til the waters receded. Of course, it's never that simple – a lot of remediation is still needed, costing money that's in short supply at a time when BC still has not resolved the 'pooling of production costs' issue. Our industry leaders continue to push forward on that issue among others in a year when CUSMA is also looming on the horizon.

The Sumas Prairie flood risk seems to have caught the attention of all levels of government – let's hope they can make even more progress this time – not sure how we deal with the Nooksack River south of the border though. **See more flood coverage on page 30.**



Floodwaters pour northward over Boundary Road in Abbotsford.

Keeping Perspective

Many of you will recognize the name, Anna Klochko, our friend and ag journalist from Ukraine. We met her three years ago when she joined our BC Farm Writers group as she was trying to establish a new life in Canada, away from the Russian attacks. She returned to Ukraine two years ago, unable to settle into a comfortable life in Canada while the war against her people raged on.

For two years she has been helping her communities hold on, while finding various writing/media gigs to support herself. All the while, looking to share the stories which detail the horrendous destruction of her homeland, so their plight does not disappear. It's deeply important that she also sheds light on the resilience and determination of the Ukrainian people to not cave under such unrelenting brutality.



Anna - trying hard to remain positive in miserable conditions.

Though news of Ukraine slips further from our view as new flashier stories emerge (Venezuela, Greenland), the drone attacks have only intensified as the aggressor seeks to beat them into submission while the world is focused elsewhere. This winter has been particularly brutal as Russia's drones have cruelly targeted the energy infrastructure.

Here are some sporadic messages I received from Anna over the last eight weeks when the power and internet was up:

"Thanks so much for continuing to keep Ukraine visible and human. We Ukrainians really appreciate it."



Gas generators have become everyday necessities.

My internet signal is very weak right now, and it's hard to type for long outside (it's freezing, and my phone battery drains fast).

Unfortunately, last night Russia attacked our energy infrastructure again, trying to push the system to the limit during cold weather conditions. Kyiv is almost completely without power...

After today's attack, Kyiv is again facing severe outages – heating, electricity and internet are disrupted across many districts, and the city has set up warming tents where people can charge phones and get basic support.

What is happening is a real genocide. I can't imagine how many elderly people – whom social services, for example, cannot reach – will freeze or die of hunger. The Russians are completely depriving the most densely populated part of Kyiv (where the sleeping districts with high-rise buildings are



Drone strikes are targeting civilian homes and infrastructure.

concentrated) of the ability to function. In apartments it's from -6 to +10C on average. Elevators don't work; there is no water.

Regardless of what outsiders are saying, Ukrainians want peace! People are losing faith and strength. Four years of defending ourselves.

Now the Russians are beginning to strike the stations feeding nuclear power plants. Today the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was temporarily de-energized. At the same time, the losses of the Russian army near Kupiansk are 27:1. But they are successful at freezing the civilian population and blackmailing with strikes on nuclear power plants.

Working, even remotely, while being in Kyiv is very hard. Internet and Wi-Fi exist only in some cafes that work on gasoline-powered generators, leaving a pungent smell of gasoline in the air."

Even in all of this unthinkable hardship, Anna has not lost her humanity, finding positive pieces to hold onto.

"The only plus is that we in the cities can see the starry sky again. All light pollution has disappeared against the background of a total blackout.

Interestingly, the weather decided to treat Ukrainians on New Year's Eve – we had snow, which noticeably lifted people's spirits. No war can fully break that positive association with a winter fairy tale and a holiday.

Wishing everyone a bright, joyful year ahead – full of health, warmth, and reasons to celebrate. Warmly, Anna"

May we all take a lesson from Anna's grace and remember our blessings though there be vibrations in our wobbly world.

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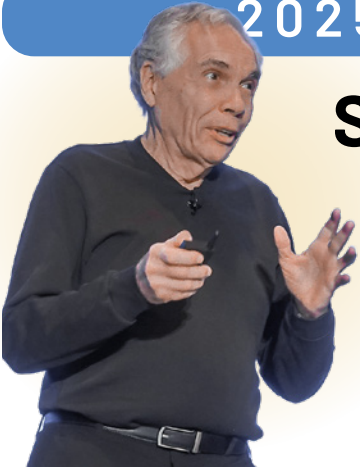
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2025 BC DAIRY INDUSTRY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Joe Schwarcz, Professor of Chemistry at McGill University

Amanda Poelman

In an age overflowing with information – and all too often, misinformation – Dr. Joe Schwarcz, Professor of Chemistry at McGill University, a media personality, and author, is touted for his commitment to scientific clarity. Aiming to help the audience “separate sense from nonsense,” Dr. Schwarcz blended scientific insight with wit, personal anecdotes, and a strong call for critical thinking. Misinformation, or what he called “a modern tsunami of quackery”, no longer lives on the fringes of tabloids but now permeates mainstream media, politics, and public discourse – especially on social media, where fact and fiction are often tangled.

“Misinformation no longer lives on the fringes of tabloids but now permeates mainstream media, politics, and public discourse – especially on social media, where fact and fiction are often tangled.

Addressing the dangers of social media-driven pseudoscience, Dr. Schwarcz critiqued popular figures such as “the People’s Chemist” and “the Medical Medium,” highlighting their unscientific claims about living “chemical-free” or offering medical advice through spirit mediums. He emphasized a foundational principle of toxicology – “only the dose makes the poison” – to underscore that chemicals themselves are neither inherently good nor bad. Using a green apple as an example, Dr. Schwarcz showed the ingredients list, which included everything you might expect, but also formaldehyde, acetone and isopropanol. He points out that this is what apples are made of at the molecular level, so should we stop eating apples? Of course not! He then showed the **numbers – the currency of science** – which shows that the amount of those three ingredients is so miniscule it would have no effect at all.

Staying on the topic of nutrition, Dr. Schwarcz debunked widespread myths surrounding food additives, dyes, and perceived dietary dangers. He challenged ideas promoted by influencers like the “Food Babe,” noting that unfamiliar or complex chemical names often describe substances that are common and benign, such as sugar. “There are obviously reasons we should cut down on our sugar intake, but its long scientific name is not one of them.”

In a dairy related example, Dr. Schwarcz talked about the link between dairy and cancer. Citing a geochemist from England who promoted the idea that reducing dairy consumption reduces the risk of breast cancer due to hormones in the milk, Dr. Schwarcz says, “Her only evidence was that in countries where milk consumption was low, rates of breast cancer were also low. But her ‘evidence’ is flawed because the level of hormones found in milk are trivial compared to the hormones we naturally produce in our bodies.” There are no scientific studies that have conclusively

Separating Sense from Nonsense: Navigating the Age of Misinformation

Presentation by Dr. Joe Schwarcz, McGill University

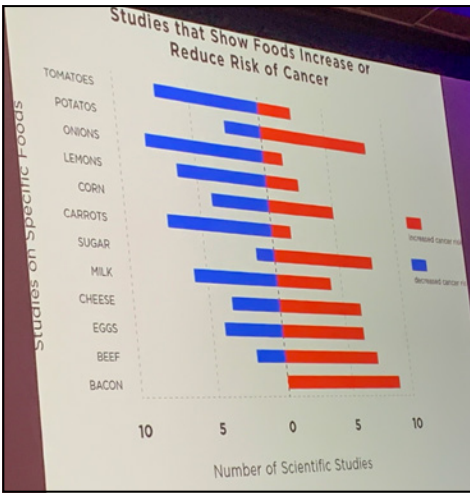
shown any link between dairy consumption and cancer. Fearmongering, he argued, distracts from true scientific understanding, which must be rooted in evidence, context, and rigorous study rather than anecdote or intuition.

Looking ahead, Dr. Schwarcz introduced emerging technologies such as laboratory-produced milk created through precision fermentation and mammary cell culturing. He highlighted both the potential health advantages of these innovations and the social, cultural, and regulatory challenges likely to accompany them. Throughout his

talk, he returned to the importance of **context** in evaluating scientific claims, saying, “You can cherry-pick studies from whatever side of the argument you want to be on.” With conflicting studies and sensational headlines so common, he stressed the necessity of critical thinking to distinguish reliable evidence from noise.

In closing, Dr. Schwarcz advocated for stronger science education, particularly at the elementary and high school levels, arguing that fostering curiosity and teaching sound scientific reasoning early are essential for navigating today’s information-saturated

“Through skepticism, curiosity, and education, we can be discerning and help slow the spread of information, one critical mind at a time.



Most debates have data on both sides, allowing evidence to be cherry-picked to support nearly any argument.

world. Critical thinking is the key to knowing what truly warrants concern. Through skepticism, curiosity, and education, he suggested, we can all become more discerning consumers of information and “help slow the spread of misinformation, one critical mind at a time.”

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2025 BC DAIRY INDUSTRY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



President of the Western Dairy Council, Dan Wong spoke of progress among dairy stakeholders while emphasizing the need for speed in evolving the industry.

Tars Cheema

Dan Wong, President of the Western Dairy Council, has become a welcome regular at BC's Dairy Industry Conference. Both entertaining and thought-provoking, he cuts to the bone with his analysis and take-away messages. For this presentation on November 27, he painted a picture of stark contrast in 'pace of innovation' between the modern world and the need to keep pace in the dairy industry.

To illustrate his point, Dan started with the example of the new world speed-record set in Germany by the SU7 Ultra race car, achieving the fastest time ever recorded by an electric vehicle – but even more stunning is that the Chinese manufacturer was barely in the business of making cars for one year. Its origins? Building home appliances and cell phones!

ChatGPT, he continued, doubled users in under three months – from 400M in February to 800M users by April 2025. "That's less time than it takes to implement an annual price change in the Canadian dairy industry," he quipped, triggering sympathetic laughter from the audience.

"More than the magnitude and scope of change...it's the pace that matters," he emphasized.

Dairy's Resurgence

Despite the dairy alternatives and anti-dairy elements, Dan shared demand is up in Canada, Europe, the US and Australia. The most recent International Dairy Federation numbers revealed a more than 2% compound annual growth rate in global milk production over the past decade. "More interesting is the longer term forecast for the next decade following this same trajectory," he added. Dairy consumption is exceeding the rate that would be explained by normal population growth – essentially, more people are consuming more dairy over the world.

In Canada, all major dairy categories show increases in 'apparent consumption' according to CDC calculations, "even in some categories where over the past five years we saw decline," Dan said. At this same time, the demand for non-dairy alternative products appears to be leveling off – possibly the result of price sensitivity, nutrition confusion and market saturation, he said.

With food-inflation outpacing overall inflation, the price/affordability issue is significantly affecting consumer behaviour. The 'back-to-basics' response is prioritizing food spending (along with housing, transportation and utilities), shifting towards more natural or whole foods, while spending on non-essentials has all decreased.

Another growth segment is protein – and dairy's position is strong, including a growing number of new dairy products and fortified milk products labeled prominently with their protein content.

Only a few years ago, there was great concern for the costly problem of growing SNF surpluses due to a robust consumer appetite for dairy fat. "Recent modeling suggests declining SNF/BF ratios, among other factors, could significantly reduce the SNF surplus," Dan used graphs from the CDC and WMP. With changing dairy consumption trends and modified on-farm management practices, the SNF situation could stabilize by 2035-2036, Dan offered. But there are consequences, such as shortages of milk when BF demand is satisfied by lower shipped volumes. The concern is for the ability to adjust to the market needs in a timely manner without over-correcting. This was a significant shift in the market in just three years.

Recognizing the Staggering Pace of Change Dairy's Obstacles and Opportunities

Presented by Dan Wong

Social and Demographic Influences

In a similar three-year time period, social and demographic changes have significantly impacted dairy demand. Statistics Canada data showed last year that beverage spending in Canada followed population growth. With declining Canadian birth rates, and in particular, the reduced immigration resulting from recent government policy changes, "we can expect some slowdown in dairy product sales, but don't expect the profile of consumer demand to change," Dan referred to the multicultural and multi-generational foundation of our consumer base. The diverse make-up of Canadian consumers drives the growth in new dairy products such as grass-fed ghee (clarified butter), saffron-flavoured ice-cream, healthy aging products and specialty infant formula, to name a few.

Even in traditional markets, Dan says evolving 'consumer values' are influencing the marketplace. From functional foods, to influencers, clean labels, lifestyle, convenience and more, these 'values' have the power to shape the dairy marketplace very quickly.

Dan also noted that processor needs are necessarily guided by commercial criteria which may not always align with the system's immediate needs. He referred to customer requests, transportation/distribution requirements, proximity to markets and ROI as some examples.

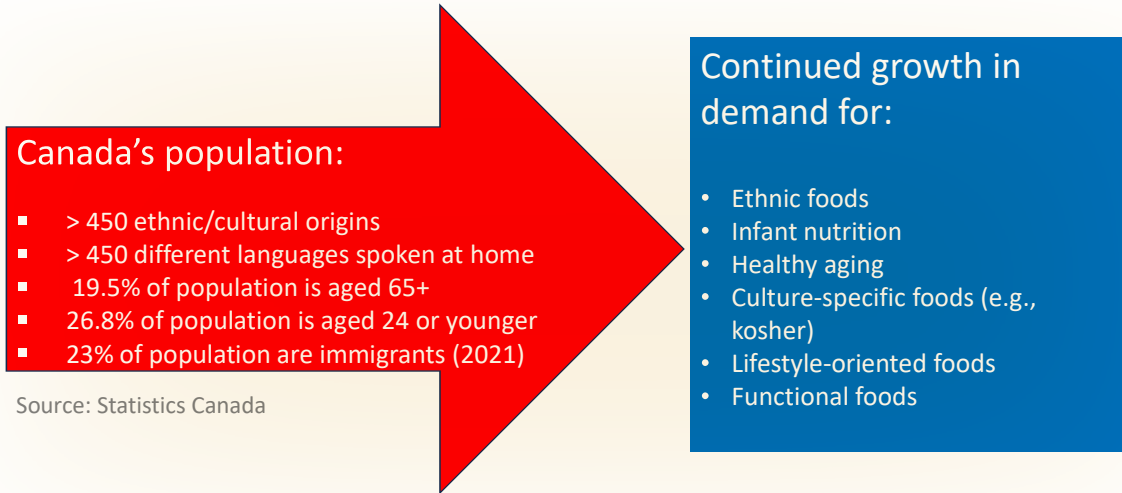
Product innovation is another area Dan described with enthusiasm. "Did you know the paneer in some of the big fast food vegetarian burgers is supplied from western Canada?" He continued with examples of yogurt and dairy ingredients from the west being marketed globally, and BC paneer being served to business-class clients on Emirates Airlines. "All of this speaks to the optimism in the industry."

Supply Chain Management

"How are supply chain dynamics changing the face of supply management in the dairy industry?"

Markets are increasingly driven by customer-supplier relationships. As a result, we've seen a shift to a market-growth strategy," Dan explained. The collaboration is a priority for the Producer-Processor Consultative Committee, tasked

Market Growth Reflects Multi-Cultural, Multi-Generational Change



International Trade Chaos

"The pace of change is nowhere greater than when we consider international trade," began Dan. "It's just whacky." The audience of course was well-acquainted with the reference, as trade tariffs have been wielded chaotically all year with disruptive and destabilizing effects.

"Is Canada's dairy industry in the crosshairs? We have to assume it is," he continued. But it's likely that dairy would be deferred to the CUSMA talks in 2026. He further asked whether dairy could be facing an existential threat or perhaps is simply a bargaining chip in a broader campaign. Regardless, we must separate the substance from the noise and understand other countries' grievances, from market access to milk classification system, SNF exports and more, he said.

With the US administration relying on executive orders to decree trade rules, together with the president's tendency to repeatedly change his mind, the instability and unpredictability in the global trade arena creates caution amongst dairy processors when it comes to capital expenditures.

Dairy Processor Picture

Despite the continuous economic and trade uncertainty, Dairy processors have made robust investments in western Canada in recent years, and are committed to their business plans. Dan cited the new 'world-class' Saputo plant in Vancouver, the massive expansion of Vitalus' dairy ingredients plant in Abbotsford and the new ethnic-focused Punjab Milk Foods (Nanak brand) plant in Surrey, in addition to smaller, specialized processing plants.

"Western Canada remains an attractive region for processor investment, for a whole variety of reasons, not the least of which is the availability of milk and the strength of our dairy farming community," he underlined. He went on to recognize the value of the WMP in collaborating with processors to grow the market.

with setting the long term objectives for the Canadian dairy industry, among others. "The successful execution of a market growth strategy **must** include all segments of the supply chain, otherwise it won't work." Dan congratulated the WMP for recognizing the benefits of collaboration. He reiterated that the 'supply chain' extends far beyond just producers and processors – there are many stakeholders in an increasingly complex dairy sector, and all have legitimate needs/expectations.

Another aspect that impacts the entire supply chain is **social license**. These issues are not isolated to producers or processors but affect **all in dairy**. "Increasingly, social license issues are embedded in regulations, laws and most importantly from the processors' perspective, embedded in our customer contracts," he laid out. While **sustainability** broadly covers many topics, Dan pointed at greenhouse gas emissions reporting as a priority, as 'Scope 3 emissions' must be reported from upstream suppliers. "That's a real challenge in the dairy industry," he acknowledged, asking how to account for emissions from individual farms when milk is supplied collectively (from the pool) to processors. He is hopeful that recent DPAC - DFC collaboration can make progress on this issue as "we don't have a lot of time."

On animal welfare, Dan said the popular tactic of activists is to 'name names' and go after the big recognizable brand name, not necessarily individual farms. The bigger the brand name, the bigger the clout in public opinion.

While dairy industry changes may not have the speed of a race car, the significant changes presented have taken place across every segment of the industry in the last three years (or less).

"We should expect the pace of change to continue and even speed up in the year to come, because of other factors like AI or more intense geo-politics. The rule is, market forces always move faster than policies and institutions. Issues are no longer segmented – they belong to all of us. My appeal is – **we need to pick up the pace.**"



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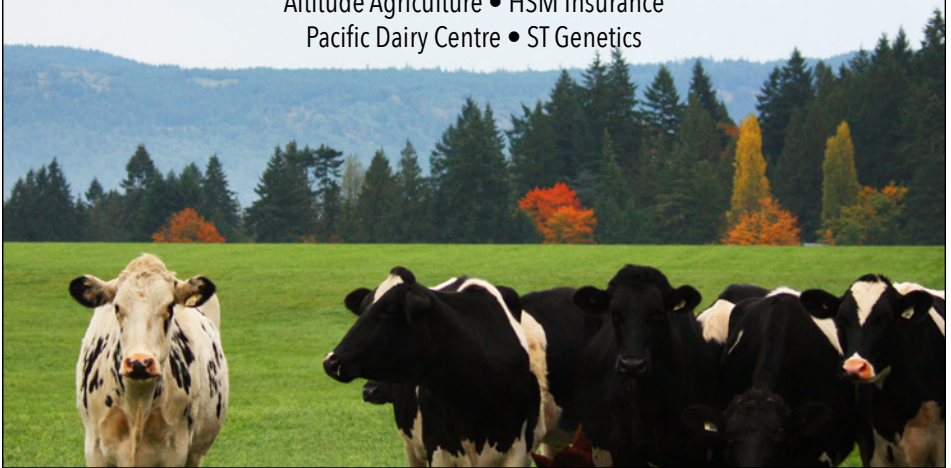
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EVENT SCHEDULE

MONDAY APRIL 20TH
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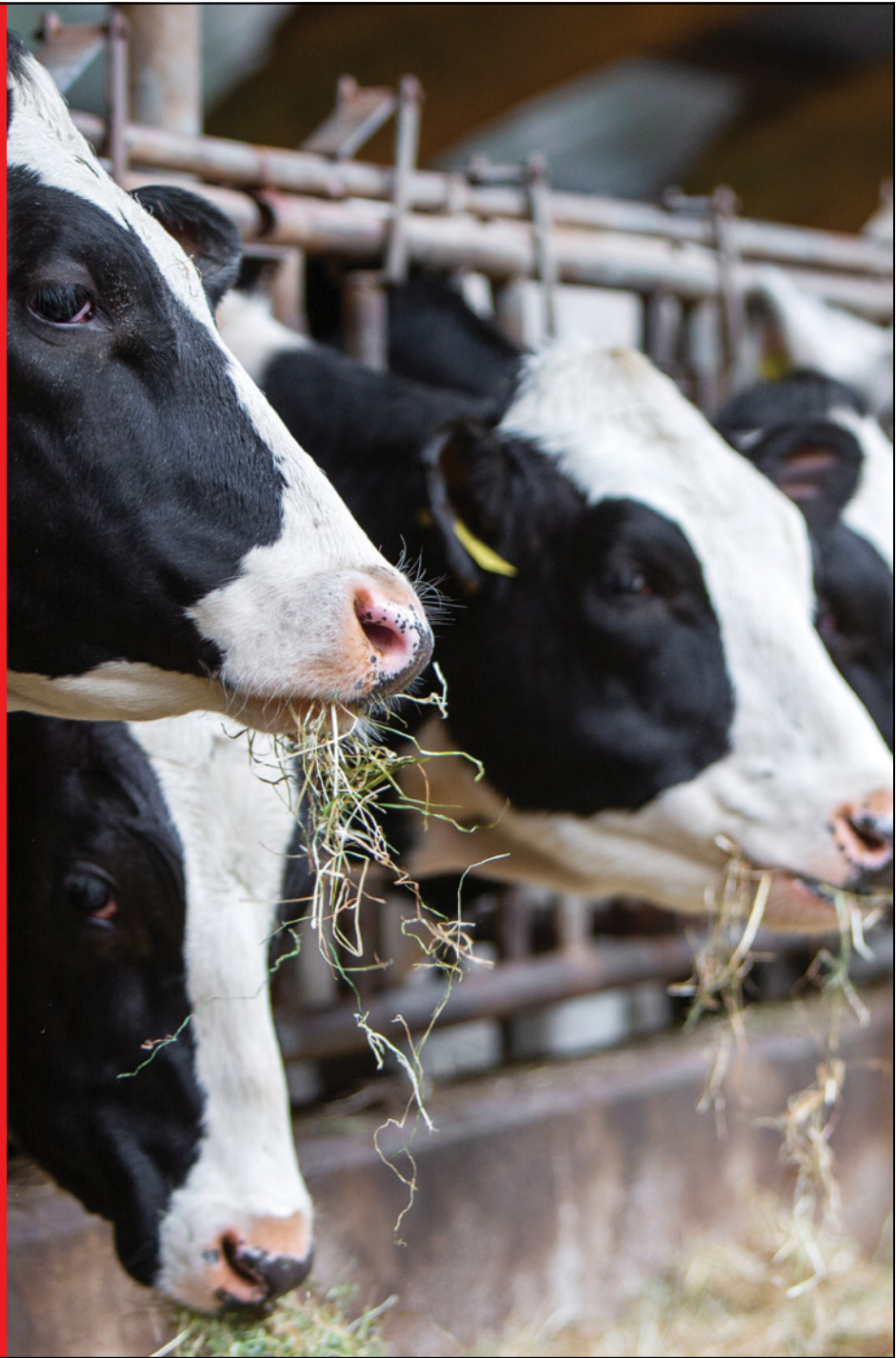


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Western Dairy PIONEERS

ELMIDO FARMS, THE AARTS FAMILY

Amanda Poelman

When John Aarts says, “I love farming—to me it’s never been work,” he’s not speaking lightly. His words are rooted in a story that began decades before, a story that, like many in the dairy industry, began with immigrant parents moving to Canada to chase the dream of farming. Through hard work and perseverance, the Aarts family learned early that survival and success in dairy requires intentional communication and the willingness to adapt the business as needed. These principles have been the foundation for the farm’s growth as they forge a path for future generations.



Bill & Dora Aarts, married nearly 60 years, emigrated to Canada as newlyweds in 1947.

A Modest Start

William (Bill) and Dora Aarts emigrated from the Netherlands in 1947, arriving in the Fraser Valley a year later after a short stint in Ontario. After taking a job on a Jersey farm in Sumas initially, Bill rented various farms in the area before purchasing 40 acres on Evans Road in 1959, where the family remains today. “There was nothing here at the time,” says John, “Dad built the original barn in the summer, proud that he only spent \$8000 on it.”

In the early 1950s, Bill’s herd was a mix of Jerseys, Guernseys and Holsteins, but after purchasing his first registered Holstein at a sale in 1952, the focus became building a purebred herd. Bill joined the Holstein Association in 1954 and started the ELMIDO prefix, which used the first two letters of the names of his three oldest daughters: Ellie, Mickey (a nickname for Maryann) and Doreen. By the time the 70-cow herd moved into the new barn in 1959, Bill and Dora were raising six children in the small farmhouse. “My parents worked very hard to get the farm going,” says John, “and my sisters and I all helped with the milking and chores as we got older.”

After graduating high school in 1973, John returned to the farm fulltime to work

alongside his dad. The herd continued to expand through the ‘80s, reaching 120 head by the early ‘90s. Throughout that 20-year span, John adopted his father’s love of purebred cattle and showing. “We traveled by train to Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton,” recalls John, “as well as attending shows locally.” Touted for his keen eye in selecting cattle, Bill made some early purchases that laid a solid foundation for the Elmido herd, which eventually led to achieving his #1 goal: receiving a Master Breeder Shield (1984), only the seventh herd in BC to do so at the time.

John is quick to credit the purebred business for generating the funds needed for expansion. “We sold some red cows to put a down payment on another farm!” However, by the late ‘90s it was becoming harder to get money out of the purebred cattle business. “Showing became a professional game,” says John, “Show cows had to be cared for in a certain way, so while showing was a definite thing we did – it was also a definite thing we quit doing in the end.”



Showing cows at the PNE in 1986 – John with Jacqueline and Jonathan.

The Next Generation

John married Debbie in 1980, a small-town girl from Swan River, MB, who had moved with her family to the Fraser Valley, and finished up high school in Abbotsford. As they raised their young family, John continued the farm partnership with his dad, slowly buying shares until 1992, when the ownership transfer was completed.

John and Debbie have four children who were all finishing high school in the early 2000s. “Our rule was that you had to work off the farm for five years,” says Debbie, “We wanted them to find their own path, even if that meant it might not be on the farm.” All four kids attended Olds College in Alberta and then worked in various jobs. “I never dreamt they would all want to be in agriculture,” says John, “or that they would all end up back at home!”



Bill in the parlour in 1980. He had a keen eye for picking out young stock that would develop into great cows and was very proud of his purebred herd.

Daughter Jacqueline is married to Richard Boer and works as the financial controller of Elmido Farms and Brightside Poultry – a new venture that began in 2003 via the BC Chicken New Entrant program. Richard spends the bulk of his time at the poultry barns, which now consist of speciality broilers, organic layers, and a retail locker market.

Jonathan, who is married to Amanda, takes care of all the fieldwork and feeding, both at the home farm and the surrounding properties. Jesse, married to Angela, is



William Aarts (left), Elmido Holsteins, Sardis, receives the Master Breeder shield at the Holstein Association of Canada annual meeting, March 15 in Ottawa. Making the presentation is Claude Pepin of Warwick, Quebec.

Bill earned his Master Breeder Shield in 1984, only the 7th herd in BC to have received it. (Photo appeared in the May 1984 edition of the BC Holstein News).

the cow guy at Elmido and manages all aspects of the dairy, including herd health and mating decisions. Jacob, who is married to Nina, manages the heifer-raising facility in Merritt, a partnership with Cedarbrink Dairy that began in 2008.

Like Debbie, who was actively involved in the industry side of the dairy business on various boards, Jacqueline and Jonathan stay active on the AgriFoods and Mainland Milk Producers board respectively, while Jacob was appointed to the Canadian Agriculture Youth Council in 2024.



1989 Chilliwack Fair Grand Champion. (L-R) Judge Gene Wautier, Sheri Schwaerzle (BC Holstein Princess), Don Lawley (sponsor), Jeff Kooyman, John with ELMIDO HELEN REVELATION, Tony DeGroot (UFVHC trophy presenter).



The development of Elmido Farms.
1959 – 1960 – 2017



Bill creatively planted his snowdrops one spring to spell **ELMIDO!**

"I never dreamt they'd all want to be in agriculture," says John, pictured with Debbie and (clockwise) Jacob, Jonathan, Jacqueline and Jesse (2000).

Expansion Continues, Management Style Shifts

By 2002, the milking herd had expanded to 200 cows, a number that continued to grow as each of the kids returned to the farm. "We were fortunate to purchase neighbouring farms as they came available over the years," shares John, aware that this unfortunately meant, friends were leaving the industry.

In 2018, after milking cows at two separate locations for a time, the milk cows – now totalling 700 – returned home, while the dry cows and heifers were moved to nearby locations. The herd is currently milked 3x per day in a double-12 parlour, which, in a herd that size, means that the milk pump is running between 18-19 hours daily.

The increase in cow numbers forced a shift in breeding philosophy as well. "We originally bred for show type and angularity," says John, noting bulls like STARBUCK, RAIDER and CONQUEST, who got a lot of use initially. "Now we are breeding for strength, feet and legs, and production." The herd at Elmido is very young, which John says is completely on purpose. "We run 100,000 SCC and only culled 20 cows for mastitis in 2024," he shares, observing that having a young herd eliminates a lot of problems. "We rarely treat for mastitis, if a cow gets sick twice, she's out." The herd has been bedded on sand for the past 30 years, which has helped keep mastitis and SCC low.

Females have two chances to get pregnant with sexed semen before beef semen is used. The Aarts family also started genomic testing their heifers in the 2025, using beef semen on the lower end. While they will breed an older cow that is solid and trouble-free, John says, "The price of beef has really changed how we manage things. Getting cows beefed in good condition is important."



Jacqueline, John and Jacob finish up the last milking in the old parlour (2002).

When purchasing semen, Elmido has been with ABS exclusively for the past five years. "We really like the program they provide," says John, a program which lends itself to smaller cows. "We needed to get the size down from all the years of purebred breeding!" Bulls in their current roster include HOT ROD, MYSTERY, SHOUT, and COLTER.

Another major change in management style has been the move away from classification. "We don't classify because of milking times," says John, "With 700 cows and only 2 hours between milkings, classification just became too disruptive." However, John says that if classification moved away from the human factor and utilized camera equipment to score, he would consider going back to it, recognizing the benefits classifying has for corrective mating. Despite stopping with

registrations in 2024, a big change after 70 years, the Elmido herd remains on test and finished third in BC for Herd Performance Index at Lactanet.

Elmido's land base has climbed to 450 acres owned and an additional 200 acres rented. The land is mainly seeded in corn, but 100 acres of grass are grown, along with 800 acres of alfalfa and silage in Merritt. "We don't purchase any outside feed other than grains and chopped straw," John says. The cows are fed a diet that includes roasted soybeans and beet pulp, allowing the herd to maintain a high production average.

Intentional Communication

After painful speedbumps in their own succession planning journey, John and Debbie vowed they never wanted their kids to experience that. "We invested in a lot of professional communication coaching and business plan development very early as the kids were coming home," says Debbie. "25 years ago, no one was really doing that!" Regular family business meetings in the barn provide a "safe space" for each family member to share their opinions freely. While each of the Aarts siblings have a "lane" that they are responsible for, they also pitch in to help each other when needed. "We cannot stress the importance of open communication enough," says Debbie, "The investment in coaching was very intentional and really made the transition smoother. It's not always perfect, but it works." John adds, "If we were going to stay in the business and have our kids stay in as well, we needed to make a decision on how best to make it work for everyone."

Communication also includes the importance of knowing the financials of the business. "Banks will give you an umbrella when it's sunny and pull it away when it rains," says John, "That's why it's so important to keep costs under control and an eye on the debt level at all times." Debbie adds, "Things have to cash flow! We made sure that the kids understood the financials as we transitioned."

Thinking Outside the Box

A forward thinking perspective led John to partner with Alfred Vanden Brink of Cedarbrink Dairy on the purchase of a heifer-raising facility in Merritt in 2008. "Getting into business with an entirely different dairy operation was not something that was popular at the time," says John. The mutually beneficial partnership has expanded three times since its inception and is now multigenerational as well. The site is home to 1100 heifers, who reside there from six months of age to a month before calving, as well as a butcher shop.

Looking Ahead

Both John and Debbie are adamant that the driving force behind their success is undoubtedly their family. "We wouldn't be sitting here if we didn't have that," says Debbie. "We wanted to make sure that our kids had the opportunity to farm, and we've done that," adds John, who is now mostly retired from the day-to-day operations at Elmido.

Perhaps what is even more special is the interest their grandchildren are already taking in the farm. Two of the grandsons (ages 14 & 15) oversee 100 calves on their own, managing the barn tasks around their school schedule. "They take care of cleaning the barn and feeding; it's their responsibility and they love it," shares Debbie. Several of the older grandkids are also actively involved in harvesting and running equipment as well. Debbie recalls, "We were up in Merritt and harvesting the field closest to the house, the dads were all on the porch and the kids were running the harvest. I don't know who was prouder – us or them!"

With plans to break ground on a new barn and parlour later this spring, there is no doubt that expansion will continue at Elmido Farms as they prepare for future generations. For John and Debbie, success isn't measured solely on herd size or the number of acres; it's found in watching their children and grandchildren show the same passion for farming that took root with John's parents when they built the farm from the ground up. Being able to pass on the farm and seeing the next generation thrive in an industry they clearly love – and helped build – is the pride that makes every long day 100% worth it.



The Aarts Family (2024)
Photo credit: Urban Fig Photography



2025 BC DAIRY INDUSTRY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



International Dairy Federation

Shaping the Future of Dairy Worldwide

Presented by Gilles Froment, President, IDF



Gilles Froment presented on behalf of IDF and Lactalis Canada.

REPRESENTING THE ENTIRE DAIRY SECTOR



- Dairy Farmers
- Milk processors
- National dairy organizations
- Academia/non-profit research institutes
- Government (Ministry of Agriculture)
- Suppliers
- Milk Sector Employees

Amanda Poelman

Building on his presentation from last year, Gilles Froment, President of the International Dairy Federation (IDF), spoke about the role IDF plays in the global dairy industry. The Federation brings together many different groups – such as farmers, dairy processors, governments, researchers, and suppliers – to support good practices, reliable science, and informed decision-making across the sector. With members in 40 countries, the IDF also works closely with international partners like the FAO and Codex to help set common standards and encourage more sustainable dairy production.

In his first year as President, Gilles set his sights on updating IDF's strategic plan to “better respond to today's challenges in dairy.” The plan focuses on sustainability from several angles: economic, social, environmental, and nutrition, along with animal health and innovation. The IDF aims to adapt its work to different regions,

build trust and cooperation across the dairy sector, and support volunteers who contribute through committees and working groups.

Gilles spoke about the wide impact of dairy worldwide, noting that it provides nutrition for six billion people and generates livelihoods for one billion, which is why “we need to show everyone the role that dairy has in nourishing the world.” At the same time, he acknowledged that the industry faces different challenges in different regions, which means solutions need to be tailored locally. He pointed to tools like the Dairy Sustainability Framework, sustainability reports, and practical guidelines that help reduce waste and emissions, including measuring carbon footprints.

In closing, Gilles highlighted the positive outcomes of the recently completed World Dairy Summit in Santiago, Chile, which recognized continuous innovation across the dairy sector. The 2026 Summit will take place in New Zealand, while the 2028 edition will be hosted in Quebec City.

Lactalis Canada: Growth, Innovation, and Collaboration

Presentation by Gilles Froment, Senior VP, Lactalis Canada

Amanda Poelman

After a brief intermission to highlight BC Dairy's partnership with Children's Hospital, Gilles Froment was back on stage, this time in his role as Senior Vice President of Lactalis Canada. Standing in for Lactalis President and CEO Mark Taylor, Gilles expressed Mr. Taylor's regrets for his absence and his enthusiasm for engaging with partners, farmers and government leaders.

A significant brand in Canada, Gilles highlighted the 4,500 employees, 21 brands, and 30 operating sites that make up Lactalis across the country. The company processes 2.2 billion litres of milk annually (25% of Canadian dairy products), and contributes \$2.9 million back to various communities, including a \$100,000 donation to BC food banks in 2025.

“Strong partnerships between farmers, processors, retailers, food service, and government are key. The links depend on each other for success.”

His presentation centred around Lactalis Canada's commitment to five guiding principles:

1) **Stay committed to the North Star** – For Lactalis, the 'North Star' is the Canadian consumer. “You as producers are constantly facing challenges provided by the consumer. As processors, we feel the same pressures,” Gilles said, noting that every decision ties back to the main goal: providing a safe product that Canadians can trust.

2) **Listen to the Consumer** – Listening and adapting to rapidly changing consumer preferences continues to be a priority for Lactalis. Over the past year, there has been a 21% surge of growth, particularly in yogurt, as consumers seek high-protein dairy products. “Dairy is a natural source of protein that consumers trust,” said Gilles. Lactalis responded to these demands by launching new lines and enhancing existing products such as ultra-filtered milk and high-protein shakes. They also expanded their lactose-free options and indulgent products (Krema yogurt line), aligning with trends in health, convenience and enjoyment.

Gilles also commented on the trends in food service as operators are confronted with rising costs while consumers seek affordability without sacrificing quality. That **quality** is a major factor influencing choice right now, and Lactalis proudly displays the “Blue Cow” on over 800 of their products as a symbol of Canadian milk and quality assurance, which has garnered 500 million consumer impressions annually.

3) **Communicate our Shared Vision** – “It is important to communicate with government and stakeholders about our long-term vision and goals,” said Gilles, “Fostering collaboration will only become more important in the years ahead.” While change can sometimes feel unsettling, Gilles believes that change pushes us to come up with creative solutions on how we work together at all levels. “Problems cannot be solved in isolation,” he says of climate change, food affordability, tariffs and labour shortages. “Strong partnerships between farmers, processors, retailers, food service, and government are key. The links depend on each other for success.”

4) **Build Trust** – Connected with the ideas in principle #3, establishing frameworks for fairness and stability will only strengthen our industry. Gilles highlighted the ‘Grocery Code of Conduct,’ a set of principles designed to ensure transparent relationships between retailers and suppliers. While voluntary in Canada currently, Gilles sees its adoption as “pivotal to fostering resilience” since it focuses on efficiency and long-term goals rather than short term pressures.

5) **Embrace Innovation with Purpose** – Lactalis places a strong emphasis on innovation for long-term sustainability. Gilles highlighted the Delta yogurt facility, recognized with the 2025 Outstanding Workplace Award, which sends all its waste to Seabreeze Farm, where it is converted into energy that heats 500 homes in the area. He also highlighted the new distribution centre in Oshawa, ON, the largest in Lactalis' global network, which showcases energy-efficient and zero-carbon-ready infrastructure. “We are only scratching the surface of what innovative projects are out there,” said Gilles, “Digital awareness is important; understanding what technology can and cannot do allows us to make smarter decisions and execute more effectively.”



Protein is on the rise, particularly a surge in yogurt. Siggis was the fastest growing Lactalis brand in 2025.



Focusing on consumer trends means expanding and enhancing product lines.



Waste from Lactalis' Delta yogurt plant is converted to energy through the biogas plant at Seabreeze Farm, powering 500 homes in the area.



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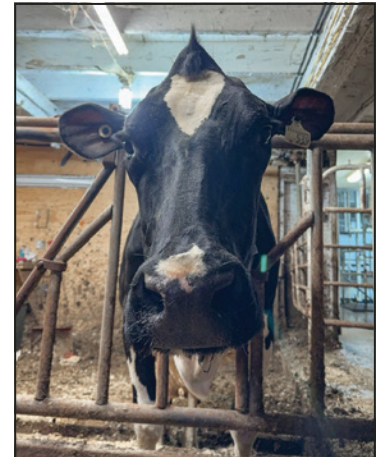
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Danny, Alison, Yvonne, John.



Polled and Bold HAMMINGVIEW SACHEL MILI P

Tars Cheema

Fresh at Christmas with her 11th calf (a heifer via sexed semen), MILI P fits the pattern of many longevity cows – first to the parlour, no-fuss and not noticed. The oldest cow in the barn, with nearly 143,000kg of milk and 5645kg fat lifetime in 10 lactations, EX-91 6E Mili has earned everybody's respect. What's more special is that she traces back six generations to the first EX cow carrying the Hammingview prefix for Cor and Mickie Hamming, soon after they began farming on their own in Pitt Meadows in 1980.

Some Background

Cor and Mickie's daughter Yvonne and husband John bought the entire dairy farm operation in 2005, continuing the family legacy together with their adult children – Alison and Danny. Breeding great cows remains a focus for this two-time Master Breeder herd that's placed sires in AI. Now it's the mother-daughter team who enjoy doing all the 'cow stuff' together – milking, breeding, classifying, etc., while the guys do all the feeding, cleaning, mechanical and field work.

They milk 100 cows 2x in a double-8 herringbone parlour, though they did 3x for five years only to facilitate sharing in the kids' school sports years.

Sand bedding has been used effectively for 20 years, helping to maintain herd SCC well under 80,000.

They utilize all the breed improvement tools – registering, classifying, milk recording and Alison wants to do more genomic testing on the heifers after a five year pause. They have used primarily sexed semen and beef, but they are swinging back towards making more replacements now.

Mili Makes Money

"She's always eating at the bunk," says Alison. "She's not a mean boss cow, but she's confident and not scared of anyone," adds Yvonne. They agree Mili has a separation attitude and will protest while in the comfortable transition pen. "She's a tough cow that wants to be with the herd."

Mili scores 92 on dairy strength, which Yvonne recalls consistent with her dams. Width, depth, capacity with dairyness are the family stamp.

"She's a big cow, her feet aren't pretty, but she never had trouble until she got old," Yvonne shares. Annual trimming keeps her sound.

Fertile

Mili's calving interval and breeding history show a cow who is remarkably fertile. Ten calving intervals averaged 12.9 months!

"She has calved 11 times, seven times needed just one service. 19 services in total for 11 calves – 1.8 services on average," Alison does the math. Sexed semen in her last two calvings brought her heifer count up to five.

Production and Health

Mili has maintained BCAs right at herd average, though she responded to 3x milking with strong deviations over herd average. "She got back in calf too quick as a first calver and her second lactation was her lowest," Yvonne explained.

When it comes to udder health, Alison says, "She has had her struggles with mastitis – she's a fast milker, but usually clears on her own."

"She's been really healthy for years, but she's needed a little more TLC lately. She had a touch of pneumonia last lactation which hurt her milk a little," Yvonne said (Mili still made 249-279-260 BCAs). Calcium boluses are used at calving for third and later calvers, the oldest cows getting several, plus additional boxstall time.

Mili has calved on her own, or with the occasional easy pull (never a problem), which likely has played a part in her smooth transition back to the milking group year after year. She's been free of metabolic and reproductive diseases.

Longevity and Profitability from Pedigree

You can't deny Mili has a solid pedigree – 25 brood stars between her five dams! Her third dam, CHARLES MINUET VG-89 14*, was the matriarch who brought about the second Master Breeder shield. These five dams had decent longevity, from 3-6 lactations each, all good production cows with 88, 89, 90 and EX 3E classifications.

Mili's dam – a VG-88 Ashlar was a "beautiful cow with a deep, wide frame – we lost her too young because she was too fast milking," Yvonne recalls. "We had really high hopes for her long term!" Over 16,500kg at 4-03 in 305d, she averaged 313-322-331 BCAs in three lactations.

Ashlar carried several crosses to both Chief Mark and Aerostar – dairyness/low

SCC and toughness with beautiful udders contributed by Formation.

The top side of Erbcrest Satchel's pedigree leads to Shottle, Oman and Mtoto – all longevity superstars. Satchel was the source of the polled gene through Lawn Boy-P, who also carries Rudolph, Aerostar and Manfred. Through Satchel's maternal side, we come across more Aerostar, Formation and Igniter – then two paths back to Glen Drummond

Shower – the tough, productive Enhancer of years past.

Between her feet and easy milking traits, Mili has not lived a perfect life, but she's determined to add to her lifetime totals living with the herd.

"It was all her. Her calm demeanor, will to live and strength through out, she is a tough cow that wants to be milked," Alison and Yvonne agree.



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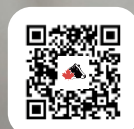
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BC Branch News

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This will be a very exciting year for the Branch as we look ahead to hosting the National Convention here in April and showcasing all BC has to offer to participants from across the country! Time is running out to book your spot on the Pre & Post Convention tours, so don't miss the bus and contact Joan Wikkerink today.

I would like to congratulate the Vanden Dungen family (MEADOW GREEN) on their Master Breeder nomination – the only one in BC this year! I would also like to give a shoutout to Balme Ayr Farms on winning their first Master Breeder Shield, which was recently announced by Ayrshire Canada.

Wishing you safe travels as you head to Quebec to celebrate in March.

A new year always brings new ideas and many of you may be considering various upgrades and improvements for your farm, especially with increased production requirements on the horizon for 2027. As we work on a calf barn project at home, I've been able to apply for various grants through Innovate BC and the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF). I encourage you to look into these and other opportunities to help lighten the financial load of your new projects.



Thomas Cuthbert
President

NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Holstein Canada continues to make positive strides through new initiatives, program improvements, and ongoing efforts to better serve our members. The following updates highlight key developments and recognition as we move forward together.

2026 kicked off on a strong note with the Master Breeder reveal on January 17th. 21 herds will be presented with their Master Breeder Shield at the Master Breeder Gala in April during the National Convention. Congratulations to CRESTOMERE, MISSIONTRAIL and MOSNANG who are representing Western Canada and receiving their first shield, we are all looking forward to celebrating with you!

National Convention and Holstein Canada AGM

BC is hosting the 2026 National Holstein Convention. The Planning Committee is working hard to welcome Holstein enthusiasts from across Canada to beautiful BC and to showcase the "Spirit of the West" in true West Coast fashion.

Now is the time to register – please visit www.holstein.ca for complete program details. Registration is open until **March 6**.

Setting New Standards of Success

Starting in January 2026, the Superior Lactation awards will be introduced with new metrics which

will result in 36 new Canadian Champions. The top 3% of these new metrics will be awarded a certificate of recognition.

TOP 3% ON SIX NEW METRICS:

- Kg milk / day of life
- Kg fat + protein / day of life
- Kg of milk in 305 days
- Kg of fat and protein in 305 days
- Combined BCA Fat and protein
- Fat and Protein Deviations

Updates to the Longtime Production, Master Breeder and Star Brood system will be introduced later in 2026.

Cow of the Year

Cast your vote for your favorite cow by February 27. You can vote via your online web account or by mail using the ballot received with *infoHolstein*.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the BC Branch Directors and members for your continued dedication and commitment. Your efforts have greatly contributed to the success of our organization, and I look forward to working together in 2026 as we continue to build on this momentum and achieve new successes.



Brian Hamming
National Director



**BC is Excited to Host
the National Holstein
Convention
April 15-19, 2026**



Schedule of Events:

(Taking place at Heritage Park, Chilliwack, BC)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15TH
National Convention Sale - 12:00 PM

THURSDAY, APRIL 16TH
Junior Showmanship Contest - 9:00 AM
BC Spring Jersey Show 11:00 AM
Judge: Jamie Black, NY

FRIDAY, APRIL 17TH
National Convention Holstein Show - 8:30 AM
Judge: Jamie Black, NY

ENTRY PERIOD: MARCH 1 TO APRIL 10
(AssistExpo link will be made available via Facebook @BC Holstein Branch)

Pre/Post Tour
Registration
Reminder

Pre Tour - April 12-15:
Journey to the Pacific
(Calgary to the Coast)

Post Tour - April 19-21:
Paradise on the Pacific
(Vancouver Island)

Register today at:
bcholsteinconvention@gmail.com



BC Dairy Association Bulletin Board

Collaboration and Momentum Define the 2025 BC Dairy Industry Conference

The 2025 BC Dairy Industry Conference, held November 26–27 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, marked a pivotal moment for British Columbia's dairy sector. With a renewed emphasis on collaboration, producer engagement, and value-driven programming, this year's conference delivered one of the strongest turnouts and most positive responses in recent history.

More than 520 attendees participated over two days, representing a 22% increase in overall attendance compared to the previous year. Most notably, producer attendance surged by 85%, underscoring the relevance of the agenda and the effectiveness of targeted outreach efforts. The return of the first in-person Annual General Meeting since 2019 further reinforced the importance of face-to-face connection in building trust, transparency, and shared purpose across the industry.

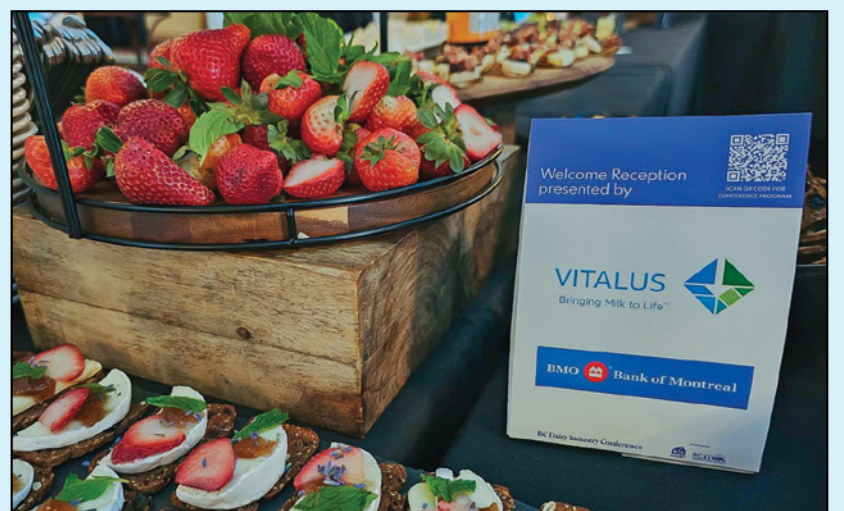
The conference program struck a careful balance between information and interaction. Market and policy updates from national and international leaders were complemented by engaging sessions designed to spark discussion and connection. Returning favourites, such as Kevin Lim as emcee, helped maintain energy throughout the event, while new elements – such as professionally produced Milk Quality Award and Industry Achievement Award videos – elevated the overall experience. The inclusion of a locally curated BC charcuterie reception added a distinctly regional touch, celebrating both the product and the people behind it.

From a financial perspective, the conference demonstrated strong stewardship. Despite rising costs, organizers achieved year-over-year cost savings while increasing sponsorship revenue and maintaining a high-quality experience for producers, affiliates, and sponsors alike.



Post-conference feedback confirmed the event's success, with an overall satisfaction rating of 89.3%. Attendees highlighted the venue, food, networking opportunities, and organization as key strengths, reinforcing the conference's role as a cornerstone event for BC's dairy community.

As the industry continues to navigate evolving market conditions, production pressures, and policy landscapes, the 2025 BC Dairy Industry Conference demonstrated what is possible when collaboration, careful planning, and producer focus come together. The momentum generated this year sets a strong foundation for future conferences – and for the continued strength of the BC dairy sector.



Don't miss out on next year!
Save the date: November 25/26, 2026.

Innovation on Today's Dairy Farms, Led from the Barn Floor

Innovation on a dairy farm does not start with technology. It starts with operational clarity: knowing cows, people, and systems well enough to identify where performance slips and why. The farms that move forward are not chasing every new tool. They are disciplined about strengthening what needs to work better and reinforcing it with systems that support consistent execution.

Canadian dairy producers have always innovated. Long before dashboards and sensors, farms adapted rations, barn layouts, labour routines, and breeding strategies to meet changing conditions. Today's challenge is not willingness or expertise; it is managing greater complexity – more data, larger teams, tighter margins – without losing consistency.

That challenge is illustrated in a story shared by large-animal veterinarian and CATTLEytics founder, Dr. Shari van de Pol. A feeding change, made for understandable cost reasons in a difficult year, appeared manageable in the short term. Milk production declined, recovery was slow, and the full financial impact only became clear months later. No single failure occurred. What was missing was early visibility into cause and effect.

This is where meaningful innovation delivers value: not by adding more information, but by improving insight while there is still time to respond.

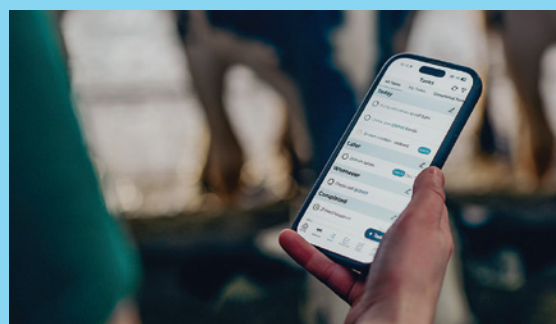
Activity Versus Progress

Many farms are busy but not moving ahead. Reports multiply, alerts increase, and systems accumulate – yet the same issues resurface. Follow-up depends on individuals. Protocols exist, but application varies across shifts.

This is false efficiency. Information alone does not change outcomes. Tools only add value when they help the right work happen at the right time, consistently.



Shari Van De Pol (left) (CATTLEytics CEO) was a presenter at the BC Dairy Industry Conference.



Producers and managers already understand where attention is needed. The challenge is translating that understanding into reliable action across people, processes, and time.

What Progressive Farms Are Looking For

Across Canada, leading dairy operations are not asking for flashy technology. They are looking for practical systems that align with how farms actually operate.

Time back for leadership. Reducing administrative drag so owners and managers can focus on decisions that influence cows, people, and financial performance.

Integrated visibility. Milk, health, labour, treatments, and protocols are interconnected. When information lives in one place, patterns emerge earlier and small problems remain manageable.

People-centred execution. Clear expectations, simple workflows, and consistent follow-through matter more than advanced features. Technology should support training, accountability, and day-to-day execution.

Where CATTLEytics Fits

Innovation only works when good management shows up every day – not just when leadership is present.

CATTLEytics was built to reinforce that consistency. It connects cow data, tasks, and protocols into a single workflow teams use in real time, helping expectations remain clear and follow-up occur the same way across shifts.

It does not replace experience or judgement. It supports them, protecting management standards as operations grow and staffing changes. Adoption still requires discipline and leadership, something that no system can replace; however, the right structure makes consistency easier to sustain.

Dairy producers remain the experts on their farms. CATTLEytics helps ensure that expertise translates into action more reliably, even as operations become more complex.

If you are interested in learning more about how CATTLEytics can help your day-to-day Dairy operations, visit www.CATTLEytics.com.

2025 Master Breeders Revealed

Congratulations



Bonnie Cooper,
becooper2010@gmail.com

Holstein Canada revealed the recipients of its cherished Master Breeder Award for 2025 during an exciting live, virtual event on January 17th. Among the 21 Master Breeders are three respected Western Canada prefixes who are winning their very first Shield – CRESTOMERE (AB), MISSIONTRAIL (MB) and MOSNANG (AB).

In addition to these, the list of Master Breeders for 2025 includes 12 from Quebec, five from Ontario, and one from Nova Scotia. Remarkably, 18 of the 21 honorees are earning their first Master Breeder title! Three Quebec herds are now multiple winners with MICHERET picking up its fourth Shield, and NAULY and HECTARE both 2X winners. Holstein Canada has awarded more than 1000 Master Breeder Shields to deserving herds who excel in production, conformation, reproduction, health and longevity since establishing the award in 1929.

Of the 70 herds who made it into the Top 10 of their respective Master Breeder categories, based on their farm's number of female registrations per year, there were three more deserving finalists from Western Canada: CHUBANNA (AB), PLEMARK (MB), and MEADOW GREEN (BC).

The "Master Breeder Reveal" program was hosted by Western Canada's Toby Kleinsasser, Holstein Canada Lead Field Service Business Partner, and Véronique Jaquet, a Holstein Canada classifier. Several special guests joined the 80-minute program. Holstein Canada's new CEO, Greg Dietrich, speaking in both English and French, spoke of his

vision for the industry and his excitement of being part of Holstein Canada's next chapter.

2019 Master Breeder winner, Chris McLaren of Larenwood Farms in Ontario, encouraged breeders hoping one day to become a Master Breeder to "be patient and determined with your goals, listen to others and draw on their experience and wisdom, and do what is best for your cows, and you will get where you want to go."

Pascal Lemire, Melissa Kemmere and Tammy Oswick, all of Holstein Canada's staff, additionally lent a hand with the presentations. Short video messages of congratulations to the winners were also extended during the evening from Holstein Canada President Gilles Côté and representatives of six Holstein Branches.

The 2025 Master Breeders will be recognized at a special Gala on Saturday night, April 18th, at the Delta Hotels Burnaby Conference Centre, Burnaby, BC, as part of Holstein Canada's National Convention in British Columbia from April 15-19. Joan Wikkerink, Suzanne Cuthbert and Morgan Sangster, co-chairs of the 2026 National Convention, along with Tammy Oswick, Holstein Canada Events Specialist, shared a special message and video during the Master Breeder Reveal inviting Holstein breeders and industry colleagues from across Canada to attend this year's "Spirit of the West" National Convention in British Columbia.

2025 MASTER BREEDERS

Prefix	Province
BIRDOLM	ON
BOISVERT	QC
BOKMA	NS
CHEVRIER	QC
CRESTOMERE	AB
DESSAUGES	QC
DESROSS	QC
EASTEDGE	ON
H-BRIDGE	ON
HECTARE	QC
HIDDENSPRING	ON
MIBOIS	QC
MICHERET	QC
MISSIONTRAIL	MB
MOSNANG	AB
NAULY	QC
RINGO	QC
ROCHELET	QC
ROCLAIRSON	QC
SAINTOUR	QC
VONBURG	ON



Crestomere Holsteins,
Ponoka, AB

Central Alberta is home to the respected Crestomere Holsteins owned by Ev and Marylee Simanton and their son Lee and his wife Lisa and their two young children. In 2018, the farm changed from tie-stalls to a free-stall barn with two robots and expanded to 100 milk cows. The Simantons have always striven for cows who can last a long time and that belief and consistency in their breeding system has yielded great results. The Crestomere herd presently consists of 13 ME, 4 EX, 48 VG and 42 GP cows. They have bred 106 EX cows and two at EX-95, CRESTOMERE G D LILLIE EX-95-5E and CRESTOMERE TATOO VEZ EX-95-2E (the latter owned by Benbie Holsteins, SK). This 3X "Alberta Breeder of the Year" has had immense success in the showing and was Premier Breeder at Westerner Dairy Showcase in 2024-25. The bulk of Crestomere's Master Breeder points came from the families of ACME STAR LILY EX-2E-8*, the World Dairy Expo Supreme Champion and 3X Royal Winter Fair Grand Champion, and WEEBERLAC TRIUMPH VICKI VG-88. Dedicated and down-to-earth, the Simantons love what they do and give generously of their time to the Holstein industry, community and church.



Mosnang Holsteins Ltd.,
Rimbey, AB

Heini and Ruth Hehli established Mosnang Holsteins in 1980 after emigrating from Switzerland. Today, they and their son Markus and his wife Amanda and their four children, Wyatt, Adair, Sawyer and Georgia, are partners in this farm, with Markus handling the daily breeding and management decisions. They milk 110 Holsteins and 10 Jerseys in a free-stall barn with a step-up parlour. The herd includes 12 ME, 9 EX, 69 VG and 36 GP. At Mosnang they aim for long living cows with type and production who can compete at the shows. A 3X "Alberta Breeder of the Year," the farm has been Premier Breeder and Exhibitor at many Alberta shows and in 2022 was runner-up for Premier Breeder at the Royal Winter Fair. The Hehlis' "L Family", led by MOSNANG SALOON LIQUOR EX-94-2E, her granddaughter MOSNANG SOLOMON LIQUIFY EX-95-3E and Liquify's daughters, MOSNANG UNIX LIPSTICK EX-95 and MOSNANG BRIDGESTONE LIVE WIRE VG-87, have been the source of many show achievements for Mosnang and their new owners. Markus is an Official Judge, won the Curtis Clark Achievement Award in 2023, and has served on numerous show committees, while Heini is a former Alberta Milk director.



Current Holsteins (Missiontrail),
Woodlands, MB

New Master Breeders Darren and Allison Hueging of Current Holsteins (prefix Missiontrail) have come a long way in just 20 years. In 2006, the Huegings bought Darren's aunt's farm, an unregistered bull-bred 50-cow tie-stall herd. They BB recorded the entire herd through Holstein Canada's upgrading registration program (Full Spectrum). Today the herd is fully registered at purebred status. Darren and Allison currently milk 80 cows in their tie-stall barn who average 13,500+ litres on 2X with 4.4% fat for 597 kg fat and 449 kg protein per lactation. The herd includes 6 ME, 4 EX, 50 VG and 49 GP and this was their first year being nominated for Master Breeder. Since they first started collecting points in 2010, 14 different cows from this well-rounded, balanced herd each contributed 10+ points to their Master Breeder Shield. The Huegings credit their success to "keeping a sharp pencil when decision-making, teamwork and focusing on production and longevity." The couple, who share this achievement with their three children, say, "It is an honour to be in the same company as the great breeders who came before us who we have long respected and learned from. This award represents years of early mornings and late nights and the steady commitment to improve each day."

Congratulations to all the Master Breeder winners! We look forward to presenting in-depth stories on the three Western Canada winners in an upcoming issue.



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Lethbridge Ag Expo February 25-27
Western Canadian Dairy Seminar March 10-13

Call us for a Demo and see for yourself!



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 SASKATCHEWAN SOUTH:
 2 locations



ALBERTA NORTH CENTRAL:
Pentagon Farm Centre
 4 locations



ALBERTA NORTH CENTRAL:
 (in-barn automated)
Agrai Dairy Mart
 2 locations



BC OKANAGAN:
North Valley Equipment



BC FRASER VALLEY, VANCOUVER ISLAND,
 THOMPSON-NICOLA:
Pacific Dairy Centre



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2025 BC DAIRY INDUSTRY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Improving Transportation Excellence & Efficiencies

Presentation by Intishar Jashim,
Manager of Operations, BC Milk Marketing Board

Amanda Poelman

Continuing discussions that began during the Fall Producer meetings, Intishar Jashim, Manager of Operations, discussed the significant transportation challenges facing BC dairy producers. High hauling costs, geographical terrain, supply chain risk, increases in milk processing volume, and small “niche” processors, all contribute to the ongoing challenges.

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), with representation from producers, processors and milk board staff, was formed in January 2025 to address transportation inefficiencies outlined in a Western Milk Pool study by Deloitte Canada in 2024. Intishar detailed the work of TAC, outlining stakeholder engagement, consulting efforts, and the need to review and update transportation policies to drive efficiencies.

The first step saw review of current BCMMB policies such as B-train discounts, every day pick up, non-Sunday shippers, and minimum delivery litres. “We have policies in place from years ago and we are trying to validate if these policies are still applicable,” said Intishar, “We are finding that some discounts (for B trains and everyday pickup) might not be doing what they were intended to do.” He also noted the serious inefficiencies of minimum delivery litres, saying “Haulers have to put milk in separate compartments since

most small processors don’t have meters, which is difficult because haulers are then traveling with empty space.”

Where Network Optimization is concerned, consideration is being given to opening pickup windows for producers and receiving windows for processors, as well as flexibility in pickup frequency at farms. Carrier zones are being examined to determine if there’s an opportunity to break up large zones like the Fraser Valley, making transportation within those zones more efficient.

Investment in both producer and processor infrastructure – such as adding a second bulk tank or expanding milk silo storage – would need to be reviewed based on Return on Investment (ROI) analysis. Other investment ideas include having large producers directly load a B train that simply needs to be picked up, thus saving time on unloading a bulk tank; or having the milk board invest in their own transportation trailer and tanker assets, rather than a carrier.

Intishar highlighted the need for a “Balanced Scorecard” which would provide a framework



Intishar Jashim, Manager of Operations, BC Milk Marketing Board.

used to track and measure financial and operational key performance indicators. This increases system visibility and accountability for stakeholders. Within the Western Milk Pool, standardized processes to ensure consistency in milk quality during transportation, while also harmonizing transporter rate formulas across the four western provinces, would be beneficial.

“We know that we do have a lot of issues with our current system, but that actually means we have a lot of opportunities as well,” Intishar concluded, promising that TAC will “leave no stone unturned” as they prioritize their recommendations to the board. The goal is to create a more efficient, sustainable, and collaborative transportation system to support all stakeholders as the industry grows.

Regional Challenges



Transportation challenges facing BC producers.

Dairy Markets and Opportunities
Tracking Consumer Patterns

Presentation by Jennifer Woron
Executive Director of Market Development, BC Dairy
and Zahra Abdalla-Shamji
Executive Director, Policy & Industry Affairs, BCMMB

Tars Cheema

BC Dairy’s Jennifer Woron and BC Milk’s Zahra Abdalla-Shamji have collaborated many times in past years, but a new level of synergy emerged when the two dairy organizations began sharing the same office space two years ago. At the 2025 BC Dairy Industry Conference, in a novel approach, the two tag-teamed a presentation that examined the same dairy marketplace from their two different vantage points.

BC Dairy’s primary role is to support market growth by reinforcing public trust while monitoring consumer trends and driving partnerships and promotions. BC Milk’s primary role is to manage the market supply – matching supply with demand and handling the processor orders.

On the front lines of the dairy marketplace, the marketers are looking for predictors of shifting demand by watching consumer behaviours and cultural factors that could further influence them, Jennifer explained. Zahra described that economists are looking to manage supply and demand through policy which by nature is in response to and lagging behind the consumer consumption trend.

Their main theme was understanding how dairy policy is shaped by consumer demand shifts resulting from changes across our population.

Economic and Social Forces

Fifteen years ago, milk consumption was declining as more people were ‘eating’ their dairy than drinking it, but the trend reversed since 2022. The pandemic ushered in a new pattern of more home-based consumption, but lately, milk’s upswing has more to do with population growth, more interest in protein, ‘wholesome foods,’ ‘back to basics’ purchase patterns influenced by food inflation and a patriotic response to the tariffs/trade war.

In BC, it’s the **innovative** categories in fluid milk that have seen the most gain – lactose-free,

grass-fed, protein-enriched and organic milk categories. “Consumers today are looking for milk that does more for them, though these categories still don’t make up a large share of the overall market,” Zahra explained.

Cream, butter, cheese and yogurt have all enjoyed steady per capita increases over many years. Zahra pointed out that per capita non-fluid dairy intake was at 12 kg in 1990 and is at 15 kg today. “Growth in overall dairy demand is at a five year high, but the product mix has changed due to the demand for high protein and low sugar,” they explained.

The trick is, Jennifer says, to identify what’s a ‘blip’ in consumption and what’s a real trend. Once the real trend is identified, Zahra followed with, “then we must integrate support early to our dairy partners via policy.”

Jennifer showed a particularly interesting slide which quantified the influence of ad/promotional campaigns, compared to dairy consumption across the total market and compared to consumers who did not recall the campaigns. Clearly, where consumers recalled the promo campaign, dairy consumption was higher (2020-2025).

In a parallel demonstration, Zahra showed a CDC slide which quantified the country’s dairy demand overall. This is a particularly useful mechanism showing the impact of consumer trends on the demand side of dairy, which further informs milk boards regarding policy changes.

Interestingly, while dairy alternatives (almond/oat beverages dominate) remain significant competitors to milk, they have lost 11% sales since 2021. “We believe cost, taste and competition are key factors in the sales decrease,” Zahra shared.

Protein and GLP Drive Dairy

Quoting a major food and health survey, Jennifer said, “High protein diets were the most popular, with 71% of respondents saying they plan to increase protein intake in 2025. Dairy is well-positioned to meet this demand for protein.” Jennifer explained that the demand is broad – spanning across all age segments from aging consumers looking for muscle-support to youth looking for protein-rich sports recovery drinks, as examples.

Jennifer spoke of how the sudden rise in use of GLP-1 weight loss drugs (Ozempic/Wegovy) – in a bit of an unexpected plot twist – are weighing heavily in the protein boom. “The number of Americans on these weight loss drugs jumped from about 200,000 in 2021 to more than 4 million in 2024,” Jennifer showed. A similar trajectory is expected in Canada, particularly with the coming pill-form making it more accessible. Users need “healthy, functional proteins, the kind found in yogurt,” Jennifer continued.

Growth in yogurt and soft cheeses has been steady since about 2018, but both categories picked up speed in the last two years, confirming GLP’s influence, Zahra explained.

What About Fat?

While GLP spells good news for protein-dairy categories, where does it leave the higher fat dairy products – butter and cheese? Jennifer indicated that demand remains steady for full fat dairy, so it’s not a return to the ‘fat-free’ trend of the ‘90s. Zahra recounted her start at the Milk Board nearly 20 years ago on the ‘BF Working Group’ which was tasked to get BC’s butterfat **up**. “Butterfat levels have been rising steadily nationally for two decades, indicating a shift in production and in consumer demand,” Zahra said. And it continues to be a very positive trend. They are however monitoring the situation to understand if the demand will soften going forward.

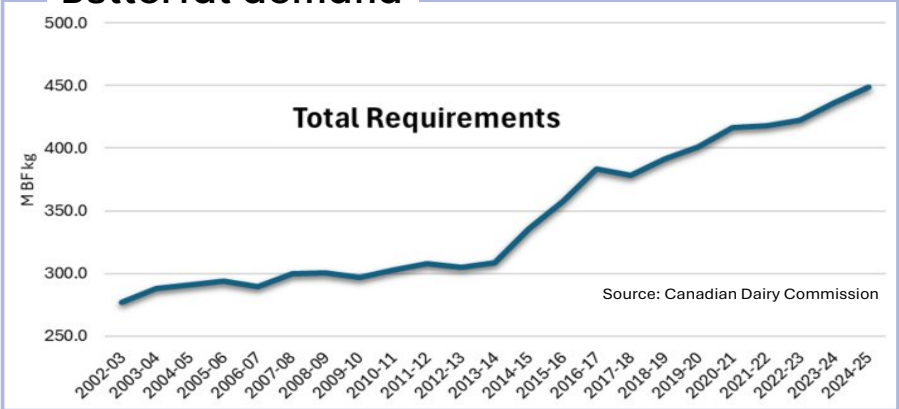
Interestingly, lower fat milks have given up ground to whole milk over the last 10 years, Zahra’s graph showed. While 2% remains the most popular nationally, whole milk exceeded 1% milk consumption in 2023.

Zahra’s final slide showed dramatic growth in total butterfat demand since 2015, and so far, there appears to be no leveling off.

Jennifer distilled their approach – watch for the changes in consumer behaviour and to understand early if it’s a temporary ‘blip,’ whether it becomes a trend for a period of time, or is it a lifestyle shift that will become long-term, normalized behaviour. Zahra reinforced that regulatory actions are taken at the ‘trend’ level, when industry makes investments to sustain the market demand. “The protein era is already behaving like a lifestyle change, requiring us to have policies in place to ensure we have enough milk in the system to meet butterfat and protein demand at the same time,” Zahra summarized.

Their parting comments spoke of a much faster-paced consumer marketplace that requires more ‘real-time’ monitoring and nimble reaction from policy makers and everyone in the supply chain (including producers) to respond most effectively to changing demands.

Butterfat demand





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Farewell
Words of
Wisdom

Lifelong dairy leader, David Janssens of Nicomekl Farm in BC, stepped down from BC's Milk Board earlier in 2025. He was afforded the opportunity to express his thoughts at the Mainland Milk Producers AGM on January 9. Much more than his imposing stature, David is respected for his intellect and appreciated for being genuine.

"There were 1200 producers in BC in the late '80s. We're down to 400 - that's a testament to your ingenuity and perseverance. You're all successful survivors in this industry and you're set up to thrive.

Everyone has great animal care and milk quality today. Moving forward, the success of your farms will depend as much or more on what happens after the milk leaves the farm.

You need to take action, and it's a great first step to be here and also involved at the dairy conference with processors too. It's important to understand how the **whole** industry works.

Go to the DFC Policy Conference. Get the flavour of how Ottawa operates. It's fascinating, informative and fun.

Participate on a Dairy Association committee - **understand** what we do - how we use your dollars to promote the industry.

Please read your emails! It's part of your business to know what's being communicated to you.

We're known for hiring the best staff - we don't compromise. They're as committed as producers are and constantly go above and beyond.

Processors are our customers - I'm impressed they attend and present at our conferences. They are making big investments in our industry. They are active participants and valued partners - we need to keep them in mind also. Our industry doesn't move ahead on its own. Get involved."

David's many contributions and roles in dairy were detailed in our Christmas 2025 issue (viewable online at wcdaairynews.com).



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PEDIGREE INFO:

- Sire Name: Westcoast GD Blakely-ET
Dam Name: Valiant Calmac Perfect Emblem
2-04 2X 365d 26,630M 5.2% 1398 Fat 3.7% 983 Prot
2nd Dam: Progenesis Challen Embrace VG-87
3-07 RX 365d 40,435M 4.5% 1823 Fat 3.8% 1526 Prot
3rd Dam: Main-Drag Helix Emmet-ET VG-87
2-06 RX 365d 25,785M 5.2% 1343 Fat 3.6% 939 Prot
4th Dam: Main-Drag Rubicon Email EX-91
3-09 3X 365d 44,440M 4.0% 1822 Fat 3.0% 1378 Pro
5th Dam: Winterhlm-WG Emotional VG-88
1-10 3X 305d 26,180M 3.2% 846 Fat 2.9% 759 Prot
6th Dam: Winterhlm-WG Bax Elated-ET EX-92
5-03 3X 365d 49,360M 3.4% 1723 Fat 2.9% 1435 Prot
7th Dam: Winterhlm-WG B G Elation-ET EX-93
5-01 3X 365d 41,730M 3.2% 1348 Fat 3.2% 1339 Prot
8th Dam: Ridgedale Emotion-ET EX-90
9th Dam: Ridgedale Emera EX-95
10th Dam: Ridgedale Emma-ET VG-88
11th Dam: Ridgedale Fond Example EX-95 GMD

KAPPA CASEIN: AB
BETA CASEIN: A2/A2
SIRE STACK: Blakely x Perfect x Challenger x Helix
REG NUM: HO CAN 000014793160
DOB: 10/8/2023
aAa: 4236
BRED BY: Valiant Dairy Genetics & Calmac Holsteins, Woodstock, ON, CAN
ACQUIRED FROM: Valiant Dairy Genetics & Calmac Holsteins, Woodstock, ON, CAN

CONFORMATION: Dtrs: 0 Herds: 0 PTAT Rel: 79%

	-2	-1	0	1	2	
PTAT						1.37
UDC						1.39
FLC						0.70
BWC						0.19
ST						0.89 Tall
SG						0.22 Strong
BD						0.28 Deep
DF						1.20 Open
RA						0.82 Sloped
TW						2.14 Wide
RLSV						0.68 Curved
RLRV						0.90 Straight
FA						0.36 Steep
FLS						0.87 High
FUA						1.18 Strong
UH						2.18 High
UW						2.19 Wide
UC						1.45 Strong
UD						0.46 Shallow
FTP						1.31 Close
RTP						1.92 Close
TL						-0.53 Short

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PACIFIC AGRICULTURE SHOW

Under the Big Tops PAS Never Disappoints

JANUARY 22-24, ABBOTSFORD, BC

The 2026 Pacific Ag Show was full of vendors – many seasoned, many new – everyone eager to engage with visitors.

Covering a wide range of ag sectors from financial services, greenhouse and blueberries to poultry and dairy – and so much more! People have been attending for 28 years, enthusiastic about seeing friends, suppliers and investigating the incredible new technologies and equipment.



1

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15



16

1 – Can't get no Satis-Traction? Call Tom at AgriTrac!

2 – Cam and Matt would love to show you their Deutz-Fahr up-close.

3 – The Mid Valley team has been designing and equipping dairy barns for decades!

4 – WestGen's team is always excited to discuss leading genetics and new herd technologies.

5 – Dayton, Mike and Mark – three generations of VanDerWals looking after your equipment needs.

6 – Greg, Grace and Michele – borrowing, investing, sponsoring Udder News. Thank you RBC.

7 – Phillip and Willem – happy to share the new milking and milk analysis tech at Chinook.

8 – Friendly, knowledgeable, helpful. Stéphane's farm background is a plus.

9 – West Coast Robotics is embracing the rain – 360 Rain – efficient and automated.

10 – Get in the groove with Josh and don't slip up!

11 – Jackson and James. Grober and Dairy Crop caring for your calves.

12 – It was a busy time at PAS for Farm Credit Canada – presenting sponsors of the show and hosts of the BC Dairy Lunch and Learn.

13 – Layne and Sjoert bring decades of dairy experience with the novel products they offer through Diamond City Farm Supply.

14 – Leendert and Andrew showcased some unique natural cattle health products, available through Star Gro.

15 – Pacific Dairy's Canadian Holstein stands tall and proud above the crowd.

16 – Aimee and Christina were on hand to explain dairy farming to the public and interact with producers.





OUR TEAM'S MISSION STATEMENT

*We are all in -
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Alberta Holstein Branch News

Submitted by Alberta Holsteins

Since 2002, the Alberta Holstein Association has recognized a 'Breeder of the Year' at it's February AGM. The award honours outstanding Alberta Breeders and their families and is based on the year's herd accomplishments in production, classification, and show records. Each of the five clubs nominates one breeder, after which a panel of judges uses a score card to rank the nominees and determine the winner. Congratulations to this year's 'Alberta Breeder of the Year' nominees!



Northern Alberta Holstein Club
Myowming Cattle Co. –
Wilbur Hofstra & Family, Millet, AB
7 VG 2 year olds
6 Excellent cows
7 Star Brood cows
11 – 60,000 kg cows
4 – 80,000 kg cows
1 – 100,000 kg cow

Bred Reserve Intermediate R&W Champion
at Westerner Dairy Showcase 2025



Southern Alberta Holstein Club
Ostara Holsteins Ltd. –
Johan & Ytje De Haan, Red Deer County, AB
6 EX or ME cows
8 Star Brood cows
3 – 100,000 kg cows
Total Rolling Herd BCA – 816 points
81.2 % GP or higher Herd Classification



Green Acres Holstein Club
Southern Skies Dairy Farm –
Ivan Veurink & Family; Coaldale, AB
8 VG 2 year olds
6 EX cows
15 Superior Production Awards
3 Longtime Production Awards
Herd Management Score – 825
(4th out of 79 robot herds in AB)



Central Alberta Holstein Club
Chubanna Holsteins Ltd. – Andrew, Anna, Adyson,
Graison, Keaton & Maisyn Wildeboer, Lacombe, AB
5 VG 2 year olds
3 EX cows
45 Superior Production Awards
Avg BCA: 300- 324-329
Reserve Champion Central Alberta Barn Cow



Country Roads Holstein Club
Skycrest Holsteins – Rob, Sue, Chad & Katelyn Crest,
Athabasca, AB
16 homebred VG 2 yr olds (9 @ 86 pts)
14 homebred EX cows
8 Multiple Excellent
10 Star Brood Cows
14 Superior Lactations
AB Dairy Congress Awards:
Overall Supreme Champ, Res. Intermediate Champ
& HM Jr Champ



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Dairy Farm For Sale

Leduc County, AB

- Dairy Barn (2019) - approximately 86 stalls with expansion potential
- NRCB permit for 100 cows
- Shop (2016) - 40' x 60' shop with a well-designed internal 2-storey residence
- Modular Home (2012) - 24' x 72' with 4 beds & 2 baths
- Lagoon - approximately 872,000 gallons



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Wanda Williams
Software Sales & Support
Lactanet Canada

FEED WITH CONFIDENCE

Feeding your cows is complex but managing it doesn't have to be. Today, mobile feed software simplifies daily tasks, improves accuracy and gives farmers the visibility they need to make faster, more confident decisions.

With feed being one of the biggest expenses on a dairy and representing 40% to 70% of production costs, one miscalculated ration or missed pen count can ripple across the entire farm — from cow health to milk output to dollars on the books.

Lactanet is working to deliver an easy-to-use feed management software solution for dairy producers—stay tuned, FeedComp will soon be available for DairyComp customers.

Why more dairies are modernizing their feed management approach

Farmers are moving to mobile feed management tools to reduce errors, streamline feeding and deliver real-time insights to help you stay in control. Simpler and connected solutions, like FeedComp, have now become easy to use and affordable.

Smarter software, better workflow

Feed management software can make all the difference in streamlining feeding and monitoring ingredients. Instead of juggling notebooks and spreadsheets, farmers and feeders can easily manage the entire system from their phones.

Want to update a ration? Easy. Need to check inventory or track ingredient use? It's all there. Want to ensure the right ration is being fed consistently each day? View the feeder report card.

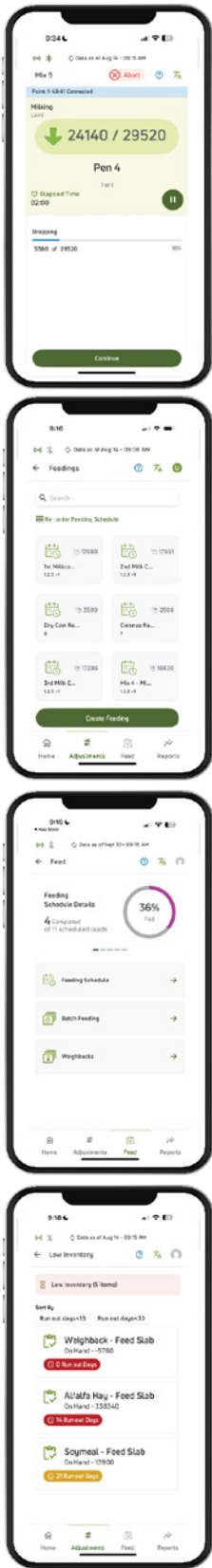
Since this feed management tool can connect with your herd management software, your feed decisions stay aligned with your production goals.

Visibility = accountability

One of the biggest wins with mobile feed software is real-time visibility. You can get immediate feedback through post-mix report cards, which show exactly how closely a ration was delivered to target.

It's a simple way to spot issues, keep everyone on the same page and celebrate wins. Feeders get a clear, step-by-step process while managers can track performance and intervene if something appears to be off. Farm advisors can stay connected to feed and performance data.

Because roles are permission-based, everyone sees only what they need to — making it easier to train new staff and build team trust.



FEEDCOMP
Feed Management Software



Feed What They Need

FeedComp feed management software will soon be available to Lactanet customers using DairyComp. Consistent mixes. Less waste. Full visibility across your feeding program. It's here! All you need is a smart phone or tablet, the FeedComp app, and a Bluetooth-enabled scale.

Data beyond the day-to-day

Standard reports help you track ingredient use, identify feed trends and improve efficiency, but they truly shine when combined with data from across the farm, unlocking the full potential of your feed strategy.

By linking feed management software with your herd management program, ration updates happen automatically. If pen counts change, the software recalculates in real time, so feeders always deliver the right mix without any extra calculations.

FeedComp offers income over feed cost (IOFC) reporting – a powerful tool that combines your feed input costs with milk production data to reveal the true return on each ration. Because it's not only about what you're putting in front of the cows, but the return it delivers.

Feeding with confidence

The insights feed management software proves especially handy when you need to adapt, like during a feed shortage. You can quickly pivot rations if feed inventory runs low in spring, without missing a beat or creating confusion at the bunker.

Feed management software also supports more thoughtful planning. The same farm now uses forecast reports to manage inventory better. Before, they relied on gut checks and rough math to estimate feed needs. Now, they have a real-time view of ingredient use and can avoid costly last-minute calls to feed suppliers.

It all adds up to better decision-making, fewer surprises and a feeding program that's built for whatever comes next. With the right tools in place, your feeding becomes more efficient, your resources go further and your bottom line benefits.

Connected solutions

FeedComp is being offered to DairyComp customers due to the synergies between the two softwares. It aligns perfectly with Lactanet's commitment to providing dairy producers and their advisors with technology that simplifies management, while providing insights for confident, cost-effective decisions.

If you are a DairyComp customer and would like to learn more about FeedComp, visit lactanet.ca/feedcomp or contact us at 1-800-549-4373 / DCsupport@lactanet.ca.



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- Save Time**
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 - Instant record-keeping
 - Eliminate feed sheets
 - Automate reporting



- Optimize Feedings**
- Deliver accurate rations
 - Reduce feed waste
 - Monitor intakes & ingredient usage
 - Record weighbacks
 - Manage inventories



- See Results**
- Consistent feed formulations
 - Share access with nutritionists
 - Calculate feed margin
 - Lower feed costs
 - Empower decision-making

Scan to learn more about FeedComp!



Fraser Valley Farm Tour Day

WestGen hosts producers from across BC

It was a *beautiful* day in the Fraser Valley as WestGen welcomed a full bus of producers for farm tours, featuring five informative stops on January 21st.



Demonstrating the ease of taking a genomic sample at Triwest Farms, a technology they’ve adopted to further their genetic progress.



Producers from across the province were all smiles as they enjoyed a great day of networking and camaraderie.



Flex stalls have made a big difference in the TLC pen at Elmbridge for transition cows as well as older cows.



The addition of a roller press at Second Dairy has cut time in half for flushing the barn and separating the bedding.



Rose Gate Dairy’s well-grown calves are fed 3-5 litres of milk per feeding until 3 months of age, as well as grain 3x daily until 7 months of age.

Amanda Poelman

#1 – Triwest Farms, Chilliwack

Triwest Farms is operated by Terry Triemstra and family. They are currently milking 128 cows 3x/day in a parlour, averaging 41 kgs/cow with a 4.5% fat test. The milking herd lives in a freestall facility, bedded with sawdust. Terry shared that the main goals of his breeding program include calving ability and production, while using Immunity+® sires to improve Herd Life. All animals are bred using WestGen’s technician service and Technician Manager, Harry Paivarinta was on hand to explain more about what the service can offer producers. Genetic Advisor, Amanda Bega presented the Elevate™ technology, which Triwest has adopted to identify the top animals on their farm and improve their overall genetic progress.

#2 – Elmbridge Farms, Chilliwack

Elmbridge Farms, a Master Breeder herd, is owned and operated by Peter Tuytel. The 100-cow milking herd is currently achieving 36-37 kgs/cow daily with 4.7% fat and are milked 2x/day in a herringbone parlour. The herd is bedded on recycled bedding, made possible with the use of a Bedding Master. Peter shares that the composted bedding gets very dry and is super soft, but that has also made the floors very slippery. To combat this, Peter installed a soaker line that not only keeps the cows cool in the summer but also keeps the floor wet year-round to improve traction. The bedding system has been used for the past 10 years and has always kept the SCC down to 40-50k.

A more recent improvement has been the addition of flexible stalls in the TLC pen. “It’s been great for transition cows after calving,” says Peter, “and I’ve also been able to get extra lactations from older cows that may have had a harder time getting up and down in the comfort stalls.”

Peter also showcased some of the popular WestGen bulls he’s been using in his program, including BULLSEYE, ALLIGATOR, MAYFAIR, LEMAGIC, an early

milking AMBROSE daughter, and an EX-90 POSITIVE fresh on her third lactation. Historically Elmbridge has made selections based heavily on conformation, but Peter is now looking for bulls with balanced type and more milk volume, also mindful of Protein as pricing adjustments are made in April.

#3 – Second Dairy, Abbotsford

Darren Vanderwal gave an overview of the herd at Second Dairy, where they built their current facility after a barn fire 10 years ago. The 400-cow herd, a quarter of which are Jerseys, is milked 2x/day in a 32-stall rotary parlour and averages 30 kg/day with a 5.2% fat test. The farm uses SCR technology, integrated right into the parlour, to monitor rumination and activity. After switching from organic to conventional status three years ago, Darren noted a big improvement in average days in milk (DIM) within the herd, going from 250 DIM to 180 DIM, a number that dropped further with the introduction of a double Ovsynch program and the use of a heat detection system.

Cows are bedded on sand and the barn features a flush system to keep floors clean. After building their own roller press, Darren shares that the time it took for flushing and separating the sand was cut in half, now taking just under four hours to complete. Second Dairy is midway through building a new manure pit, choosing concrete over a Slurrystore for cost purposes as well as it being more accessible to clean the sand out. The new pit is also part of their long-term plan to increase cow numbers to 550 in the next four years.

#4 – Birchwood Dairy, Abbotsford

A tasty lunch and delicious ice cream awaited tour guests at the Birchwood stop, where a SenseHub® Technology presentation was given. The use of SenseHub® was implemented in September 2025 and the herd, managed by Brandon and Darren Kooyman, has already seen significant improvements. From a reproduction standpoint, Brandon shared that previously most animals were bred to beef semen, but now more sexed semen is used as the system reports the list of cows in heat, including an optimal breeding window for both conventional and sexed semen, and automatically removes cows that are in heat before the voluntary waiting period (VWP) is over. This has allowed for a 55% conception rate for the 280-cow herd.

The benefits of SenseHub® from a health perspective are also impressive. Data collection on 20-minute intervals generates lists of cows that need to be inspected based on changes in rumination, calving distress signals, and even changes in panting rate so Brandon knows when to lower or raise the curtains to regulate the temperature in the barn. “The best part is that everything is easily accessible on my phone,” says Brandon, who also manages his own farm nearby. The technology, which can be fully integrated with DairyComp and other management software, is available in an ear tag as well as a neck collar.

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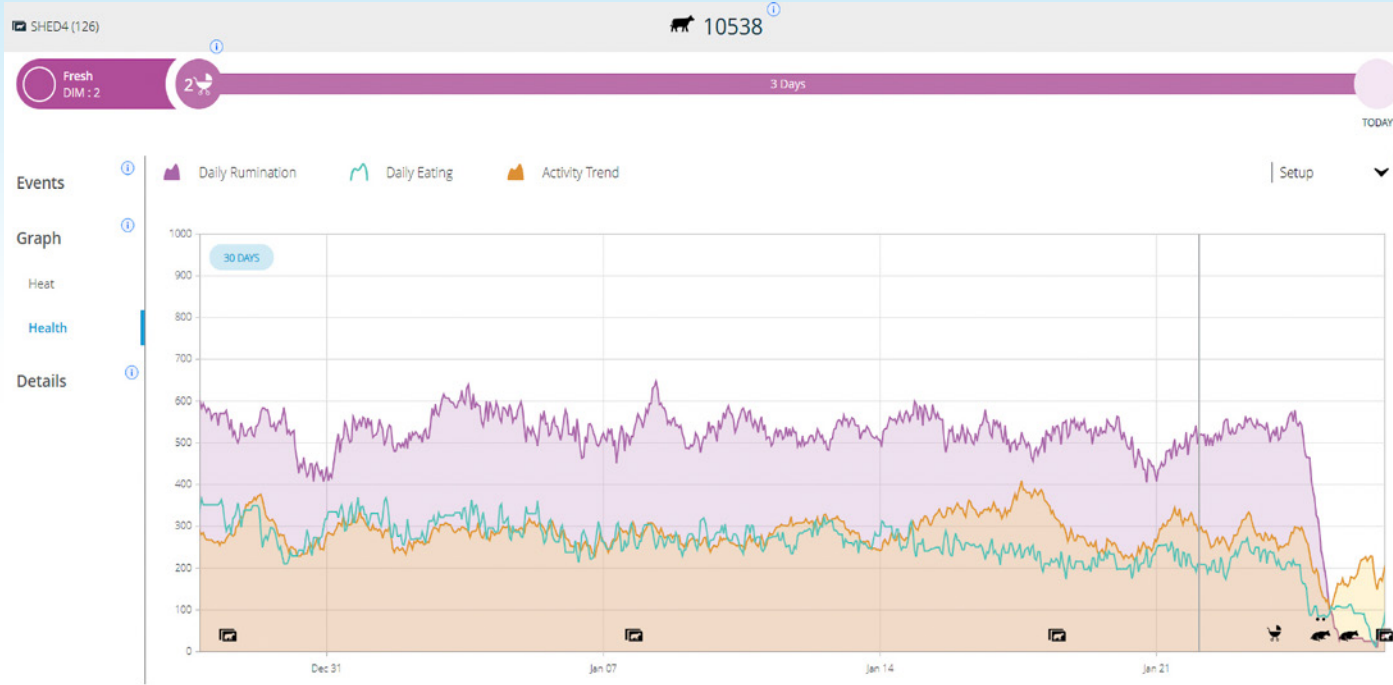
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SenseHub® technology tracks rumination, eating, activity, heat cycles, panting levels, and many other health and behavior indicators in cows at Birchwood. Data collected can be accessed remotely, giving the herd manager a full picture of herd health in real time.

Animals In Heat 7 🐮					
12605	Group AA PD+		DIM/Age 416	Breeding Window	Heat Index 99
12459	Group AAi @ ANGUS		DIM/Age 441	Breeding Window	Heat Index 97
12622	Group AAi @ ANGUS		DIM/Age 408	Breeding Window	Heat Index 92
7946	Group SHED2 (200)		DIM/Age 73	Breeding Window	Heat Index 94
8803	Group SHED3 (198)		DIM/Age 149	Breeding Window	Heat Index 53
9146	Group SHED3 (198)		DIM/Age 124	Breeding Window	Heat Index 79

#5 – Rose Gate Dairy Farms, Matsqui

Rose Gate Dairy is owned by the De Jong family and day-to-day operations are managed by siblings Jared and Lexi De Jong. The family milks approximately 280 cows with six Lely robots, the first of which were installed in 2011. With 50 cows per robot, cows consistently average 42 kg/cow/day and first lactation animals have been able to hit a 7-8 kg higher peak with 3+ visits. For the past two years, Rose Gate has made use of a double Ovsynch program, on cows with two or more lactations, with a VWP of 72-78 days. "I'll breed a first lactation cow before 70 days if she's producing less than 35-40kgs/day," says Lexi, "and second lactation and mature cows I'll wait until 85-90 days." By monitoring heats prior to the VWP, the De Jongs have managed to achieve a 30-35% pregnancy rate overall, with 40% on their 2-year-olds. A mix of beef and sexed semen is used, as Rose Gate actively sells surplus heifers regularly.

Cows are fed a ration that includes a 50/50 mix of grass and corn silage, as well as barley, canola, round bale and roasted soybeans, which has brought protein levels up and reduced the need for palm fat. Heifers are fed grain 3x/day until seven months of age according to Jared, and although that makes animals a little heavier when they calve in, "They milk the extra weight off quickly," he says, aiming to have youngstock calving by 22 months of age.

Pleased with the help of the Farm Management Support (FMS) program provided by West Coast Robotics, Lexi and Jared agree that the program helps to keep everyone accountable for their part; employing strategies that consistently keep Rose Gate Dairy near the top of Lactanet's Herd Management scale in BC.

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Manitoba Holstein Branch News

Manitoba Branch Celebrates Successful Year

The Manitoba Holstein Branch held its 98th AGM in conjunction with the Manitoba Dairy Conference at the beginning of December. Our Branch had a successful year, and it was great to celebrate the achievements of several members. Thank you to everyone who helped organize the event!

AWARD HIGHLIGHTS

MOST IMPROVED HERD

Sponsor: Marc Hutlet Seeds

Twinairview Holsteins Ltd., Steinbach
Improved by 28.7 BCA Points

HIGHEST PRODUCING HERD

(UNDER 80 COWS)

Sponsor: Beausejour Animal Hospital

Grateful Dairy, Landmark
51 Records 342-371-352
Avg 354.7 BCA

HIGHEST PRODUCING HERD

(80-129 COWS)

Sponsor: Grand Valley Fortifiers

Hueging Dairies, Woodlands
102 Records 319-366-328
Avg 337.7 BCA

HIGHEST PRODUCING HERD

(130 COW & OVER)

Sponsor: Trouw Nutrition

Reutter Dairy, Grunthal
342 Records 296-310-308
Avg 304.7 BCA

COW OF THE YEAR

LAMPADA ALDEE GOLDCHIP EX 95-5E

Breeders: Fred Fornwald and Sons (Lampada Holsteins)
and Laurie D. & Donna Harp (Aldee Holsteins), Brandon

2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Award \$1000

Laura Delichte, Delichte Farms Ltd., St. Alphonse

1



2



3



4



5



6



1 - 2024 Highest Herd BCA over 130 Cows (L-R): Mark Sweetnam (Branch President) and Rachel Bueckert (Branch Financial Chair) present to Saskia and Thomas Reutter, Reutter Dairy.

2 - 2024 Highest Herd BCA 80 Cows or Less (L-R): Mark Sweetnam (Branch President) and Rachel Bueckert (Branch Financial Chair) present to Inge and Kaitlyn Meinen, Grateful Dairy.

3 - 2024 Most Improved Herd (L-R): Mark Sweetnam (Branch President) and Rachel Bueckert (Branch Financial Chair) present to Kim and Micheal Andres, Twinairview Holsteins.

4 - Congratulations to all the breeders of Manitoba's new Excellent Cows in 2025!

5 - Mark Sweetnam (Branch President) presents the \$1000 MB Branch scholarship to Laura Delichte, who is currently studying Agriculture at the University of Manitoba.

6 - Winning the 2025 Manitoba 'Cow of the Year' award - LAMPADA ALDEE GOLDCHIP EX-95 5E, bred and owned by Lampada and Aldee.



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Jackie Wigglesworth, DVM



Mélodie Arès-Monast, DVM



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Tara Sweetnam, DVM



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Passion

News from Lakeland College

Updates from Lakeland's SMF Dairy Team



**Shawni De Jong, 2nd year
Lakeland Dairy Student**

This fall, the Lakeland College SMF Dairy Team was busier than ever – balancing chores, classes, and show preparation, all while managing the herd and making decisions. From mornings in the barn to nights clipping and packing for the Westerner Dairy Showcase, our team has poured time, effort, and passion into every part of the semester. The experience has been more than just hands-on learning – it's been a chance to grow as future dairy producers, teammates, and leaders in the industry.

Our team has been hard at work on improving the DLC by increasing milk production, evaluating rations, and working on the reproduction program by creating new SOPs and strategies. We see lots of potential and improvement through our weekly SMF meetings by comparing ideas using past knowledge and considering the ever-evolving dairy industry.

Prior to Christmas break, one of our main projects has been designing a new housing area for our bull calves, as our nursery has become too full to accommodate the growing number of new calves. Outside, we built a new pen equipped with super hutches and heated water bowls to ensure comfort and accessibility during colder months. Our bred heifers on pasture will soon be getting new mangers – a project our team is looking forward to building together.

Another exciting development is the use of five new embryos generously donated to the DLC, which have been implanted in five heifers. We're eager to see the results of these embryos in the months ahead. In addition, our Research and Technology Coordinator has been busy seeding the dry cow pasture this past fall, ensuring that all bare patches are well covered for new season to come.

Our final project focuses on creating a pathway from the heifer shed to the barn to improve efficiency and reduce the stress of trailering for our dry cows. Each of these projects has encouraged collaboration, allowing us to share ideas, compare perspectives, and make meaningful decisions that benefit both the herd and our learning experience.

A big highlight of last semester was attending the Westerner Dairy Showcase in Red Deer. It was an incredible opportunity for our team to get involved in the industry, meet producers, and represent Lakeland College in the show ring. The experience taught us a lot about show preparation, animal care, and teamwork – and although not all our heifers behaved, everyone worked extremely hard and with determination, we made it through the ring with placements to be proud of. In the Junior Show, showmanship highlights included Cailyn Charlton (8th), Shawni De Jong (10th), and Amy Hoogendoorn (12th), while conformation results included Shawni De Jong (8th) and Amy Hoogendoorn (10th). In the Open show, Stevie Kwantes was 13th. We are super proud of our team!

Given only four short weeks to get our heifers halter broke, trained, adjusted to the new feed, washed and clipped, it was great to see how it all paid off at the Westerner. It was a learning experience for everyone involved as we had team members with lots of experience as

well as team members new to showing! Much of the learning came from comparing differences in opinion, as people have different ways of accomplishing tasks. But a simple conversation always eases the disagreement, and our team always found a way to compromise, being mindful that we are all tired – as we were running off very few hours of sleep. The Westerner experience was a very positive one for the entire team.

As the new semester begins, our team is excited to have a positive and productive semester as we are proud of the progress we've made and the knowledge we've gained through each new challenge and project. Every improvement on the farm, big or small, reflects the teamwork and dedication that make the Lakeland College SMF Dairy Team so special. We're excited to keep learning, growing, and contributing to the future of the dairy industry.



The SMF Dairy team!



Westerner Dairy Showcase 2025





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- Lactanet Canada announced the appointment of Dr. Cindy Jatton to the position of Director, Genetics & Traceability, effective December 22nd. Since joining Lactanet in 2024, Dr. Jatton has held the position of Genetics Industry Ambassador. She has an MBA from Laval University, as well as a PhD in Animal Breeding & Genetics from the University of Guelph. Prior to joining Lactanet, she spent eight years on the research and solutions teams at Semex. In her new position, Dr. Jatton will oversee Lactanet's genetic and traceability services, including the associated industry committees.
- There will be an election for Holstein Canada National Director in two electoral districts for 2026 – Western Ontario and Atlantic Canada. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, incumbent National Director Harold Sweetnam of Sweetridge Holsteins, Winkler, MB, was re-elected for another term without opposition.
- Dairy genetic improvement in Canada marked a significant milestone in December with the publishing of the 100th official genetic evaluation proof release by Lactanet Canada (formerly Canadian Dairy Network). December also marked five years of DairyTrace as Canada's dairy traceability program.
- Annie AcMoody has been appointed the new Chief Executive Officer of Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC), effective February 9th. AcMoody has worked with DFC for over five years, serving in progressively senior roles and making significant contributions to policy, economics, trade, and sustainability initiatives. She brings nearly 20 years of experience in policy and economic analysis within the dairy sector and holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics. She succeeds Lucie Bérubé, who has served as Interim CEO since April 2025. Bérubé will now return to her role as DFC Chief Operating Officer.
- Bloyce Thompson of Eastside Holsteins, Frenchfort, P.E.I., was sworn in as the 35th Premier of Prince Edward Island on December 12th. Thompson has served in a number of portfolios since being elected to the provincial government in 2019. He will remain Premier and Interim Leader of

the P.E.I. Progressive Conservatives until the party selects its permanent leader at a convention on February 7th. Thompson's Eastside herd has won a Master Breeder Shield and co-bred EASTSIDE LEWISDALE GOLD MISSY (EX-95-3E-35*), Supreme Champion at World Dairy Expo and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in 2011.

*Semex, the Guelph, ON, based A.I. company, has announced the purchase of Semex Holland, including distribution in Denmark and Belgium, from Bles Dairies, effective December 31, 2025. For 28 years, Henk Bles, Chairman and Founder of Bles Dairies, has led these markets for Semex. Rutger Woolderink, who has served as Bles Dairies' Commercial Director for three years, has been appointed Managing Director of this new Semex subsidiary. Semex Holland joins Semex Argentina, Semex Australia, Semex Brazil, Semex China, Semex Deutschland, Semex Mexico, Semex N.Z. Ltd., Semex Uruguay, Semex UK, Semex USA, and Genbank (Hungary), as Semex-owned subsidiary companies.

Ron Long, 87, of Marysville, Ohio, passed away on December 6th. Ron was a dedicated 30-year associate of Select Sires Inc., Plain City, Ohio, where he retired in 2003 as Vice-President of Genetic Programs. At Select Sires, he developed the Select Mating Service (SMS) and served as Director of Sire Procurement and Type Evaluation programs. Earlier in his career he was a classifier for the American Holstein Association. Ron judged many shows, including being Conformation Judge at the 1985 Scotiabank Hays Classic at the Royal Winter Fair.

Niles Wendorf, 81, of Crescentmead Holsteins, Ixonia, WI, died on December 14th. Along with his wife Carolyn and brother Elmo Jr., Crescentmead earned wide acclaim with 50 All-American or Junior All-American nominations, 260 sires in A.I. units, and 317 EX cows, 54 Gold Medal Dams and 43 Dam of Merit winners. Niles judged many shows. Two of his proudest accomplishments were Lawcrest Rotate Mindy, U.S. National Senior 3-Year-Old Milk Champion, and Rotate Amanda, #1 CTPI cow.

Best wishes to everyone for a very Happy New Year and wonderful 2026! – Bonnie

TMR Consistency: A Key Fundamental Driving Profit in 2026

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Victoria Asselstine, Ph.D.
Ruminant Technical Service Manager, Jefe Nutrition Inc.
vasselstine@jefe.ca

Did you know that feed represents nearly 50% of a dairy farm's operating costs? Small variations in how a **total mixed ration** (TMR) is prepared and delivered can quietly erode both performance and profitability.

As the New Year begins, many producers set goals aimed at improving efficiency and performance. New programs, products, or technologies often come to mind. However, with input costs remaining high, meaningful improvement may not always come from adding something new. In many cases, it comes from doing the fundamentals better and more consistently, starting with the TMR.

TMR consistency: Small variations, big consequences

A well-formulated ration only delivers value if it is mixed, delivered, and consumed as intended. Variability in TMR preparation introduces unnecessary stress on both cows and people, often without being immediately obvious.

Inconsistent mixing time, ingredient order, or particle length can increase feed sorting, leading to unbalanced nutrient intake within the same pen. Over time, this variation contributes to rumen health challenges, reduced intake consistency, and lost milk potential.

Several on-farm factors influencing TMR consistency

- Ingredient loading order:** Adding forages, concentrates, liquids, and minerals in the correct sequence for the type of mixer being used supports uniform distribution.
- Mixing time and speed:** Under- or over-mixing alters particle length and increases sorting risk.
- Scale accuracy and inclusion rates:** Small daily errors accumulate into meaningful nutrient variation.
- Feed delivery and push-up frequency:** Inconsistent access to feed can result in fluctuating intake patterns.

When these steps vary from day to day, cows experience changes in rumen fermentation that increase metabolic stress. The result is often seen indirectly, through inconsistent intakes, milk components, or manure consistency, rather than as a clear, single problem.

Starting the year with intention

Innovation often requires less than we think. Sometimes, it begins with asking a few practical questions:

- Is our TMR mixed the same way every day?
- Are we confident cows receive a consistent ration from the first bite to the last?
- Where could small refinements reduce variation and stress?

In the New Year, innovation doesn't have to mean *more*. For many producers, it means being intentional, disciplined, and consistent with the smart inputs already in place; and that may be the most reliable path to long-term success. Focusing on TMR consistency is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect the feed investments already being made.

While management practices set the foundation for TMR consistency, ingredient characteristics also play a role. Choosing high-quality feed ingredients designed for uniform handling and predictable inclusion helps reduce day-to-day variation and supports consistent intake.

Master this key fundamental, eliminate the variation, and watch your herd reach its true potential – make 2026 the year consistency drives results.



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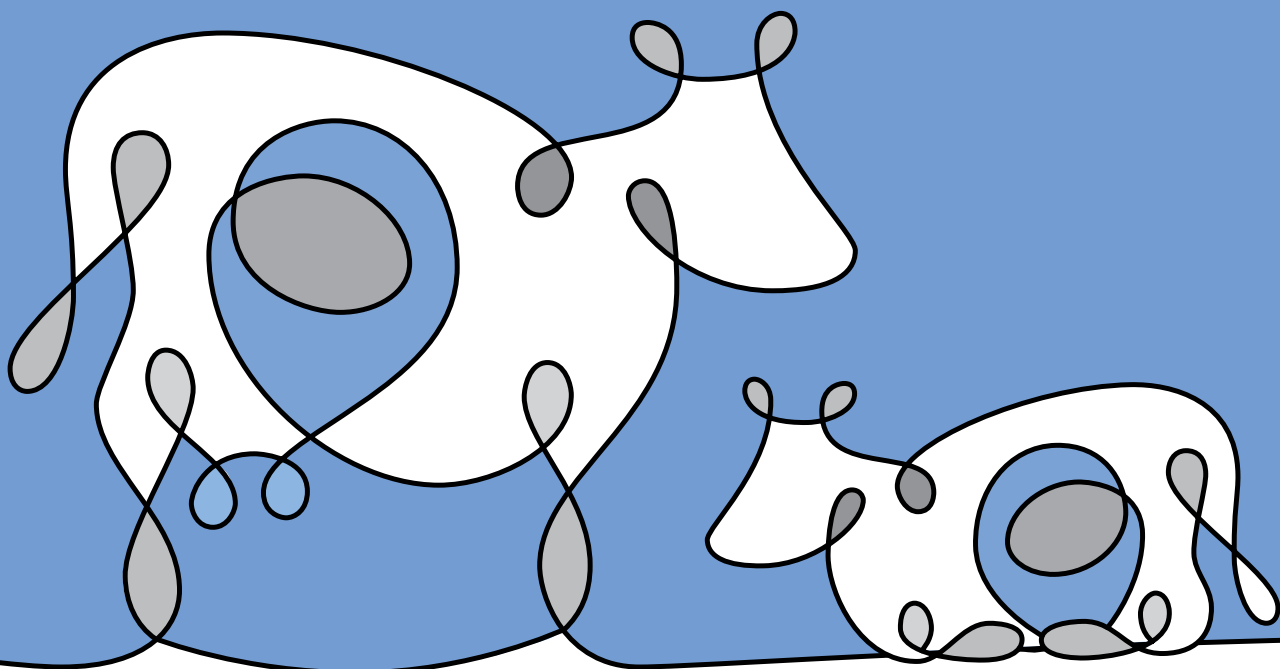
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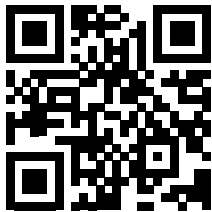
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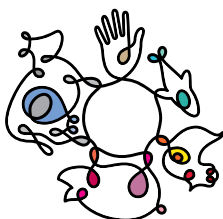
Increase protein percent



Improve feed efficiency



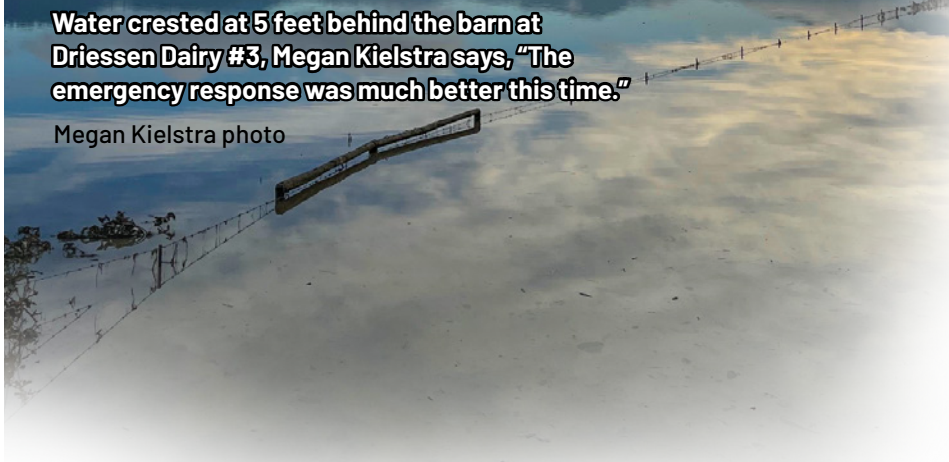
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Flood Fatigue: Farmers Call for Long-Term Solutions Again...



Water crested at 5 feet behind the barn at Driessen Dairy #3, Megan Kielstra says, “The emergency response was much better this time.”
Megan Kielstra photo

Morgan Sangster, Producer Support
Manager, BC Dairy
Tars Cheema & Amanda Poelman

The Sumas Prairie experienced déjà vu the second week in December as heavy rains fell. While not as distressing as the events of 2021, many producers still experienced palpable tensions with anxiety rising along with the water.

Rudi Meier – U&D Meier Dairy, South Parallel Rd.

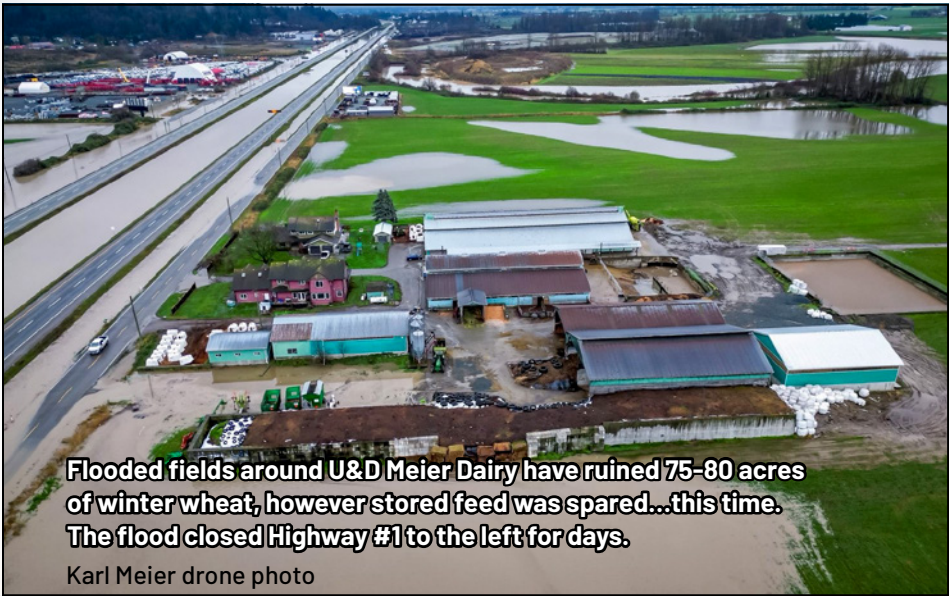
Rudi Meier, who farms across from the #1 Hwy with his twin brother Karl, is still worn from the intense six weeks – and it’s far from over. “December is usually a recharge month for us – getting ready for Christmas with our families – but all we did was keep pumps going while we worried about the water and watched where it

might go.” Initially, they had six pumps going for 72 hours, then three going for another week, the two pumps in their basements for three more weeks. Dehumidifiers are still going. They have a lot more cleaning and disinfecting to do through their crawlspaces.

They had to relocate their five-month-old and younger heifers to Postmas as the water came up two feet in 20 minutes in the driveway. Rudi is thankful the water did not reach the bunkers and ruin stored feed like in 2021, but the flooded fields will cost them plenty. 75-80 acres of winter wheat was well on its way but it’s a total write-off now. Meanwhile, the fertilizer, seed and labour are a loss.



Matt may have needed hip waders to get through milking, but the cows stayed dry and “didn’t miss a beat.”
Matt Dykshoorn photo



Flooded fields around U&D Meier Dairy have ruined 75-80 acres of winter wheat, however stored feed was spared...this time. The flood closed Highway #1 to the left for days.
Karl Meier drone photo

Megan Kielstra – Driessen Dairy #3, South Parallel Rd.

“We had significantly less water than in 2021,” says Megan, “There was about 6-8 inches at the road, and we had about 2.5 ft in the bunker, which is the lowest part of the yard.” She also notes, “By the time the US water came across the border, most of the rainwater had already drained.”

Although water flowed up through the manure alley, the Kielstras were able to shuffle around their youngstock, making offsite relocation of animals unnecessary. Due to full access to Sumas Way, milk was able to be picked up as usual, with no loads needing to be dumped.

The emergency response of local authorities and BC Dairy was positive. “Last time was really hard,” said Megan, “but this time the police had more awareness of what was needed and were much more accommodating when we pulled up to the barricade to get to the farm.” She credits this in large part to the response of BC Dairy, which served as a buffer between producers and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). “Morgan (BC Dairy) was organized with checklists of things to consider that may have slipped our minds, and that was really helpful.”

Although the Kielstras made some improvements to their manure storage since 2021 to avoid having manure water running through the yard, Megan says, “We learned in 2021 exactly where the water would go, which allowed us to move our animals accordingly as needed.” She adds, “You can’t truly stop the water – it always finds a way.”

Matt Dykshoorn – B&L Dairy, Kenny Rd.

“We were as well-prepared as we could be,” says Matt, who experienced up to 5ft of water during the December flood – 2ft less than he contended with in 2021. “Thursday morning (Dec 11) our road was dry. At 2pm the water came over the tracks in five or six different places – rising quickly and by 5pm we were under water.” Matt was prepared and evacuated 40 heifers because if the water gets to his barn, that means Kenny Road already has 5 ft of water and evacuation is impossible.

Barn alleys filled quickly, but despite walking through water to get to the feed bunk and the parlour, their bedding stayed dry thanks to the 8-inch curb. Thankfully, B&L Dairy only had to dump their milk on Saturday while the road was submerged. “It was a calculated gamble not moving the cows, but it paid off!”

“We double-fed everything Thursday morning, so they would have enough feed for 48 hours and filled the silage wagon with sawdust so that we could refill the bedding immediately when it was safe to go back to the barn.” Using the largest tractor he has, Matt was able to get back to the bunker by Saturday afternoon. “We lost about 1ft of face off the bunker and some of the plastic washed up slightly on our sealed bunkers,” he says, estimating about 50 tons of loss. All the grass and cover crop was under water, but Matt is optimistic, saying, “The

fields look pretty good all things considered. I think we should only lose about 10-15 acres of feed,” a sharp contrast to the 100 acres he lost in 2021.

Matt agrees that the response of the authorities and BC Dairy showed great improvement this time around. “The emergency command that BC Dairy has built has paid dividends,” he says. “EOC doesn’t have people everywhere all the time, so sharing information instead of operating separately is important. I can’t say enough about the work BC Dairy has done to foster relationships.”

While preparedness is important, Matt, like many producers, believes that ultimately prevention is the answer. “We need to get in front of this. We can handle 6 inches of rain in a weekend, but the problem comes when the major rivers keep spilling over.” In the meantime, having a plan in place and monitoring the warning signs is paramount. Matt speaks highly of the dairy community and its willingness to help, “In 2021 I made one call and an hour later I had 15 trailers on the farm ready to move animals,” he says, and despite not needing that kind of help this time, it’s comforting to know that safety net is available.

The BC Dairy Perspective

Although a very unfortunate event, BC Dairy feels the 2025 flood event demonstrated significant progress in our organization’s emergency response coordination. During this event, BC Dairy was able to virtually attend the Abbotsford EOC meetings twice daily, as well as the daily PREOC weather calls. The Ministry of Agriculture and EMCR staff within the EOC enabled proactive two-way communications with both local and provincial authorities, as well as BC Dairy. Maintaining direct communication with impacted producers was prioritized – we wanted to ensure a constant flow of intel to and from the EOC. Producers provided real time updates for the situation on the ground, which not only benefited the EOC, but in turn also improved access which was a large issue in 2021. This level of open communication was integral to facilitating the movement of milk and feed, and ensuring our producers needs were met during this difficult time. Overall, the 2025 flood response reinforced the importance of real-time intelligence, coordinated planning, and the need to continue advocating for investment in infrastructure and preparedness.

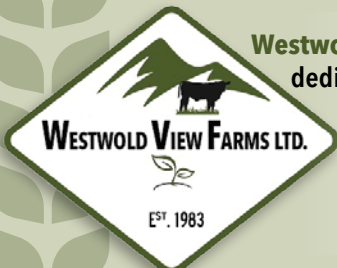
Farmers are resilient, but the mental health toll can’t be ignored. The trauma of 2021 is still fresh, and many are now facing a second flood. Beyond recovery, pressure is mounting for real, long-term solutions – farmers can only do so much to protect their homes and facilities. Fatigue is setting in, Rudi says.

Politics aside, all players must work together to address flood risks. Urgent action is needed, and we can’t keep spending millions on disaster relief and short-term band-aids.

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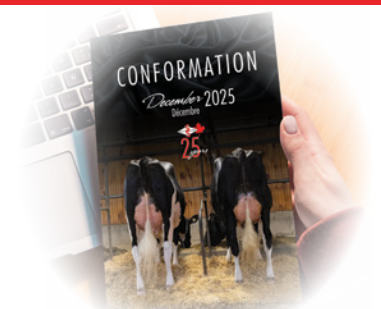
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A Partnership That Makes a Difference

BC Dairy and Alberta Milk Meet Goals in Holiday Campaign



Amanda Poelman

This past holiday season, BC Dairy and Alberta Milk partnered with BC Children's Hospital Foundation and Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation, respectively, to match community donations, turning generosity into meaningful support. The campaign supports some of the greatest needs of BC Children's Hospital and Alberta Children's Hospital, including transformative technologies, groundbreaking research and enhanced clinical programs that improve care for kids across both provinces.

BC Dairy

BC Dairy's campaign kicked off November 27th and featured Chilliwack dairy farmers, Marc and Jessica Dalton, along with their three children: Kyle (7), Emily and Alice (5½). "Alice is our complex kid," says Jessica, "She was diagnosed with right atrial isomerism when I was 20 weeks pregnant with the twins." Jessica explained that isomerism is a type of 'heterotaxy' which means that Alice's organs are in different locations, and specifically, her heart is very complex with only one ventricle. Fortunately, when Alice and Emily were born, Alice didn't need initial support and did much better than expected. However, as she grew the demand on her heart also grew, resulting in a 3-stage surgical plan. Alice was able to skip the first stage but had her first surgery at 2½ months old. The third stage surgery took place in October 2024, and while more surgery may be needed eventually, Jessica is happy to share that nothing is currently scheduled, and Alice is a thriving kindergarten student.

"We've now had a 5-year relationship with BC Children's Hospital, and they've been incredibly supportive," says Jessica. "We have never had to worry that she wouldn't receive the care that she needs, and that is very assuring for us as parents." Although the Daltons have been approached previously to be in the BC Dairy campaign, this year it felt like the right time for them. "We didn't feel ready before," says Jessica, "We were still very much in the thick of things. But now that the kids are a bit older and have been creating their own fundraisers, they all agreed when we asked them!" All three Dalton kids have been actively involved in raising money for the hospital, as well as Canuck Place, where the family stayed a lot during the early days.

While Jessica notes the importance of funding the research that is being done, she also wants to make sure a light is shed on what makes the hospital special. "Alice loves going to see her doctors and nurses – it's



Alex hiked the Grand Canyon's 'Rim to River' trail with parents Crystal and Robert, who are thankful for the care he receives at Alberta Children's Hospital for his A-T.



Marc and Jessica Dalton, along with Emily, Kyle and Alice (red suit). Alice is part of the Heart Centre at BC Children's Hospital, where therapeutic programs create magic daily.

pure magic for her! And they do an incredible job of including our other kids who are often with Alice for her appointments," says Jessica. A great example was in October when Alice had her last surgery. "The staff had set up a costume shop, there was a therapy dog parade, and all the departments had booths in the lobby so the kids could go trick-or-treating." These glimmers of excitement make being at the hospital a positive experience for families at a time when it may feel like their world is caving in, Jessica shares.

Alberta Milk

Alberta Milk's matching campaign for the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation also began at the end of November, featuring the Olive family – Robert, Crystal, Alex and

Clark, from Silver Top Dairy in Fort Macleod, Alberta. "We have been 'frequent flyers' at Children's Hospital since Alex was diagnosed with A-T at 18 months old," says Crystal. A-T (Ataxia-Telangiectasia) is a rare, progressive, degenerative muscle disease that causes lack of muscle control, immune deficiencies and high risks of cancer, Crystal explains. "There are only 500 kids in North America," Crystal says of the small A-T community, "Most kids don't survive their 20s."

The Olives make the 90-minute drive to Calgary every 4-6 months, unless Alex gets sick in between. "Alex has a dream team of doctors," says Crystal, "They care so much about him and are personally invested in his care." Alex is currently 15-years old, attending school – with the help of a fulltime aid, and works with a personal trainer who

helps him train to keep his muscles strong. "Alex is doing well because he does his best to take care of himself," says Crystal, who has dedicated her life to living by the motto, "You can do hard things," while running 100-mile mountain races to raise money for A-T research.

In 2025, with the help of generous sponsors and donations within the agriculture community, the Olives purchased a Joelette adaptive hiking chair for Alex, and after countless days of training and preparation, the family slowly hiked all the way down to the river of the Grand Canyon and back in ONE DAY. This feat, while the most physically demanding of Crystal and Robert's life, made Alex the only A-T kid to have ever hiked the Bright Angel – Rim to River trail.

A Positive Impact

Both Crystal and Jessica are incredibly grateful for the partnership between the Associations and Children's Hospital. "At the end of the day we are all parents and if we haven't needed Children's Hospital ourselves, we definitely know someone who has," says Crystal. Jessica adds, "As dairy farmers we are always providing for the community through dairy products – that is our role, and Children's Hospital plays a huge role in the community too because so many kids rely on the hospital regularly, not just for one-time visits."

Jennifer Woron, Executive Director of Market Development for BC Dairy, echoes that sentiment, stressing the importance of community partnerships, saying, "Community partnerships are one important part of a larger piece of the work we do to support our industry. It is important for dairy farmers to have the trust of the overall community, but it's also important for farmers to feel like they are giving back. Strong community partnerships are vital for advocacy."

For families like the Daltons and the Olives, support from the Children's Hospitals came when it was needed most. Their experiences serve as a reminder that behind every donation and every partnership are real families, real moments, and real hope – made possible through a community willing to show up for one another, not just at Christmas, but 365 days a year.

Both BC Dairy and Alberta Milk are proud to have met their fundraising goals, matching \$120,000 and \$100,000 respectively for the BC Children's and Alberta Children's Hospital Foundations.

“When it’s showing a cow in heat, no questions you just go breed her.”



Ben Korporaal, Valedoorn Farms, Agassiz, BC, Canada

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Saskatchewan Holstein Branch News



Ria Vanzessen,
SK Branch Secretary

Happy New Year – wishing all of you the best in 2026!

Board Update:

During our November AGM, the Branch welcomed a new Director – Mike Hofer. Mike and his family farm at Rosetown Colony, in Rosetown, SK. Although Mike has been working on the dairy since he was young, he took over the management position in 2020. Under the ROSECOLONY prefix, they milk 120 cows with two A5 Lely robots. Mike has always been fascinated by pedigrees and strives to breed balanced cows. In his new role as a Director, Mike says, “One of my goals is to encourage producers to get more involved in the Branch activities.”

Mike is taking over from Director Cathy Schaeffer of Ronleen Holsteins, who has served on the Branch for the past 15 years in various roles. The Board thanks Cathy for all of the time and energy she put into the Branch over the years – she will be missed!

Coming Events:

- * Breeders Cup – Judging: February 16-20 (Judge: Ryan Friesen)
- * Awards Night: March 5 at Vandenbrink Dairy, Pike Lake.
- * Western Dairy Expo – April 23-24, Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.
- * Junior Ag Showcase – July 1-6, Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.
- * Saskatchewan Dairy Heifer Show – July 8-10, Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.
- * WCC – August 18-22, Brandon MB.

Follow us on Social Media to stay up to date on SK Branch events!

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More Protein, Same Cows: 3 Strategies



Daniel Scothorn,
Scothorn Nutrition

Milk protein has moved to the top of the priority list for many Canadian dairy farms. The good news is that optimizing milk protein is not new. Regions that paid heavily on cheese yield have been focused on milk protein for decades, and there is plenty of practical experience and research we can draw from.

It also helps to remember milk components follow a seasonal pattern. In most herds, protein concentrations tend to be higher through winter and lower through summer, influenced by photoperiod, heat stress, and changes in intake and maintenance needs. That matters because it sets expectations. If milk protein slides in spring and summer, the goal is often to reduce the decline and recover faster, not to chase a number that ignores the season. With that context, here are three strategies that consistently move milk protein in the right direction.

1. Rumen health and cow health first

A healthy rumen is the foundation of milk protein. Most amino acids that end up in milk protein start as microbial protein, and microbes only thrive when rumen fermentation is stable. When rumen function slips, you often see a combination of reduced intake, lower rumination, looser manure, more sorting, inconsistent components, and cows that simply do not look right. Subacute ruminal acidosis can reduce fiber digestion and disrupt microbial growth, and the result is often lower milk protein yield and weaker component consistency. To support rumen function, keep fiber in a safe zone and ensure it's effective. For many high producing herds, total NDF in the ration commonly falls 28 to 32 percent of diet dry matter, with enough physically effective fiber to drive chewing and maintain a stable rumen mat. Aim for a ration uNDF240 near roughly 7% of diet dry matter, then adjust based on intake, manure, milk fat, and rumination. Too little can increase acidosis risk, while too much can put a ceiling on intake. Make changes gradually, because big jumps in starch, sugar, or fat sources can destabilize fermentation quickly, especially in early lactation. Finally, pay close attention to sorting and bunk management. A strong formulation can still fail if cows are not consuming what the ration is designed to deliver.

Even with a solid rumen, early lactation body condition loss can pull milk protein down. When cows are in a deeper energy deficit, nutrient partitioning shifts, intake is often limited, and amino acids are more likely to be used for maintenance instead of milk protein synthesis. On many farms, the most effective "protein strategy" is getting fresh cows eating more, sooner, with fewer metabolic disruptions. Key moves include a smooth transition program, strong fresh cow routines, comfort, stall time, water access, and ration consistency. If ketosis, displaced abomasums, retained placentas, or slow starts are common, address those issues before investing heavily in amino acid fine tuning.

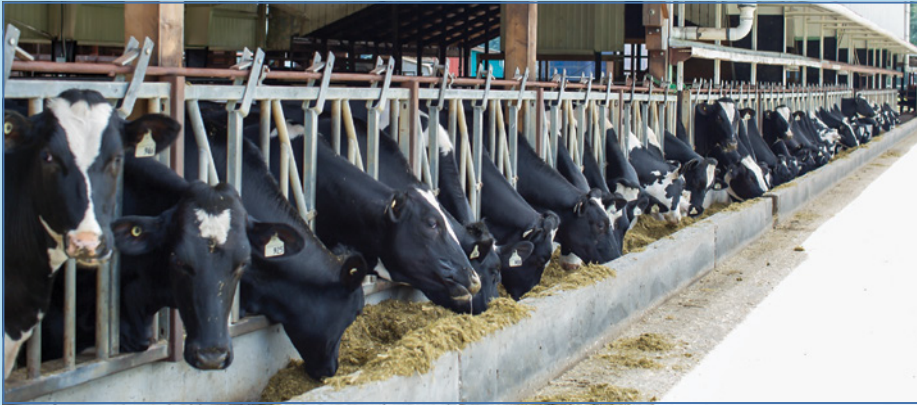
2. Non nutritional strategies that raise protein without buying feed

Some of the fastest gains in milk protein per cow come from management. Moving from 2x to 3x milking often increases milk yield meaningfully, and milk protein yield per day typically rises because total milk rises. Milk protein percentage may remain similar while fat percentage slips depending on parity, stage of lactation, and whether nutrition keeps pace with the higher output. Either way, more kilograms of protein shipped is usually the primary objective.

Cow comfort is also a milk protein strategy. Lying time, heat abatement, stocking density, pen moves, and parlor or robot flow all influence intake and rumination. Stress and poor lying time reduce dry matter intake first, and components follow. Genetics and heifer strategy are slower levers, but they compound over time. Selecting for stronger protein breeding values and optimizing heifer growth and age at first calving will not fix a rumen problem, but it can raise the ceiling once management fundamentals are in place.

3. Nutritional strategies that fine tune the result

Once rumen stability and cow management are in place, nutrition is where you can refine performance. A common reason farms lag on protein is an imbalance between energy supply and metabolizable



protein supply. If energy is limiting, microbes underperform and the cow cannot use amino acids efficiently. If metabolizable protein is limiting, you can have adequate energy and still be short on milk protein output. A practical strategy is to confirm intakes are where they should be (27 kg or greater), confirm fermentable carbohydrate supports microbial yield without pushing acidosis, confirm MP supply, then refine amino acids.

Many herds land in a starch + sugar range that supports production while protecting rumen function, but the correct level depends on forage digestibility, chop length, moisture, processing, feeding frequency, and cow factors. The goal is not "more starch." **The goal is enough fermentable energy to support microbes and milk, without compromising rumen stability.** Targeted amino acid supplementation, especially methionine and lysine, can be effective, but it works best after MP and energy are on track. If the foundation is weak, amino acids often look disappointing because the limiting factor is still intake, rumen health, or energy.

Fat source choices can also influence how energy is partitioned and how components express. Palmitic acid sources tend to push milk fat yield more strongly, while oleic rich sources often support body condition and milk yield more so. The right approach depends on the fat percent, the farm's goals, and whether the herd is energy limited or rumen limited.

Practical examples

Farm A

Top five in the region on BCA milk and fat, but lagging on protein. Healthy cows, 45 kg milk, 4.5% fat, 3.3% protein on 2x.

Practical fixes include moving to 3x if facilities and labour allow, reviewing whether fat is being pushed too hard with palmitic, and running MP and ME together to get the balance right before adding amino acids.

Farm B

Cost focused, healthy cows, 36 kg milk, 4.8% fat, 3.4% protein.

Practical fixes include prioritizing fresh cow intake and transition consistency, allowing starch intake to rise carefully if energy is limiting, and keeping fiber in a safe zone so rumen health is not traded for a starch bump to improve milk protein.

Farm C

Older free stall barn, 2x milking, TMR, 33 kg milk, 5.0% fat, 3.5% protein. Cows dry off heavy, and first breeding averages 100 days in milk.

Practical fixes include starting with comfort and reproduction, tightening

transition to reduce ketosis and other early lactation disruptions, and only then revisiting starch, MP, and amino acids.

Conclusion

Improving milk protein shipments without adding cows and reducing butterfat is a whole farm approach. Start by setting expectations around seasonal biology, then build from the bottom up: rumen stability and cow health, management levers such as milking frequency and comfort, then targeted nutrition that aligns energy, MP, and amino acids with what cows can actually use. When those pieces line up, milk protein improves in a way that is repeatable, profitable, and resilient across the year.



Funding Programs to Support Water Management in BC Agriculture

BC’s climate is changing with hotter temperatures, insufficient snow accumulation, faster spring snowmelt, glacier loss, and reduced precipitation over extended periods of time. As the drought conditions continue to escalate, water demand and supply challenges have become more persistent, affecting agricultural production in many regions of the province.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food provides opportunities for agricultural producers to help improve their water management practices through two main funding programs.

The **Beneficial Management Practices (BMP)** Program (www.iafbc.ca/bmp) helps producers contribute to a cleaner, healthier environment with projects that improve water management, air quality control, emissions control, soil and riparian integrity, and environmental impacts. Producers who have completed an **Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)** (www.iafbc.ca/efp) in the last five years may apply for funding under the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) program. Producers who have an EFP learn how to reduce agriculture’s impact on the environment. Many EFP participants have experienced increased efficiency and profitability as a result of increasing their environmental sustainability through implementing EFP recommendations, many with BMP Program funding support.

In the Plans and Designs category for water under the BMP Program, funding is available for irrigation system assessments or designs, water management plans, and engineering designs, technical design or assessments. The cost-shared ratio is dependent on the type of plans and design selected.

In the Water Infrastructure category of the BMP program, funding is available to support smaller-scaled producer projects (up to \$70,000 funding request), such as water storage infrastructure (e.g., dams, dugouts and rainwater harvesting), irrigation scheduling equipment, new and existing irrigation systems, water supply systems, water meters, backflow prevention devices, on-farm drainage systems, and well protection for existing wells. The flowchart below provides general guidance of Water Infrastructure projects that are eligible for BMP funding. To learn more about the funding opportunities, prioritization, and pre-requisites for BMP Water Infrastructure projects, please visit www.iafbc.ca/bmp.

Applications for 2026/27 BMP funding will open soon. Visit the webpage to subscribe to the BMP newsletter to stay in-the-know on the BMP application dates and more at www.iafbc.ca/bmp.

For larger-scale producer projects, the **Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program (AWP)** (www.iafbc.ca/awp) helps increase the adoption of efficient irrigation infrastructure and improve agricultural water supply and management in BC while also improving stream flows, supporting healthy fish populations and working towards increased and more sustainable food production.

The AWP Stream 1 (Producer Projects) provides funding for the construction of dams, dugouts, and other water storage infrastructure including water conveyance or delivery systems. The cost-shared funding is 50% up to \$1 million with a minimum funding request of \$200,000 (i.e., total project cost must be at least \$400,000 to be eligible to apply).

Although the 2025 application window has closed for AWP Stream 1, Stream 3, which supports Assessments, Engineering Studies or Plans, remains open until all funding is fully committed. Stream 3 supports producers to complete agricultural water supply assessments/feasibility studies, dam engineering assessments, dam emergency plan, dam safety review, and other professional consultative services for dams. The cost-shared funding will cover 50% up to \$200,000 with a minimum funding request of \$20,000 (i.e., total project cost must be at least \$40,000 to be eligible to apply). Details about the AWP program can be found at www.iafbc.ca/awp.

Gietema Farms Ltd.

In the heart of the North Okanagan, Gietema Farms Ltd. began their dairy operation six years ago. Dan Gietema ran his father’s farm in Abbotsford before relocating to the Okanagan.

With the support of his EFP Planning Advisor, King Campbell, Dan was guided through the completion of his EFP workbook, which identified key environmental and climate risks affecting the farm. This process allowed him to evaluate his farm’s specific challenges and identify practical strategies to address them through BMP funding.

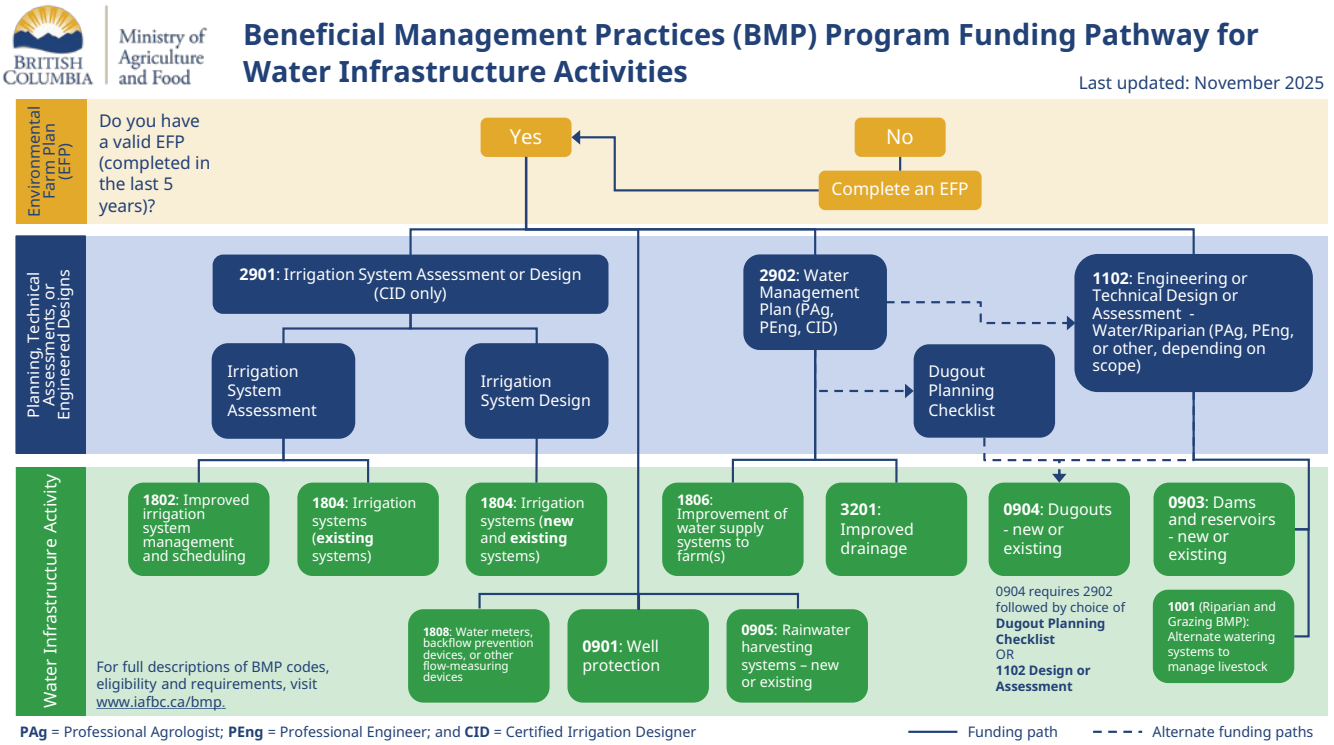
Gietema applied to the BMP program to complete an irrigation system assessment and design. Following the completion of the assessment and design by a local Certified Irrigation Designer, Pat Doorn from Mountain View Electric Ltd., Gietema was successful in a subsequent BMP application for cost-shared funding to upgrade their irrigation system. Learn more about qualified professionals who are able to support BMP Plans and Designs at www.iafbc.ca/bmp/contractors.

Dan implemented an irrigation system upgrade by replacing his travelling gun irrigation system with a centre pivot system. Irrigation has become much more efficient and effective with substantial reduction in labour costs and reduced water use. The BMP funding program made the system upgrade achievable and more affordable, allowing him to invest in sustainable technologies and practices that would improve water use efficiency, increase production and reduce operating costs.

“This new irrigation system has been a great benefit to our farm,” said Dan Gietema.



Gietema Farms Ltd. photo



We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the governments of Canada and British Columbia through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative, for the Beneficial Management Practices Program.

We also acknowledge the support of the Government of British Columbia for the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program. The programs are delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

Where We've Been, Where We're Going: A Look at Workplace Safety

Chad Stewart, AgSafe chad@agsafebc.ca

Looking at the evolution of agricultural workplace safety, we've all seen or heard about the shift – WorkSafeBC visits are occurring more frequently, and the orders issued are increasing in complexity. So where does this leave producers?

While it was once nice not to worry about an unexpected or unwanted visit from your local officer, this has created a substantial gap between where most producers are with their safety programs and where they need to be. Unfortunately – or fortunately – when an officer visits your farm and issues an inspection report, they are raising your health and safety standard. In the absence of these visits, the gap between where your program is and where it needs to be grows considerably. As we move into new safety territory, this presents a significant challenge.

What are we now seeing?

- Agriculture being treated the same as other major industries
- A more formalized approach to WorkSafeBC inspections

- Notice of Compliance documents required for every set of orders (this previously was not the case)
- A truncated process from outstanding orders to warning letters, citations, and administrative penalties
- An increase in administrative penalties
- Greater complexity in the inspection reports being issued

Inspection reports containing orders for walkthrough exposure assessments, exposure control programs, silage gas safety, and confined space entry programs are becoming commonplace. These are examples of the more complex orders being discussed on dairies and fall under the category of occupational hygiene.

What does it mean for orders to be of an occupational hygiene nature? Briefly, many of the orders we see can be addressed and complied with by the producer, with support from a local AgSafe representative. However, some orders can only be complied with through the involvement of an occupational hygienist (formal designation that is specific to handling certain types of workplace hazards) – for example, confined space entry programs and

exposure control programs. Think of engineers – anyone can build a bridge, but an engineer must stamp it before it can be used. It's the same principle for orders that have an occupational hygiene element to them. This is why we consistently advocate for engineering solutions, where hazards can be eliminated or substituted with lower-risk alternatives.

While this may sound challenging, the dairy industry has reached a point where significant construction activity is expected to occur in preparation for future increases in quota. This situation creates a unique opportunity. By rethinking how we approach and manage safety, we can implement effective solutions before the hazard is even created.

When you're getting ready for your next construction project, stop and think – why should I continue to build the same way? If I'm incorporating new technology into every facet of my new barn, why am I not taking the same approach to safety? If we know certain hazards exist, why not engineer them out during the design phase to eliminate problem areas now, rather than managing them indefinitely? Reach out to your local AgSafe representative and speak with your contractors about how this can be done.

WorkSafeBC inspections will not stop or revert to how they were years ago. Just as every other aspect of dairy operations has advanced and evolved over time, so too has the workers' compensation system.

Chad Stewart is AgSafe's **Superintendent of Field Operations**. The role of AgSafe field representatives is to provide workplace safety consultation, education and advice that will help producers achieve long-term safety goals.



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Ukraine’s Cotton Comeback

Farming fabric and gunpowder feedstock

Anna Klochko,
Ukrainian-based ag/photojournalist



The innocent cotton plant – soft t-shirt fabric or military munitions feedstock.

No one spoke of cotton in Ukraine a few years ago. But today it’s prominent in parliamentary agriculture committees, in debates over restoring irrigation in the south, and – surprisingly – in discussions of feedstock for the defence industry. War, climate change and increased competition for strategic resources have reignited a debate over a crop Ukraine once cultivated on a large scale. What’s at stake now is whether Ukrainians can make cotton both a national-security product and a winning agricultural tale for Europe.

Why cotton matters

Gossypium (cotton) is a shrub with its seeds covered in soft fibres which continue to make up about 40 percent of the world’s textiles. Globally, production is on the order of tens of millions of tonnes annually. The market is also concentrated, primarily produced in India, China, the U.S., Brazil and Pakistan. Ukraine is vying for a niche which prioritizes proximity to Europe, shorter logistics and supply security. In an increasingly fraught geopolitical scenario, raw cotton finds itself in a larger “strategic autonomy” conversation, particularly for Europe, which imports much of its cotton and textile feedstocks.

for nitrocellulose, used in propellants and explosives, and domestic cotton is increasingly reframed as part of defence resilience. The back-of-the-envelope math being debated in Ukraine says it all: 30,000 hectares (74,000 acres) of cotton might provide as much as 10,000 tonnes of cellulose annually for gunpowder. That wouldn’t eliminate deficits, but it could create a domestic buffer and less dependence on fragile supply chains. However, agronomics still comes first. Serhii Melnyk, director of the Ukrainian Institute for Plant Variety Examination, notes: “Cotton was grown in southern Ukraine before, and we have domestic varieties. Today the climatic belt has shifted by almost 100 km; we now have conditions similar to those once typical for Crimea. For cotton, this is a positive factor.” According to Melnyk, cotton is promising for certain zones but has clear natural and technological limits. It is not suitable for all of Ukraine: critical constraints include elevation above sea level, groundwater depth, and stable heat throughout the season. Moving from an idea to systematic production is only possible where geography and technology match the crop’s needs.

Stoyanova says. “The only thing we don’t have is harvesting machines. For three hectares you pick by hand, but at industrial scale you have to cut with combines.” A scalable industry demands mechanization. Without harvesters – and without local servicing/parts – cotton is a niche experiment. **Policy steps: seed availability and early incentives** Ukraine has also made efforts to lower early hurdles. A new law made the registration process easier for cotton seed varieties with approval on EU soil to be imported and tested in Ukraine, skipping a long domestic approval. The point is straightforward: rapidly expand varietal choice and allow trial across a wide variety of irrigation and climate conditions. The government has incented cotton pilot support – around CAD \$335 per hectare. The funding does not pay for start-up costs, but it does reduce risk at entry. It’s only the beginning. Supporting policies and encouraging pilot yields are helpful first steps, but two bottlenecks will determine whether cotton can scale into a real industry. The first is breeding capacity. Olha Trofimtseva, Agriculture and Biodiversity Director at the Ukraine Facility Platform and



Successfully re-establishing cotton in Ukraine goes beyond simple farming – there must be reliable support for the military end products to ensure the equipment, irrigation and harvests have ROI. Farmers cannot take this on without government guarantees for the profitable purchase of the end products.

What cotton “likes”: heat, timing, water control Why the south is the testing ground

Cotton is tough, but it appreciates precision. Its goal is for constant warmth (long frost-free periods), and it thrives when moisture is controlled, not just left to chance. Drip irrigation is frequently the make-or-break technology in arid areas: It can raise yields, reduce the amount of water wasted, giving farmers control over nutrition and boll development. That may sound fancy, but southern Ukraine is increasingly encountering that reality. Heat and water shortages have emerged as a defining feature of recent seasons. In regions where traditional crops are struggling without irrigation, cotton stops coming across as exotic and begins to look functional. **Ukraine has done this before** During the 1930s–1950s, about 475,000 hectares of cotton was grown in such southern areas as Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv regions and Crimea, yielding about 100,000 tonnes seed cotton at its height. Production was halted in 1958 when the Soviet system shifted cotton cultivation to Central Asia, where the climate was better suited to the crop – and where ample labour was readily available. Today, that history reads as evidence that cotton can work in the Ukrainian south – if you have the right technology and markets. **Russia’s war against Ukraine refocused the lens: cotton became a security crop** The full-scale invasion also transformed cotton into more than just a textile storyline. Cotton cellulose is a feedstock

Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odesa, particularly the Danube region of the country, have experienced many seasons of temperature shifts in which non-irrigated farming has been risky. Cotton, which is both heat resistant and suitable for drip systems, is being promoted as one answer to the new norm: heat, drought, uncertainty. Melnyk points to another point of this quiet, but frequently-cited one made by farmers: Cotton can put some abandoned or degraded lands back into economic use over time – though of course all depending on location, soil health and safety restrictions. The flagship pilot region is Odesa. Alla Stoyanova, a leading farmer and chair of the NGO “Agrarians of Odesa Region,” is renowned for her boldness and unconventionality – testing crops that might otherwise be dismissed as “exotic.” She says 2025 has been a season of testing – varieties, technologies, with/without irrigation and economics. “We’re at the beginning of it. We’re piloting varieties, refining technology, and sourcing specialized equipment,” she explained. Initial calculations suggested 1–2.5 tonnes per hectare without irrigation, and potentially around 3.5 tonnes per hectare with drip. While the yield increase is significant, it comes with a heavy cost: drip systems can be priced at \$1,900–3,400 CAD per hectare. For cotton to get beyond pilot plots, the economics must pencil out with stable prices and trustworthy purchasers. And then there’s the equipment disparity. “Farmers already stock most of the machinery necessary to grow cotton,”

acting Minister of Agrarian Policy in 2019, warned cotton needs to be tested for several years. “You have to test it for a number of years – preferably at least three, better five. We don’t have those years,” she explains, urging a hybrid model: import tried and true varieties now, and invest in Ukrainian breeding science in the medium term. The second is processing and markets. Cotton without ginning, primary processing, certification, and a clear customer base risks remaining a “beautiful experiment.” Farmers want simple answers: who will purchase the fibre, where it will be processed, and what standards it must meet. The best external market from which to start would be Europe – Europe consumes far more cotton than it produces domestically. Ukraine’s proximity could be attractive to reducing logistics costs and carbon footprint, if the value chain is credible and designed to scale. But even at an early stage trial, Ukraine’s cotton push comes with real risks for farmers. That’s because part of the front line now runs through Ukraine’s southern regions – the very areas where cotton is climatically viable. When the testing of varieties began on a small number of the local farms, this news quickly spread to Russian pro-war channels. They openly discussed the need to prevent Ukrainians from growing a strategic feedstock for propellant production – calling for cotton fields to be burned using the same tactic they have used for four years to set Ukrainian wheat fields on fire: drone strikes.



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Ethics as a competitive advantage in the marketplace

Ukrainian cotton could compete not just on geography and price, but on reputation. Globally, scrutiny of fibre origin is tightening as forced and child labour become unacceptable for brands and governments – opening a real market window for “clean” supply.

Ruslan Myatiev is a Turkmen journalist and human rights defender. Since 2010, he has led the independent media outlet Turkmen.news. He says Turkmenistan’s cotton continues to rely on coercion: “Public-sector workers – from janitors to teachers – are sent to the fields or forced to pay for hired labour. That is forced labour.” He notes the U.S. has banned Turkmen cotton and textiles since 2018, and more than 140 international brands have pledged not to use it – yet products can still slip into Europe through opaque supply chains.

Myatiev recalls spotting bedding in the Netherlands labeled “Made in Turkmenistan.” After he and colleagues from the Cotton Campaign raised the issue and shared evidence with manufacturers, IKEA publicly said it would stop using Turkmen cotton and removed the products.

So, European markets do respond when ethics are backed by proof – and traceability requirements will only tighten. For Ukraine, producing without forced or child labour and building a transparent chain from field to fibre could become a competitive advantage. But it will only pay off with credible certification, lot traceability, and export promotion that makes “ethical cotton” verifiable – not just a slogan.

Cotton as a model of resilience

For Ukraine, cotton has become more than a textile crop. It sits at the junction of agriculture, irrigation renewal, industrial policy and national security. There is historical precedent in the country, a warming south that increasingly accords with cotton’s climate, with early pilot data and with political momentum. But the next steps are decisive: breeding, mechanization of harvest, processing capacity, contracts. If those pieces snap on, cotton might be a new variety of “white gold” for Ukraine – not some exotic experiment, but a practical niche with strategic relevance and a marketplace directly across the border.





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Revisiting Stories from the Holstein Journal

Production Milestones

Canadian Holsteins have made great strides in production over the years. In 1984, the *Holstein Journal* published a limited edition commemorative book, *Century of Achievement*, in honour of Holstein Canada's 100th Anniversary. In that book, they highlighted some of the significant production achievements made by Holsteins in this country from 1884 to 1984, along with changes in Canada's milk recording system. In this article, we draw from that story to look back at what was happening on the production scene and the Western Canada animals and people who were making an impact during that era.

Bonnie Cooper,
becooper2010@gmail.com

In 1945, **ALCARTRA GERBEN** completed a World record for fat production for Hays Limited, Calgary, AB, with that last milking drawing hundreds of people and wide media coverage.



**AGNES
RIVERDENE
MAGIC**



HOLLYBANK MEDALIST HEATHER



LANGVIEW SHAMROCK PRINCESS



ALCARTRA GERBEN

"In the 1880s, milk yield for Holsteins was high, but their butterfat test was an embarrassment. To encourage herds to improve butterfat test for their own benefit, and disprove the public's perception of Holsteins, the Holstein Association of Canada initiated prizes for dairy tests at fairs. Competition at these fairs was keen and winners received a great deal of publicity.

While these fairs were a valuable promotion tool for the breed, a regular testing program was needed to identify the producers in Holstein Canada member herds. The advent of the Babcock test for butterfat content in milk in 1890 made it possible for Holstein Canada to establish an official testing program in 1901. Called the Record of Merit (ROM), the program measured the production of an individual cow over a single 7-day period. In 1905, the Record of Performance (ROP), a testing program of 10 or 12 months duration, was established by the federal government to record the milk and butterfat production of dairy herds with at least three purebred cows. Many high records were reported in the coming years as more breeders enrolled in the ROM and ROP programs. The popularity of the ROP program eventually led to ROM being phased out in the late 1920s.

In 1922, **AGASSIZ SEGIS MAY ECHO** made a World record for butterfat at the Agassiz Experimental Farm, Agassiz, BC, with 1345 lbs. fat from 30,886 lbs. of 4.5% milk. At the 1929 Holstein Canada Annual Meeting, mention was made of the World 305-day butterfat record for all ages of 1080 lbs. fat made by **CANARY KORNDYKE ALCARTA**, a 4-year-old in the Braeburn herd of B.H. Thomson, Moose Jaw, SK. She had been purchased as a young heifer in Ontario for \$70 and later sold for \$10,000 after completing her

World record lactation.

SIR ROMEO MILDRED COLANTHA 6TH and **HAZELWOOD HEILO SIR BESSIE**, both owned by Colony Farm, Essondale, BC, became the breed's first 'Century Sires' in 1939, an award recognizing bulls who had sired 100 daughters that qualified in ROP. That same year, a 'Hazelwood' daughter at Colony, **COLONY FLETA HEILO**, became the Canadian Champion for milk for all breeds and all ages when she made 34,636 lbs. milk in 365 days. This was her second 30,000+ lbs. record, a feat matched by only two other Canadian Holsteins at the time.

In 1939, the *Holstein Journal* published its first Honor List, an annual list identifying the top producers for the past year. Awards for Superior Production and Longtime Production for cows were established by Holstein Canada in 1941. In 1949, it was agreed that monthly testing results would be allowed in the ROP system.

In 1945, a World record for fat production was reported for **ALCARTRA GERBEN**, owned by Hays Limited, Calgary, AB. Her 365-day 4X record of 1409 lbs. fat from 27,745 lbs. of 5.08% milk was a production milestone and received a wealth of publicity as this *Holstein Journal* story revealed: 'On March 24th, the final milking in the year's lactation of the new champion was witnessed by some 500 spectators from Canada and the United States. Newsreel and press cameras recorded the event in pictures and the microphones of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and radio station CFAC gave a squirt by squirt description to Alberta listeners which was later rebroadcast in part across Canada. The celebration concluded with a banquet at Calgary's far-famed Palliser Hotel, the proceedings of which were also broadcast.'

Les Gilmore of Richmond Farms, Richmond, BC, was the leading owner of Honor List producers in 1951-52-53 and then runner-up for four consecutive years after that. It was not until 1955 that expressing records in terms of BCA (Breed Class Average) came into use. The BCA system was developed by Dr. J.C. Berry of the University of British Columbia and was hailed at the time 'as one of the great steps forward in breed improvement.'

In the 1950s, provincial governments established an 'unofficial' Owner Sampler milk recording program through Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) organizations as a way to help commercial dairy farmers improve their profitability. A 'supervised' plan would later be offered by DHI as well.

One of the top producers in the 1960s was **AGNES RIVERDENE MAGIC** who made a 2X Canadian Championship Junior 4-year-old milk record of 32,764 lbs. milk in 305 days and 37,402 lbs. milk in 365 days, more than even the highest milk producer on 3X, for the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.

W.C. Blair of Langview Holsteins, Langley, BC, was in the limelight in the 1970s with his three generations of 200,000-lb. lifetime milk producers, all completed on 2X milking. This cow family was headed by **LANGVIEW SOVEREIGN QUEEN GP-4*** with 231,617 lbs. milk in 14 lactations, followed by her daughter, **LANGVIEW QUEEN AVITA VG-3*** with 203,958 lbs. milk in 11 lactations, and then her granddaughter, **LANGVIEW SHAMROCK PRINCESS VG-6*** with a 10-lactation total of 224,027 lbs. milk. (Princess later completed her career at 20 years old with 277,938 lbs. milk in 13 lactations.)

In 1970, Holstein Canada started to accept DHI 'supervised' plan records. This move significantly increased the rate of genetic improvement in Canadian dairy cattle as more information from cows on test was now added to genetic evaluations enabling the A.I. industry to prove more bulls and expand their sire sampling programs. In 1977 the introduction of the metric system prompted changes to Holstein Canada's production award qualifications and nomenclature.

In 1982, **HOLLYBANK MEDALIST HEATHER VG** set a new Canadian milk championship record in the mature cows with 361% BCA on 19,245 kg milk at 8 years. At the time, this record was the highest ever recorded in a single lactation in Canada, and the highest BCA, beating out her own 1981 championship mark of 17,333 kg milk or 318% BCA. Heather was bred by James K. & V.M. Holyoak, Aldergrove, BC, and owned with Gordon & Iris Blair, Surrey, BC."

Since the publishing of *Century of Achievement* in 1984, the Holstein cow has continued to set higher standards for production, with Western Canada continuing to be the home of many new Canadian Champions and high ranking lifetime production cows. Canada's milk recording programs have also evolved. In 1985, the federal ROP program wound down and began to integrate with provincial DHI agencies where the program became privatized as federal and provincial funding ended for milk recording. In 2004, CanWest DHI was established as an alliance between Western Canadian DHI Services and Ontario DHI. In 2019, Lactanet Canada was created when CanWest DHI, Valacta - who provided producers in Quebec and Atlantic Canada with milk recording and management programs - and Canadian Dairy Network (CDN) came together as a unified body focusing on dairy data,

genetics and management services. On-farm testing programs have changed too becoming more flexible to better fit the needs of producers as advances in milking equipment and technology occur. From once simply recording milk weights, DHI's role has now expanded into providing more management information so that dairy farmers can make better decisions in managing their herd's production, reproduction, udder health and feeding programs, decisions which will improve efficiency and increase profitability on their farms.

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AB Milk 2024-25 Annual Report and AGM Summary



Submitted by Kelsie Cosens, BSc.,
Communications Specialist, Alberta Milk

The annual general meeting was held at the Fantasyland Hotel in Edmonton on November 25-26. The presentations included speakers from the Canadian Dairy Commission, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Western Dairy Council, Lactanet, and the Western Milk Pool. The evening banquet featured the 2024-25 Milk Quality Award presentation, recognition for the outgoing director and chair, Stuart Boeve, a presentation from the Stollery Children’s Hospital, and the keynote speaker, Ramy Nassar.

Mission & Vision

- Mission:** Inspiring, innovating, and collaborating to build a healthy Canadian dairy industry.
- Vision:** *Better Together for Canadian Dairy!*

Industry Snapshot

- 2024-25 was a year of progress and collaboration.
- **459 dairy farms** operating in Alberta.
- **880 million litres of milk shipped**, representing **9.01% of Canada’s total production**.
- **Butterfat average:** 4.37 kg/hL (+1.46% from last year).
- **Total Producer Revenue:** \$869 million.
- **Average Milk Price:** \$98.74/hL.

Key Achievements

- **Dairy Innovation West (DIW):** Facility completed, commissioned, and operational; designed to process 300M litres annually.
- **Western Milk Pool (WMP):** Strategic plan launched focusing on cost efficiency, market alignment, and sustainability.
- **Sustainability:** Commitment to Net Zero by 2050; GHG Calculator pilot with 40 farms (three in Alberta).



2024-2025 AB Milk Board of Directors (L-R): Top Row: **Cornel van’t Klooster, Arjan Ijzerman, Mike Vanden Dool, Conrad Van Hierden, Stuart Boeve, Reuben Jooisse, Gerrit Haarman, David Morey.** Bottom Row: **Jason Rietveld, Wim van de Brake.**

Celebrating Excellence in Milk Quality

Alberta Milk has two programs for rewarding excellence in milk quality. Below are the criteria for the Monthly Milk Quality Bonus, and Milk Quality Awards.

Milk Quality Parameter	Monthly Milk Quality Bonus	Milk Quality Award
proAction®	Registered and deemed compliant with proAction	Registered and deemed compliant with proAction
Bacteria	Average of 30,000 cells/mL or less	Average of 15,000 cells/mL or less
Somatic Cell Count	Average of 250,000 cells/mL or less	Average of 200,000 cells/mL or less
Freezing Point	At or under -0.525 degrees Hortvet	At or under -0.530 degrees Hortvet
Inhibitors	No positive inhibitors	No positive inhibitors
Rejections	No rejections on farm or at the processor	No rejections on farm or at the processor
Results	An average of 80% of producers qualified and collected \$1,369,968 of available funds in the dairy year.	Of the producers who shipped in all 12 months, 188 producers (42%) qualified.

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- High compliance with quality standards; milk quality bonus program paid \$1.37M to producers.

Producer Engagement

- Satisfaction survey: **30% participation, 60% satisfied or very satisfied.**
- New **Young Producer Forum** introduced at AGM.

Community Impact

- **\$180K donated** to Alberta Children’s Hospital.
- Support for **4-H Alberta**, school nutrition programs, food banks, and youth initiatives.
- Marketing campaign: *Farm to Table* featuring Alberta farmers and chefs.

Financial Highlights

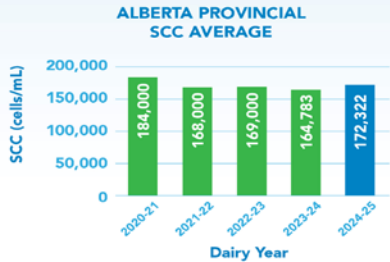
- **Total Revenue:** \$1.09 billion.
- **Excess of Revenue over Expenses:** \$2.67 million.
- **Net Assets:** \$17.5 million (+12% from last year).

Looking Ahead

Focus on transportation efficiencies, processor partnerships, sustainability incentives, and youth engagement.

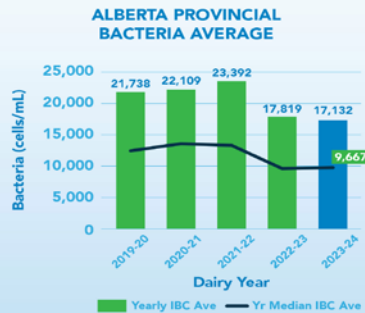
Milk Quality

SCC is an important indicator of milk quality and animal health. The 2024–25 provincial average of 172,322 cells/mL was 4.7 percent higher than the previous provincial average. This is the first increase in six years, ending a slow and steady decline in SCC values.



Bacteria counts (IBC) in raw milk are also used as an indicator of raw milk quality.

Alberta producers achieved a new record with a low yearly provincial average IBC of 16,741 cells/mL (down 2.3 percent). These low bacteria results continue the trend from 2023–24 and indicate the switch to PPP has influenced bacteria counts.



Congrats Buffalorock Farm!

Nestled in the scenic Mountain View County near Olds, Buffalorock Farm Ltd. stands as a testament to dedication, teamwork, innovation, and family-driven farming.

The Ridders moved from the Netherlands in 1998, embracing a new life, and building a legacy in Alberta’s dairy industry. Over the years, Buffalorock Farm has grown into a thriving operation with 200 cows, both milking and dry, housed in a freestall barn with sand bedding. The farm utilizes a 2 x 10 parallel parlour, ensuring efficient and comfortable milking practices. With a strong focus on cow comfort, environmental consciousness, and operational efficiency, the Ridders have

continually upgraded their facilities to reflect these values.

In 2018, Berend’s parents moved back to the Netherlands. Berend and Karin continued to farm, and their kids Sem, Mike, Ella, and Jace, have shown lots of interest in farming, whether it’s helping with the custom farming side of the business, or milking and taking care of the animals. Berend and Karin also have two full-time employees, Jeff and Hendrik, who are huge contributors to the overall daily operations and success.

Buffalorock Farm cultivates a variety of crops including corn, alfalfa, barley, and canola, integrating sustainable practices such as manure management to enrich the soil and support crop growth.

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A recent article was published in the Journal of Dairy Science Communications, explaining the results of how high or low immune responders fared against bird flu.

Here are excerpts of Semex’s press release:

"We're excited to announce that an article by Semex's Dr. Shannon Beard, Mark Carson, Dr. Michael Lohuis, Dr. Francesca Malchiodi, and Dr. Bonnie Mallard, showcasing the power of Immunity+® genetics to fight Bird Flu, was published in the latest issue of the Journal of Dairy Science Communications. This article, titled "High immune responder cows have lower treatment risk and reduced milk loss during highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 outbreaks," was so highly regarded that it is included in JDS Communication's Editor's Choice Collection.

This study evaluated whether genetic selection for improved immune response, using Immunity+ GEBVs, can increase resilience to HPAI H5N1 in commercial dairy herds. Treatment records and daily milk yield data were obtained from the herd management software for six large commercial dairy herds in the United States with confirmed HPAI H5N1 outbreaks.

It found that cows with high Immunity+ GEBVs were 24% less likely to require supportive treatment than those with low Immunity+ GEBVs. High-immunity cows also experienced significantly less milk loss during the post-treatment fluctuation period than low-immunity cows."

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Planning for Intergenerational Farm Transition Delay Does Not Help

Patrick O'Brien,
Senior Portfolio Manager & Wealth
Advisor, RBC Dominion Securities

On November 19, 2025, farmers from across the Fraser Valley gathered in Langley, BC, for a day of learning and connection. The focus? One of agriculture's most enduring challenges – how to successfully pass the farm from one generation to the next.

Shifting Realities in Farm Succession

In 1950, the average Canadian lived to just 68 years old. At that time, a 60-year-old farmer was often ready to hand over the reins, worn out from decades of hard work. Today, however, many farmers at 60 feel they are just hitting their stride – finally enjoying the vision they set out to achieve in their twenties.

“All speakers acknowledged a difficult reality: farm values have soared, but cash flow has not kept pace.

This shift, combined with rising farm values, modest cash flow, sibling expectations, and complex tax and legal systems, makes succession planning far more complicated. And when the dust settles, the older generation still needs a reliable, tax-efficient income stream to support retirement.



Expert Perspectives

The seminar featured insights from leading professionals. Matt Creechan and Laurel Thornton (KPMG Private Enterprise) shared tax-reducing tools to ease farm transfers, emphasizing that tax planning must follow

thoughtful family discussions about keeping the farm in the family, supporting retiring farmers, and maintaining harmony among farming and non-farming children.

Patrick O'Brien and Associate Advisor Thomas Bell (O'Brien Wealth Management Group of RBC Dominion Securities) offered their expertise. Patrick, a former dairy veterinarian turned wealth advisor two decades ago, highlighted the importance of creating pension-like income certainty for retiring farm couples. Thomas provided practical examples of the benefit of financial planning software and advice to ensure adequate retirement funds.

With over 30 years in the Fraser Valley farming community, Trevin Rogers (Baker Newby LLP) stressed the importance of codifying family agreements into legal frameworks. He noted that early involvement of younger family members – through age-appropriate responsibilities – helps prepare them to eventually run the farm independently.

Key Challenges

All speakers acknowledged a difficult reality: farm values have soared, but cash flow has not kept pace. This imbalance often results in an unequal distribution of wealth, favoring farming children if the farm is to continue as a successful business. For many families, the priority must be clear – ensuring the farm continues within the family while providing adequate retirement security for the older generation.

Practical Takeaways

The seminar concluded with a lively roundtable discussion, summarized in the following three guiding principles.

Start early by giving responsibility – Involve younger family members gradually to build skills and confidence.

Set clear goal posts – Define desired outcomes including a successful farm transition, secure retirement income, and family harmony. Recognize that non-farming children may not share equally in farm wealth.

Do it right – Work closely with trusted advisors to ensure plans are tax-efficient, legally sound, and reflective of family discussions.

While there are few quick, easy answers, there is a sound path to follow with capable advisors ready to assist.



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Please contact me to schedule your complimentary, no-obligation discussion at **604.467.5321**
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References are available.



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A Peek into the Past

R.W. HOLLIDAY, SALMON ARM'S CIVIC-MINDED DAIRYMAN

• Mike Yusko, BC Dairy Historical Society •
dihscurator@gmail.com www.bcdairyhistory.ca

Through my efforts to preserve BC Dairy History, I've uncovered a wealth of fascinating stories about lesser-known dairies that once operated throughout British Columbia. The following story is taken from the article "Token History. R.W. Holliday, Salmon Arm's civic-minded dairyman" by Denis Marshall, printed in the BC Historical News - Vol. 37 No. 3 Summer 2004.

In 2004, 90-year-old milk tokens were unearthed during excavation on a pioneer farm on the western fringe of Salmon Arm. The tokens were for Maple Leaf Dairy, owned by R.W. "Billy" Holliday. Billy was yet a teenager when he had the urge to see what Canada had to offer. He is believed to have arrived in the Shuswap Lake district from England as early as 1888. This would place him among the area's first white settlers. He wanted to own land and found employment in the fledgling local lumber industry, progressively acquiring the skills of a sawyer.

In 1892, twelve-year-old Anna Justine Laitinen experienced her first glimpse of Salmon Arm upon stepping down from a transcontinental CPR passenger train after a bewildering journey from

her native Finland with two siblings to join their widowed father, Gust Laitinen.

Gust Laitinen married again and became a much-respected citizen of Salmon Arm for championing the unfranchised and downtrodden. Sharing by nature, his favourite gift to hard-up farmers was a 100-pound sack of flour.

'Annie' Laitinen and Billy Holliday eloped to Vernon May 24, 1898, breaking the news of their marriage to family and friends in Salmon Arm by telegram. They took up residence at Kualt on Tappen Bay, Shuswap Lake, where the groom was holding down the sawyer's job at Joseph Genelle's sawmill. It was here the following year that the first of their six children was born.

Around 1905 the Hollidays purchased 30 acres of partly cleared land on 'Rotton Row' from C.B. Harris, one of Salmon Arm's earliest fruit producers. They proceeded to acquire a dairy herd. They established Maple Leaf Dairy, one of the first door-to-door milk routes in

the community.

By 1908, Maple Leaf Dairy was delivering milk and preparing to offer ice cream. With Salmon Arm's growing population, a retail store opened on Front Street in 1911 selling Maple Leaf products and other staples. After World War I began, the Hollidays set up an ice-cream parlour near Vernon Army Camp, serving trainees during the hot Okanagan summer.

At that time, Holliday told the Salmon Arm Observer he would provide free milk to families of married men serving in active duty from Salmon Arm.

In 1916, Billy, now 47 years old, felt the patriotic duty to join the war effort and enlisted in the Canadian Forestry Corps and hoped to go overseas in a non-combative role. Thus, Maudie, who was nearly seventeen years old, took charge of Holliday's Confectionery, as her mother - barely taller than a cream separator - managed a herd of twelve dairy cows and supervised the entire dairy operation.



Two generic eight-sided aluminum tokens issued by Maple Leaf Dairy have come to light, both Good for 1 Quart Milk.

Aileen Holliday Vanderbrug, who was seven years old when her father joined the military, fondly recounted in 2000 how her family handled their responsibilities while her father was away at war. "Mum would make ice cream on the farm using eggs and cream, and it tasted incredibly rich and delicious," she said. "My brothers Bob and Dick operated the small engine to churn five-gallon tubs."

R.W. Holliday, Sam McGuire and two other local men received special treatment on their return to Salmon Arm February 1, 1919. The town fathers urged the whole populace to rise in the wee hours to meet the homebound train.

It wasn't long before the decision was made to close Maple Leaf Dairy, but Holliday's Confectionery lasted well into the 1920s.

Holliday was known for his patriotism and community service, serving on both the rural school board and Salmon Arm city council. He was an alderman for one term in 1913 and a director of the B.C. Dairymen's Association in 1911.

After leaving his businesses, Holliday returned to the lumber industry. He became skilled at fixing high-speed circular mill saws, making him sought after across the province.

Barely into his 60s, Holliday was hit by a debilitating stroke and spent the rest of his days in poor health. Billy Holliday died in 1959 in Shaughnessy Military Hospital, having outlived his wife by three years.

Holliday's ice cream parlour on Front Street in 1913.



R.W. Holliday, his two girls and a friend on an automobile excursion Salmon Arm, BC, 1910. Salmon Arm Museum & Archives photo



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Weeksdale Holsteins, PE & T. Carter, IL

Congratulations

...to all Western Canadian breeders and exhibitors who received nominations in this year's All-Canadian contest. Since 1942, the prestige associated with winning All-Canadian has held steady as it celebrates top Holsteins. Breeders and exhibitors in the west earned 11 nominations collectively, highlighting their 2025 success!

ALSO NOMINATED BLACK & WHITE HOLSTEINS

- WINTER YEARLING IN MILK
WEDGWOOD BLAKELY REBEL**
Breeder & Exhibitor:
Wedgwood Holsteins, BC
- SUMMER 2 YEAR OLD
KINGSWAY EYE CANDY TENNESSEE**
Breeder: Kingsway Farms, ON
Exhibitor: T&L Cattle, BC
& Kingsway Farms, ON
- SPRING 2 YEAR OLD
WEEKSDALE JURY ADDICTION**
Breeder: Weeksdale Holsteins, PE
Exhibitor: T&L Cattle, BC &
Weeksdale Holsteins, PE
- JUNIOR 3 YEAR OLD
ARWAY SIDEKICK LIDIE**
Breeder: Arway Farms, ON
Exhibitor: R&F Livestock, SK
& Walker Dairy, ON

4 YEAR OLD JENDRO DELTA LAMBDA SANDY

Breeder: Ferme Jendro, QC
Exhibitor: R&F Livestock, SK
& Walker Dairy, ON

MATURE COW WENDON SOLOMON ALBY

Breeder & Exhibitor: Wendon Holsteins, AB

LONGTIME PRODUCTION WEDGWOOD DEMPSEY CELLIA

Breeder: Stanhope-Wedgwood, BC
& Morsan Farms, AB
Exhibitor: Stanhope-Wedgwood, BC
& Crestomere Holsteins, AB

BREEDERS HERD Wendon Holsteins, AB

ALSO NOMINATED RED & WHITE HOLSTEINS

- R&W FALL HEIFER
MS BELIEVE ITS TRU-RED**
Breeder: MilkSource, Fischer,
Steinhagen & Crescentmead, WI
Exhibitor: Westcoast Holsteins, BC

**R&W SUMMER YEARLING
MOSNANG HAVE TOO GO SHOW**
Breeder: Mosnang Holsteins, AB
Exhibitor: Mosnang Holsteins, AB
& Lin-Den Holsteins, SK

Lots of Machinery, Kids and Smiles at the Pacific Ag Show

The Pacific Ag Show has been bringing together farming people for 28 years! You get to meet old friends and share the awesome machinery technologies with your families! Having a fun day out with your kids is important to balance the work days.



- 1 - Island boys tractor shopping. (L-R) Hank & Caleb Durrance, Mack & Connor Cuthbert.
- 2 - (L-R) Noah Arends, Dominic Dykman and Mara Arends, on sale for \$24,900.
- 3 - Eco Farm's Vicki the Cow gave a lot of hugs to little ones as Annabelle managed traffic.
- 4- Jared DeJong inspected a new Deutz-Fahr tractor with two of the fam.
- 5 - Oeds Smid and Mike Dykshoorn catch up, while impeding traffic!
- 6- (L-R) The Senators of Ritchie Smith. Earl (retired), Peter (nearly retired), Norm (retiring this summer). You will all be missed!
- 7 - Bob Brandsma (Make a Difference Sale Ambassador) and Matt DeJong sharing a moment.



Are You (and Your Calves) Ready For It?

Part 1: Planning for Social Housing



Kinder Ground
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Jennifer Walker, DVM, Ph. D., Co-founder,
Chief Animal Welfare Officer Kinder Ground

PRESENTING PART 1 OF 2.

Next issue, Dr. Jen will discuss considerations to help you decide between housing in pairs or groups, and how to manage that.

It should not be new news that *effective April 1, 2031, calves raised indoors must be housed in pairs or groups (social housing) by four weeks of age.* When done well, social housing, indoors or out, has multiple upsides for you and your calves – including raising cattle that adapt better to new situations throughout their lives. There are lots of resources and folks with experience managing social housing, such as my favourite, Dr. Jennifer Van Os at UW-Madison (*Pair or group housing of dairy calves – Animal Welfare Science @ UW-Madison* https://animalwelfare.cals.wisc.edu/calf_pairing/)

Here is my advice on managing the transition to social calf housing based on my experience with farmers and my digestion of the research.

The most important advice is to remember change is hard; even harder when you care deeply about the outcome. And when your calf program has consistently been producing healthy calves, I get “*If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.*” We adopted practices and systems that made sense at the time. Individual housing was our way of protecting each calf’s health. We’ve learned a lot over the years, and we know there are ways we can do better for the calf. Nevertheless, the concern for health is genuine, and respecting this, I suggest a deliberate, careful transition, one step at a time.



Calves are programmed to suck 30-60 minutes a day. Feeding long hay early helps to provide a better outlet for nursing behaviours that might go to cross-sucking.

Step 1: Feed them to thrive, not just survive.

There was a time when feeding 10% of body weight (4 litres/day) was an industry standard – based on efficiency and managing apparent ‘scours.’ Today, we understand calves perform better in all environments when they are **fed to thrive**. Farms have been quickly adopting 8-10 litres/day (more in winter) with impressive results! Beyond the obvious physical improvements, these calves are healthier and will outperform when they reach the milking herd sooner.

Getting comfortable with Step 1 is critical to managing social housing. Feeding more milk will ultimately result in more loose stools – but this is not automatically a sign of illness requiring treatment. It will take time to build confidence in the new feeding rates and to adjust to this ‘new normal.’

Step 2: Slower is better

When calves are raised by their dams (like beef calves) they feed multiple times a day – smaller meals and lots of udder-time. Calves were not meant to inhale a gallon of milk in three minutes! Aggressive pail consumption can lead to some milk spilling into the lungs, setting up conditions for respiratory disease.

Automatic feeders are great at allowing multiple smaller feedings a day, but meals should be large enough to allow the calf to feel satisfied. I personally prefer bottles using slow flow nipples, if possible, fed three times a day. This improves digestion, minimizing the chance of digestive upsets or calves refusing to drink all their meal. If bottles aren’t possible, using nipple buckets can help slow calves down. Nipples should be checked and replaced if there is more than an occasional drip when held in position to avoid aspiration which can lead to pneumonia.

Step 3: Preventing cross-sucking

It turns out calves are going to spend 30-60 minutes a day sucking on something no matter how much milk you feed or how you feed it. If you feed milk in buckets, they spend less than five minutes a day sucking. When fed with bottles or nipple buckets using slow flow nipples you can double that. Leaving nipples in place for 5-10 minutes before being removed for cleaning may add to that, but it is not enough.

To minimize cross-sucking we need to provide an outlet for the behaviour. Long-stem hay is a great outlet for their nursing energy. Calves will begin exploring and eating small amounts of hay on day one. Feeding hay also has the benefit of increasing starter intake and it may improve fecal consistency.

If you’re preparing for a transition to social housing, now is the time to start the process. Taking it one step at a time will improve your chances of a smooth transition and allow you to figure out what type of system works best for you and your farm system. I personally have enjoyed watching farms discover the benefits of social housing; employees sharing with me stories of calves forming lifelong bonds that seem to help them navigate the changes natural in every dairy system. In the words of one calf manager, “Everybody needs a buddy.”

Make sure to check back for Part 2 where we will review housing options. Until then, invite your veterinarian to take a walk through your calves with your calf care manager and take a closer look at how you are doing today, so you can begin to imagine what success looks like.

Change is hard, but it is a lot more fun and manageable when it is a team effort.



Calves are meant to nurse – smaller meals more frequently are preferable. Slower nipple feeding reduces risk of milk aspiration while also satisfying the nursing behaviours by taking longer.

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‘Gap Between Polled and Optimal Achievements Getting Smaller.’

How much attention is polled receiving in AI programs world-wide?

Especially in Europe, the advance of polled continues at a rapid tempo. At the top of lists, more and more often we are finding P and PP sires, who are being used on an increasingly broader scale by dairy farmers. In North America, the zeal was initially clearly less, but thanks to the breakthrough of elite transmitters like Luster-P and Remover-PP, attention here is also increasing. How diligently are AI companies world-wide working on polled for their breeding programs? HI conducted the research.

JAN BIERMA CHRISTINE MASSFELLER

‘Polled is a key component in our program and we are using the gene wherever possible. But: the bulls and donors must have competitive indexes. We have been fortunate to have already been able to use a few strong polled sires – both in the past and now – so we currently see more and more polled genes in the populations with which we work. But as with everything: sires need to be competitive, because a bull will not sell just because he is polled.’ Speaking is Hendrik Albada on behalf of the British breeding program Genus. The comments of Ryan Starkenburg from Genus’ daughter company ABS Global are in line with them: ‘For generations already, we have been intensively involved with polled breeding. It is a trait that ABS emphasizes, and we have opted for the long-term approach by introducing the gene in all of our significant bloodlines. As a result, at the same time we maintain diversity.’ Also Dan Carroll from STg draws attention to the importance of polled: ‘For polled, STg continues to strive in the direction of homozygous polled (PP). The next generation of PP sires that are born will include a group of bulls that can compete very well with horned sires. We know that heterozygous polled is no guarantee for a polled calf. Dairy farms that use polled due to the ease of not having to dehorn calves, want homozygous polled, while not sacrificing other traits. The gap between polled while also realizing optimal achievements is getting smaller.’

‘VERY IMPORTANT’

Germany is one of the absolute “polled pioneers” because society, and thus the market, clearly demands it. Listen for a moment to representatives from German AI companies. ‘Polled is very important for us, especially creating PP sires (homozygous polled). This is one of the future markets in Germany,’ emphasizes Hartwig Meinikmann on behalf of Phönix. The same perspective is held by Bernd Koch from Qnetics: ‘Polled is very important, since farms in the



Many AI companies indicate: especially homozygous polled (PP) sires hold the future. This is Brandy-PP from RUW/Phönix, a Brandung son out of a VG-85 Builder daughter: Good for 138 gRZG and 128 gRZE.

eastern part of Germany prefer to use PP sires. For that reason, we have numerous PP sires in our line-up.’ Polled is also significant for the German-

Currently more than 50% of our matings involve a polled sire or dam, or both.’ Also OHG (Osnabrück) finds polled important ‘In recent years, 25-30%

important, as we hear from KI Kampen: ‘Polled sires certainly have an advantage when being launched. Right now, we are striving to launch five PP sires annually. In coming years, this number will grow because there is a lot of demand from the field, the genetic level is increasing, and it is more animal friendly and labour efficient.’ Similar is the opinion of the Dutch CRV, as we hear from Marcel Fox: ‘Polled is becoming increasingly important in our selection process; currently about 60% of our sires of sons are polled.’ Gerard Scheepens from KI Samen confirms that polled is important and necessary, but... that it is also challenging.

‘Sires need to be competitive, because a bull will not sell just because he is polled.’

- Hendrik Albada, Genus/ABS

French organization Synetics, reports Nicolas Agache on behalf of Synetics: ‘Polled is very important, and demand continues to increase.

of our black & white lineup consisted of polled sires, while for red & white, it was nearly 50%. In neighbouring Netherlands, polled is also



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‘LOW PRIORITY’

Is polled intensely important everywhere? Interesting is the statement by Robert Derksen from Genetics Australia: ‘The market for polled sires on dairy farms in Australia continues to grow, although it is still limited. Especially from Europe, we see growing demand for polled, but in countries where labour is easily available, polled does not seem as important right now.’ In New Zealand, there is growing attention for polled: ‘We strive for 10% polled sires,’ says Simon Worth from LIC. Andrzej Baeher from WCHIRZ in Poland reports: ‘We have just one polled sire in our lineup. In general, our customers do not ask for polled.’ Kelly Song from Direct Global Genetics (US) notes: ‘We consider polled sires, but it is not a priority.’ The same is the case at RuAnn Genetics, according to Patrick Maddox: ‘Polled has low priority; we have had a few polled sires, and next year we’ll have more.’ Radical is the response from Wout VanderGoot at Global Alliance: ‘We tried polled for a while, and it turned out that none of the commercial dairy farmers

paid attention to it. So I don’t do anything with it anymore; a waste of our time and genetics.’ Michael Schmitt from Peak displays caution: ‘Polled selection continues to be evaluated, but it is has a lower priority compared to the selection

safe way. Our focus is on longevity in combination with lots of fat and protein.’ Surprising is the polled influence at Triple-Hil Sires. Even though Jared Martin says polled is not a necessity, 50-70% (!) of their young sires are polled.

‘Polled is very important for us, especially creating PP sires (homozygous polled).’

- Hartwig Meinikmann, Phönix

of horned sires. Unless polled sires reach the same genetic level as horned sires, polled will have a lower priority in our program, since right now, dairy farmers are not prepared to sacrifice genetic gains for this trait.’ A similar response is provided by Ben Masemore from NoBull Sires: ‘We value polled, but not at the expense of production or physical limitations. The future is clearly polled, but if we transition into that segment, we will do so in a

‘ADMIRER’

However, even though, for example, 10% of the breeding program at Select Sires is polled, and Blondin Sires also states that they are certainly looking at polled – clearly the polled priority is lower in North America than in Europe. Opinions from Europe seem to be much more pertinent; just listen for a moment to Hanna Driscoll from VikingGenetics: ‘Polled is important as there is high demand from

our dairy farmers in Scandinavia.’ And from Spain, Carlos Ugarte at Aberekin reports: ‘The demand for polled is growing by the month. We need to conclude that polled sires are admired by our dairy farmers – both for Holsteins and other breeds. That also turns out to be the case at Semex, as Carl Barclay shares: ‘We are doing a lot of work in the area of polled. Usually we use polled donors, in order to create PP sires.’ Right: the future direction towards PP sires is essential, as also pointed out by Swissgenetics and Showbox Sires: ‘We much prefer PP sires in our lineup.’ We conclude with comments from the young American AI (United) and from one of the world’s oldest AI companies (Wölsau). On behalf of United, Mitch Amundson says: ‘Elite polled genetics have been a topic since the formation of our company. We have a deep female population that offers us possibilities.’ Marten Hambruch from Wölsau in closing: ‘The polled gene is very important to us. We see polled genetics as a very important factor in the future marketability of cattle semen.’ ●



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MMP Hear Updates on Flood, Trade and Managing HR

Mainland Milk Producers AGM, January 9, 2026

Tars Cheema

At last year’s MMP AGM, the topic of HPAI and its devastation in California dairy herds dominated the event. This year, discussions related to the Sumas Prairie flood event a month earlier were first up, with Abbotsford Mayor Ross Siemens’ address.

Taking a much different road, this year’s keynote speaker was a local author and human resources coach delivering sound guidance on working with varied staff.

Beyond the regular reports, retired BCMMB Director David Janssens delivered an inspiring address.

The Flood

Abbotsford Mayor Ross Siemens, whose in-laws are dairy producers, described the challenges of the Nooksack River spilling its banks, flowing north of the border, causing 1000 properties to be ‘on evacuation notice’ and 500 to be evacuated. While damage wasn’t as bad overall compared to 2021, it was “horrific for some farmers on the west side,” he stated. New attention has been gained from both provincial and federal representatives, he said. “Agriculture remains a vital part of our economy, and this prairie provides over 50% of some of our dairy and poultry products provincially,” he conveyed, knowing the importance

of making progress to protect the land. “Having the dairy industry behind us when we advocate to government is really important,” he emphasized.

The Business

Mainland Milk Producers’ Chair, Brian Janzen delivered his Board report, thanking WestGen, where they held director meetings, saving on their budget. Directors were actively engaged in dairy policy issues – Michael Haan on the Quota Exchange Committee and Ron Kooyman and Nigel Vandenbrink on the Transportation Advisory Committee. Another key accomplishment was providing a letter of support from the MMP for the protection of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

2026 Election Results:

Brian Janzen Casey Pruim
Jeff Kooyman Les Neels - new
Nigel Vandenbrink
Rudi Meier - new

Brian thanked outgoing directors – Rebecca Senicar, Michael Haan and Alfred Vandenbrink.

Michael Haan’s final Treasurer’s report

highlighted several key elements. Some expenses were up slightly such as administrative/office expenses, elections cost (two years rolled into one – just this time). Other expenses dropped – such as director meetings being held at WestGen and lower Ag Gala sponsorship. Overall, the organization finished in a strong financial position, ahead of 23/24 by a good margin.

Actual expenses came in well-under budget for several reasons, including no directors attended DFC meetings, Ag in the Classroom projects concluded, MYMP expenses were down and no producer meetings were held.

The proposed budget includes more Dairy Promo funds and more for MYMP than spent last year.

The Power of People Skills

Trevor Throness described himself as more a coach than a professional speaker, but his human resources guidance was entertaining, engaging and pleasantly practical!

We will present his summary in our next issue.



Longtime dairy industry leader, David Janssens retired from the BCMMB last spring and delivered an inspiring speech to the attendees, encouraging involvement!
Read his comments on page 19.

WestGen Update

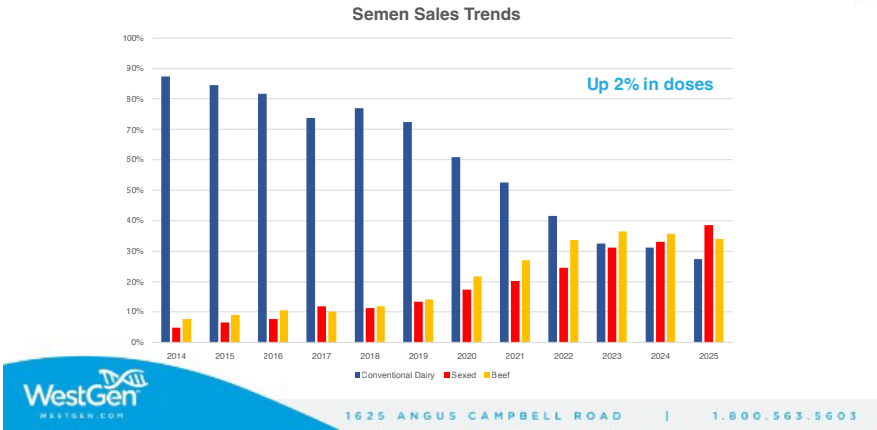
WestGen’s Paul Meyer shared that 2025 ended with semen doses up 2% across the western provinces, following on the heels of a 4% increase the previous year. “This is the first year where the largest doses category was sexed semen and where beef sales declined a little,” Paul explained the bar graph. The transition suggests producers are adjusting towards making more replacements, perhaps in response to the calls for growing milk demand in the near future. In BC specifically, sales have grown 4% in each of the last two years.

Paul spoke of the uptake of genetic planning tools such as Optimate which he says are a key to driving herd profitability. The current tools permit customized indexes and allow producers to “drive their own plan” quicker than general indexes like LPI.

More producers are utilizing genomic testing, “Elevate saw a 20% increase last year...it’s become a mainstream tool,” Paul said.

Management technology also showed a strong uptick with the SenseHub monitoring system jumping 127% over 2024! This eartag tech for both cows and youngstock monitors heats, health and more, for quick management intervention and proactive precise monitoring.

SHIFT IN MARKET DEMANDS



WestGen Endowment Fund has invested over \$2.885M to date across the western dairy and beef sectors since being established in 2004. It continues to support youth development (4-H, WestGen Canadian Classic), applied research (M. bovis and S. Dublin tests at KPU) and more with other research partners.

Upcoming events include the WestGen AGM on March 14, and the ‘Best in the West’ display from April 14-18 in the ARC facility in Abbotsford, where producers are invited to showcase their top Holstein genetics for the influx of National Holstein Convention attendees.



Abbotsford Mayor Ross Siemens explained that more concerted government dialogue has resulted from the December flood in Sumas Prairie.

MYMP Update

The current Chair of Mainland Young Milk Producers, Anton Schmidt explained their primary purpose is to help develop future dairy leaders for the industry by providing educational and social events for young producers through the mainland. “We plan our own professional development sessions with banks, the Milk Board and other allied trades,” he said. It presents excellent development opportunities to learn about the complex functions of the industry and how boards function. Two new directors were elected at their Winter Gala in December – Ryan Meier and Thomas Meier.

MYMP Directors

Anton Schmidt Alyssa Vanderkooi Alicia Postma
Dan Huizing Kevin Werner Noah Driesen
Alex Schwichtenberg Ryan Meier Thomas Meier

He thanked outgoing directors Bryce Tuytel and Justin Kloot.

Anton wrapped up with a quick acknowledgement to Mainland for their financial support and to the many companies who also sponsor over the year.



MMP Chair Brian Janzen kept the meeting moving.

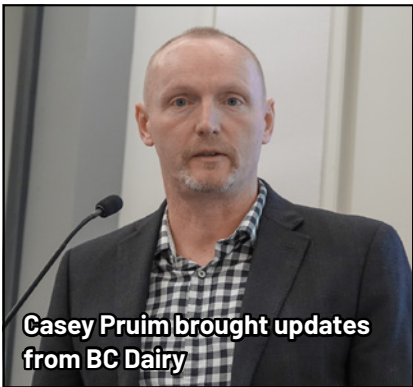
BC Dairy Update

BC Dairy’s Chair, Casey Pruim presented a short update on several items, beginning with the ‘trade file’ saying, “Nobody knows where this is going, the situation would be volatile at best,” he acknowledged honestly. “We have people in the right places, talking to the right people as much as we can.” BC Dairy and DFC will be taking the time to educate key individuals regarding the impacts of any trade decisions. Strengthening the trust and value of Canadian Dairy to the public will be a parallel strategy.

On the Flood File, Casey expressed frustration over the lack of involvement from the federal government previously, sharing the

concerns of City of Abbotsford whom they will continue to work with. “As bad as the flood situation was, the staff at BC Dairy... they did a phenomenal job, they have a ton of respect from the city and the other emergency management people. They punched way above their weight,” Casey praised Morgan, Dylan and other staff on the front lines. “Staff spent most of December dealing with the flood and working ‘farmer hours’ – they weren’t leaving at 5 o’clock.”

Casey’s DFC update identified the improved collaboration with the provinces over the last six months, a result of a new leadership team, culminating in the hiring of Annie AcMoody. “We are looking forward to a more positive working relationship between DFC and the provinces,” he concluded.



Casey Pruim brought updates from BC Dairy

Jersey Canada News



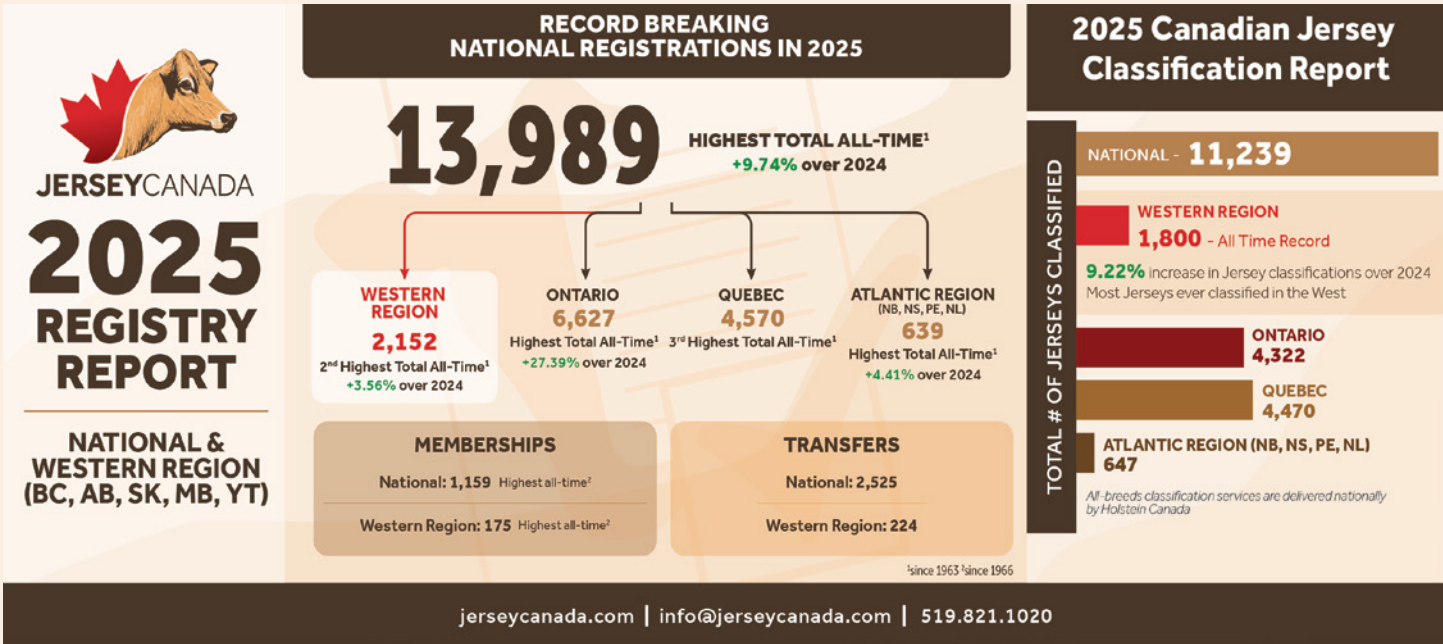
The Jersey Breed: Continually Trending Upward

Jacob Lucs, General Manager, Jersey Canada

2025 registrations of Jerseys in Canada broke records for the second year running, with 13,989 Jerseys entered into the Canadian herdbook, nearly 10% more than in 2024. This is the highest total in the “modern era,” (i.e. since 1963 and prior to supply management), and these registry numbers continue a trend that has seen Canadian Jersey registrations increasing steadily at nearly 4% on average, per year, since 2001. This has led to an increase in the percentage of Jerseys as part of the national dairy herd by over 2%, now at nearly 5% of all dairy cattle registered in 2024, a number not seen since the early 1970s.

The breed expansion has taken place over a period that has seen significant changes in the dairy industry, consumer trends, and the wider Canadian economy including: the advent of genomics, advances in on-farm technology including the introduction of robotic milking systems (now found on almost 20% of all dairy farms in Canada and 33% of Western dairy farms), fewer farms, larger herds and more efficient cows, the steady decline of fluid milk consumption and shift to component demand, two recessions and a pandemic. Through collaboration at all levels, our industry has been able to weather unexpected adversity, while also increasing productivity and value for Canadians.

Looking ahead, the increase in the Jersey population offers producers and partners opportunities for continued growth using breed improvement tools. In 2025, Jersey Canada recorded 3,695 parentage results, and in the last 10 years genomic testing of registered Jerseys has climbed from less than 5% to more than 25% of new registrations. During that same time, the number of official milk-records for the breed increased by 1% per year and classifications have increased by 3% per year. These services provide valuable, reliable data that benefits everyone, data which would not be available without the contributions and commitment of Canadian dairy producers.



VetFocus

Practical Interpretation and Use of Mastitis Culture Results

Dr. Kiri Stephenson, DVM,
Greenbelt Veterinary Services

Veterinarians often recommend regular milk culturing of clinical mastitis cases and high somatic cell count (SCC) cows to monitor for significant and/or contagious mastitis pathogens. Identification of the specific mastitis pathogens is useful to determine the likelihood of treatment success and for development of prevention and control programs.

As more animal health laboratories routinely use advanced bacteriological techniques when culturing, you might notice more unfamiliar results, and ask yourself: “What is this organism and what should I do about it?”

To help your decision-making, here is a guide to culture results.

- **No growth**
 - Indicates pathogen has been killed or is not grown effectively by regular culture
 - Generally no treatment is required; if severe, supportive care should be provided
- **Contaminated (more than 2-3 pathogens per sample)**
 - Generally no treatment is required; if severe, supportive care should be provided
 - If milk remains abnormal or CMT-positive, consider re-sampling following sterile technique

Environmental (non-contagious) pathogens	
Name	Treatment
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (<i>E. coli</i> – non-hemolytic) <i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i>	• If severe, systemic antibiotics with supportive care; consider implementing vaccination protocols to reduce severity • Chronic infections do not respond to treatment
<i>Streptococcus uberis</i>	• Intramammary antibiotics, with supportive care if deemed necessary
Environmental <i>Streptococcus</i> pathogens (<i>Enterococcus/Aerococcus/Lactococcus</i>), <i>Acinetobacter</i> , <i>Psychrobacter</i>	• At first diagnosis if severe, intramammary antibiotics • If chronic/recurring infection, only provide supportive care and consider culling as antibiotics are likely ineffective
<i>Serratia</i> , <i>Truperella pyogenes</i> , <i>Proteus</i> , fungi (<i>Pichia</i> , etc.), yeasts (<i>Candida</i> , <i>Diutina</i> , <i>Kluyveromyces</i> , etc.)	• If severe, provide supportive care • If chronic, cull (no specific treatment options)
<i>Bacillus</i> , <i>Pseudomonas</i>	• Often need supportive care, and if septic require systemic antibiotics • If chronic, cull

Contagious Pathogens	
Name	Treatment
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	• At first diagnosis of a mastitis case in a good cow, less than 3 lactations and less than 90 days in milk, can try extended intramammary antibiotics (refer to your herd veterinarian’s recommendations), however cure success is poor; slightly improved treatment success during dry period. • If chronic/recurring infections, cull promptly or dry off quarter
<i>Streptococcus dysgalactiae</i>	• Intramammary antibiotics
<i>Streptococcus agalactiae</i>	• Rare & highly contagious, intramammary antibiotics
<i>Corynebacterium</i>	• At first diagnosis, intramammary antibiotics and supportive care as needed (may cure in the dry period). • If chronic/recurring, cull
<i>Pasteurella</i>	• Supportive care often needed, and if septic requires systemic antibiotics • If chronic, cull
<i>Mycoplasma</i>	• Unlikely to be diagnosed in a routine milk culture due to specific culturing techniques required; usually detect with PCR testings • No treatment, cull

Environmental & Contagious Pathogens	
Non-aureus <i>Staphylococcus</i> (<i>Staphylococcus hemolyticus/hominis</i> , etc.)	• If severe, intramammary antibiotics
<i>Prototheca</i> (algae)	• No effective treatment available, cull



Mastitis Pathogens:
Mastitis pathogens are categorized based on the primary source of infection. For environmental pathogens the source of infection is the environment. For contagious pathogens the source of infection is other infected animals.

At the time of clinical mastitis diagnosis and sampling, you should examine the cow to determine the severity of infection and investigate her past mastitis history. Consider also your farm’s overall mastitis history from previous cultures, which indicate common pathogens in your herd. In combination, this information will guide your treatment plan in consultation with your herd veterinarian.

Generalized Mastitis Treatments:
Develop and use treatment protocols following the guidance of your herd veterinarian and ensure you follow withdrawal times.

- **No Treatment** involves continued milking, including the affected quarter(s), while monitoring an otherwise normal cow. Regular milking is a mainstay of mastitis management (while following careful cleanliness protocols and dumping affected milk) regardless of other treatments used.
- **Intramammary Antibiotics** (up the quarter treatment) uses one of two lactating cow products following milking-out of the affected quarter(s) as per your veterinary prescription. This is a typical step when a new mastitis case is diagnosed while awaiting culture results; however, consider your farm’s history and the cow’s clinical status when deciding on treatment without culture results.
- **Supportive Care** uses oral drenches, and/or anti-inflammatories to provide hydration and pain/fever management. This should be used for any cattle who are systemically unwell regardless of sample results.
- **Systemic Antibiotics** (injectable treatment) uses antibiotics for clinically ill animals with mastitis, typically with injectable anti-inflammatories given simultaneously.
- **Culling** should be used in cases of chronic infections or mastitis infections that are not susceptible to the available treatment options. Chronic contagious mastitis cows should be milked in a manner which reduces risk of infection to other cattle (last to milk, separate group, etc.) before they are culled from the herd.



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Lactanet Celebrates 2025 Success, While Looking Ahead

Amanda Poelman

Lactanet held its final Open Industry Session of 2025 on October 22nd. CEO Neil Petreny provided a corporate update highlighting the achievements of the past year and shared initiatives that the organization looks forward to in 2026. In the area of Milk Recording, the Lactanet app has been successful, offered as part of Lactanet's basic milk recording service plan, and continues to provide information to customers quickly. Neil noted that robotic milking growth has continued in 2025, seeing an increase of 3-4%. This is especially true in Western Canada, where 1-in-3 cows are milked in a robotic facility, including 52% of farms in Manitoba.

On the Genetic Services side, Lactanet released its modernized LPI formula in April, adding two new subindexes related to sustainability: **Environmental Impact and Milkability**. Calf Health traits were introduced in August for Holstein, with full inclusion into the Health & Wellness subindex planned for 2026. In October, Lactanet also started providing monthly evaluations for Canadian females, and the 10-year anniversary of the Pro\$ index was also celebrated this year.

Industry partnerships with Dairy Farmers of Canada saw the launch of the Canadian Dairy Hub – a website dedicated to bringing practical science-based research directly to the producer. The site is filled with fact sheets and webinars on a wide variety of topics under four main umbrellas: environmental sustainability, animal welfare, animal health, and herd management.

Looking ahead to 2026, customers can expect to see the Transition Management Index (TMI) offered, which looks at how animals move from one lactation to another and uses genetic indexes to monitor deviations. *FeedComp* will also be available, a tool that works with DairyComp software and offers precision feeding guidance, and herd and feed insights for producers. Customers can expect more data collection for the crampy trait, as well as milking speed for robots, and more genetic information available on the mobile app. The Lactanet board will also be doing a deep dive into a 2028 strategic plan, highlighting what producers can expect from the company over the next three years.

Dairy Industry Distinction Award

In September, Dr. Gerrit Kistemaker was recognized posthumously at the Dairy Cattle Industry Forum as the recipient of the 2025 Dairy Industry Distinction Award. Born and raised in the Netherlands, Dr. Kistemaker earned his PhD in Animal Breeding and Genetics at the University of Guelph. In 1999, he became the Chief Geneticist at CDN, a role he held for 25 years. He was responsible for the delivery of 83 official genetic evaluation releases and was actively involved in the creation of the Pro\$, Feed Efficiency, and Methane Efficiency indexes. According to past Chief Services Officer, Brian Van Doormaal, Dr. Kistemaker's greatest accomplishment was the introduction of genomic evaluations, which officially launched in August 2009. He was an active member of the Genetic Evaluation Board for his entire career and was also an inaugural member of the Interbull Technical Committee internationally.

Presentations and Project Updates

Updates were given on the progress of the partnership between Canada and Switzerland on Methane Efficiency evaluations. Since Switzerland uses the same methods of testing (MIR from FOSS spectrometers) as Canada, and since many of the bulls and pedigrees overlap, collaboration between the two countries is beneficial. As study of the changes in the evaluation continues, a switch to the two-country genetic evaluation is planned for April 2026.

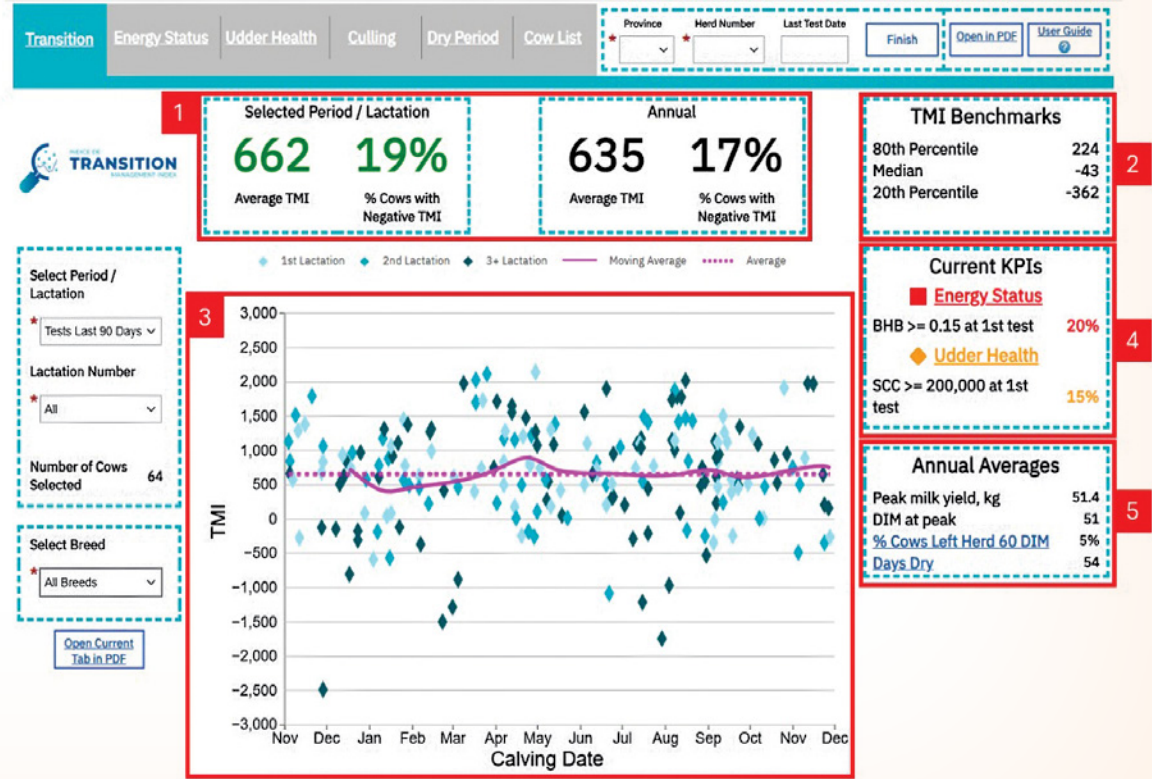


Other topics included *Detecting Detrimental Genetics in the Canadian Dairy Herd* (Dr. Christine Baes, University of Guelph), *Monthly Evaluations for Canadian Females* (Peter Sullivan, Senior Geneticist & Genetic Systems Leader), *Sexed Semen Fertility Update* (Brian Van Doormaal, Chief Services Officer), and *Current Initiatives Related to Genetic Evaluation Services* (Dr. Allison Flemming, Manager of Genetic Evaluation Services), which covered the incoming Calf Health index into the LPI formula, the addition of the Subclinical Ketosis index for smaller dairy population breeds, the use of robot data for the Milking Efficiency index, and the collection of on-farm crampy data.

Robots

- Growing 3-4% annually
- 1,152 Herds (21%)
- 150,000 cows (26%)
- 130 average cows/herd
- 17-52% by province
- 37% Western avg (52% MB)

All the information for these presentations, as well as previous Open Industry sessions, can be found on Lactanet's website, under the 'Genetics' tab. The next Open Industry Session will be held on February 25, 2026!



The Transition Management Index (TMI) tracks how animals move between lactations and has been officially launched in Canada.

Observations From the Field



Paul Meyer,
WestGen
Genetic Solutions Manager

Multiplying your Best Females

We are still in that alternate reality where the birth of a beef-cross calf can generate more excitement than a Holstein heifer, but we can see the day coming when good dairy replacements will be coveted in a similar way. It is hard right now to compete with a week old black-hided calf that someone will gladly pick up from your farm, and for what a few years ago would have been

thought of as an unfathomable price. While that isn't likely to happen for week old Holstein females, we do envision that Holstein replacements ready to go to work could fetch similarly unfathomable prices in a few years. It could well become our next alternate reality if there simply are not sufficient females to produce the needed milk.

But this isn't just a message about making sure to calculate correctly how many replacements you need to make – or to develop a plan for where you will get them if you have decided to just continue to clip coupons at a week of age while the high beef prices last. You see, we know that in the years to come just about any milking replacement will be worth a lot of money, but those that choose to

make the best heifers possible will have a significant competitive advantage over those that take a different path.

then compares actual dollars per day of life for those quartiles. It confirms in herd after herd that the top 25% outperforms

“Rather than become dependent on the high dairy-beef windfall I would submit that investing some of that money while it lasts into your replacement improvement plan would be a very prudent strategy.

Some of you have heard me bore folks at seminars about the magical “quartile report” that groups 1st lactation cows into quartiles by their LPI or Pro\$ values and

the bottom 25% by a wide margin – often to the tune of around \$1/day of life for 1st lactation animals, meaning nearly a

Continued on next page ➡

\$1000 revenue difference per animal between the top vs bottom 25% groups by the end of 1st lactation. **The clear message is that while costs are the same to raise average heifers versus top shelf females, performance and ROI time-and-again favours the top genetic group on farms.** Average cows also take up a stall in the barn and require the same labour for care and milking as the high performers. So, if you can accurately predict which ones will make you more money while they are still in calf hutches, why wouldn't that become a key strategic planning piece for all farms? There will always be a bottom 25% but by strategically making more top 25%-kind-of animals, in effect you will change "average" significantly and accelerate overall genetic progress.

To be fair, there are many, many producers who are already believers. They carefully plan who gets sexed semen to purposefully produce the next generation of replacements versus who gets beef semen. More and more of these producers are benchmarking genetic gains in calf crop over yearlings and yearlings over 1st lactation. They know that higher genetic averages result in more revenue too. Not surprisingly, many of these farms use genomic testing to increase the reliability of the numbers and they also use the genomic results to identify outlier females that deserve IVF or embryo transplant investment in order to make a disproportionate number that would in effect, fit into not just the top 25%, but top 1%. Applying this nucleus theory is not really a theory at all at this point – it works.

As we move into an era where top end females will drive the competitiveness in our herds and especially at a time when our selection goal – the emphasis on Protein versus Fat yield – is changing; the idea to concentrate the progeny creation on the elite females in the herd for that future breeding goal can be a very profitable focus. The term 'profitable strategy' is important because we know these are still lean years. Rather than become dependant on the high dairy-beef windfall I would submit that investing some of that money while it lasts into your replacement improvement plan would be a very prudent strategy.

Farmers are so very good at shaving small amounts from the cost side of the business. That's a good thing and a necessary approach to running an efficient business. Still, remember that your replacement pens contain your dairy future and those replacements are not created as equals. Investing a small percentage of the overall replacement rearing cost into making the very best ones will pay off in a big way. Over their lifetime your best genetic quartile of females (identified by either LPI or Pro\$) will outproduce the bottom quartile by over \$3 per day of life providing about \$5,000 more revenue with very little additional cost than your bottom quartile females. It is real and your own DC305 farm data will prove this. Anything you do strategically to make more of those top quartile kind will be a key to ensuring your farm stays above average for performance and profitability.

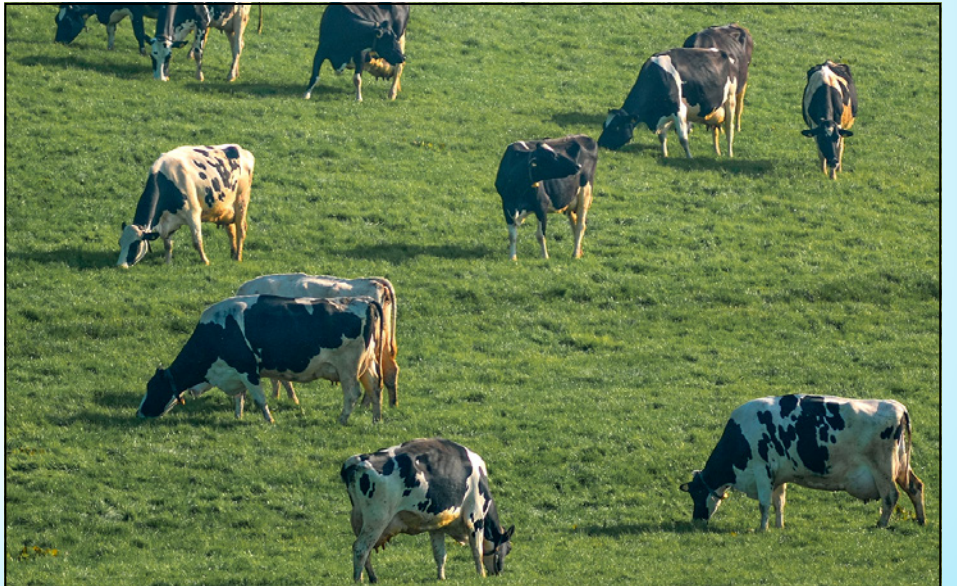
What are the keys to making better females for your future?

1. Create an index with your genetic advisor that reflects where the genetic emphasis needs to be placed for the future – most importantly weighting Protein yield higher than we have been relative to the emphasis on Fat yield.
2. Stratify your herd to identify your females that already rank well on that same index you use to select your bulls and prioritize making replacements from these females
3. Focus on your reproduction plan. No genetic strategy will work unless you have good and maybe even excellent reproductive results. Some of your peers are achieving a 30% preg rate. It is possible and this is an important piece to a successful genetic plan.
4. Superior repro results allow for an aggressive genetic plan that capitalizes heavily on use of sexed semen – in many cases eliminating conventional dairy doses altogether.
5. Every herd has some truly superior females that are hundreds of points

higher for LPI or Pro\$ than even your top quartile average. When you identify these superior animals – ideally confirmed by a genomic test result – consider generating several replacements from them through IVF or ET.

By the end of 3rd lactation your very best cows will have generated nearly \$50,000

in milk revenue and nearly \$15,000 more than the average cow in the herd with very little extra cost. These cows don't happen by chance. A good repro and genetic strategy will help create not just one or two such cows in your herd but many. It will make a big difference to your bottom line in the years to come and will be a key differentiator for herds that thrive.



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Udder News

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Shawn and Shawna Arends of Crossroads Dairy Farm (Abbotsford, BC) were blessed with a new son, Louie Harris Arends, born September 28. A little brother for Noah and Mara. Proud grandparents are John and Alison Arends and Tracey Saelman and Neil Saelman.



Congratulations to WestGen Financial Controller Cornel Steijn and wife Kim (Abbotsford, BC), as they welcomed their beautiful daughter, Sofia Joy Steijn, on December 24, 2025. Sofia arrived weighing 9lbs 2oz and measuring 53cm long – a very special Christmas gift indeed! Big brother Emerson is already loving his new role and absolutely adores his little sister.

Congratulations to Kevin Vanzessen and Melyssa Sargent who were engaged June 8, 2025. Kevin is the son of Tymen and Ria Vanzessen of Vanzessen Dairy (Rosthern, SK), and Melyssa is the daughter of Tim and Sharyn Sargent of Enniskillen Jerseys (Enniskillen, ON). While no definite wedding plans have been set yet, Kevin says, “It’ll definitely be a party!”

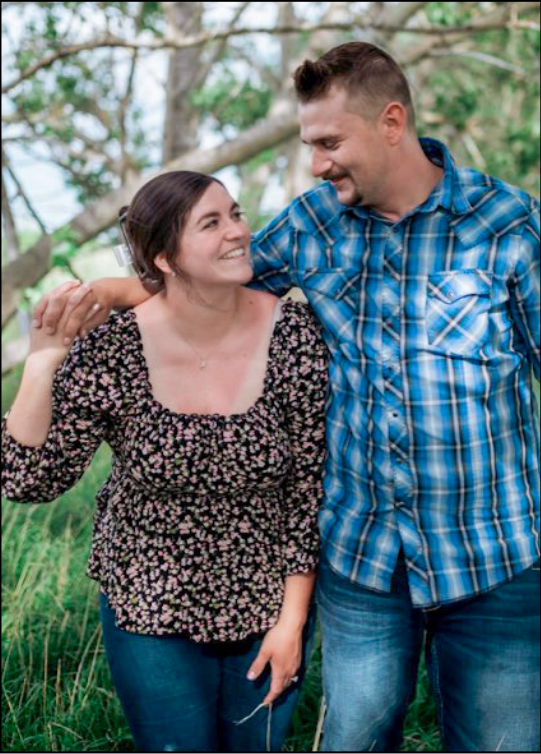


Great Grandma Marjorie Paton with baby Townes and proud big sister Natalie.



Grandparents Ian and Pam Paton with baby Rowan.

Congratulations to Ian and Pam Paton (Delta, BC), who wrapped up 2025 in style with the birth of TWO new grandbabies. On December 17, Townes Thomas Paton made his grand entrance three weeks early, weighing 6lbs 3oz, a son for Tom and Clare Paton (Ladner, BC), and a little brother for Natalie. Five days later, on December 21, Rowan Paton Cantu was born to Jamie Paton and Mark Cantu (Courtenay, BC), weighing 7lbs 7oz. Proud great grandma, Majorie Paton (98 years young and doing well!) is also thrilled with their safe arrival.



They’re engaged! Congratulations to Travis Wikkerink and Emily Unger who got engaged in June 2025. Travis is the son of Betty Ann and Andy Wikkerink of Westwikk Farms (Laird, SK) and Emily is the daughter of Pat and Rica Unger (Belmont, ON). Travis got down on one knee in one of Emily’s favourite places (the calf barn!) and proposed with her newest jersey calf! The soon-to-be newlyweds are planning a June 2026 wedding in Southwestern Ontario where Emily was raised. They are then making the journey to Saskatchewan to start their new chapter together. Once settled, Emily hopes to pursue a career in the Western dairy industry, and Travis will continue to grow his custom farming business, Western Custom.



“My baby’s getting married!” WCDN’s Chris Maarhuis and husband Jason (AgPro West Supply) are thrilled to announce that their youngest, Jenna is engaged to George Dumitrascu, son of George Sr. and Nicoleta Dumitrascu, Abbotsford. A wedding is being planned for late Fall 2026. Congratulations Jenna and George!



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Contact your RBC advisor or visit [rbc.com](https://www.rbc.com)



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Len and Sarah Congdon of Mazylake Holsteins (Bashaw, AB), along with Karmyn and Doug Johnson of Crik Boyz Farms (Meeting Creek, AB), are pleased to share news of the marriage of their children – Trinity Congdon and Ben Johnson. The wedding took place December 21, 2025, in Camrose, AB. Trinity and Ben are now making their home on an acreage at Meeting Creek, halfway between both their family farms. Trinity works at Timber Coffee while also working towards her psychiatric nursing degree, and Ben works in construction and at Crik Boyz. Congratulations!



Congratulations to Patrick Hylkema and Kassidy Plunkett who were engaged in August 2025. Patrick is the son of John and Susan Hylkema of Hyljon Farms (Hague, SK), and Kassidy comes from Saskatoon. The couple is planning a July 2026 wedding and will reside at Hyljon Farms, where Patrick works.

Verne Toop

We are saddened to hear of the passing of Verne Toop on November 3, 2025, at the age of 68, in Viking, Alberta. Verne dairy farmed with his family in the Chilliwack area, later moving to Alberta. He is lovingly remembered by his daughter Kelsey (Matt) Kitsch and grandchildren Ayden and Keira Toop-Kitsch. He was predeceased by his wife Kathy Toop, parents Les and Doris Toop and siblings Wayne Toop and Kim Toop.



Michael (Mike) Turchyn Sr.



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mike Turchyn on November 23, 2025, at the age of 92. Born in Vancouver BC, his family settled in the Aldergrove area of the Fraser Valley. Greeting you with a warm smile and firm handshake, he was well respected in the community and a proud farmer for 52 years. Many will remember that Mike and Monica farmed in the Aldergrove area with the Micmon prefix.

He will be greatly missed by his loving wife of 68 years Monica; daughters Lynda and Sandra; sons Michael Jr., Mark (Mya) and Randy; eleven grandchildren, seventeen great grandchildren and a large extended family. A celebration of life was held in January.

Henk Wikkerink

It is with great sadness and peace that Hendrik (Henk) Wikkerink went home to be with his Heavenly Father on December 1, 2025, at his home in Lacombe, AB.

Henk was born in Holland to Jan and Engelina Wikkerink and emigrated to Canada with his family in 1953, settling in Taber, Alberta. After a short time in Taber, the family moved to the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, where they enjoyed the warmer climate and began farming. Henk worked at various sawmills before beginning his own business, Hank's Dairy Supply, as a dairy equipment sales and service man.

Henk and Gladys were married in 1971 and had three beautiful children.

Throughout the years, the family enjoyed camping trips, Sunday afternoon bike rides, and gardening. Henk and Gladys enjoyed travelling to various hot spots around the world, especially Mexico. Henk loved old cars, John Deere tractors, and woodworking and always had a soft spot for children.

After a short battle with cancer, Gladys passed away in April 2013. Two years later, Henk moved back to Alberta, this time to Lacombe where he could be closer to family. Henk loved spending time in Nicole's garden, weeding and picking beans. He joined Bentley curling club, peeled hundreds of pounds of potatoes for CACHS catering, and enjoyed quality time with family.

Henk is survived by his children: Nicole (Kevin) Tolsma, Matthew (Maria), and Karen and grandchildren Reuben (Alyssa), Nathaniel, Julie, Olivia, Adam, Luke, Noah, and Sofia. He is predeceased by his wife of 41 years, Gladys, and several brothers.

We are thankful that he is at rest in his Heavenly Father's arms and reunited with Gladys.



Ronald McFee

July 9, 1946 – January 5, 2026

Ronald Charles McFee passed away unexpectedly with his loving wife Jackie by his side on January 5, 2026, at the age of 79. Ron was born in Chilliwack on July 9, 1946, the fifth child of Donald and Amy McFee. His early years were spent on his parents' dairy farm on Sumas Prairie, where he developed a love of working with animals. He became a 'town' kid in sixth grade when his family relocated to Chilliwack.

Ron met Jackie when he was in grade 12. He then spent four years at UBC and obtained his B.Sc. in Agriculture. Ron and Jackie were married on August 31, 1968, and then made their way to Saskatoon

where he attended the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, graduating in 1972. These were difficult early years of marriage as Jackie faced some serious health issues but ultimately strengthened their love and faith in God.

Ron started his veterinary career in Williams Lake and then returned to Chilliwack to work with Dr. Harry Brewster. After establishing himself in the business from the basement of their family home on Kipp Ave., Ron partnered with Dr. Chris Byra and founded Greenbelt Veterinary Services on June 1, 1982. Many years were spent faithfully serving the many farms in the Fraser Valley. He enjoyed the relational aspect of the job as much as the hands-on work.

In 1986, Ron moved the family to eight acres in Rosedale where he was able to bring his own children up to appreciate rural life as he did when he was younger. He worked to instill in his family the importance of honest hard work and the beauty of living a simple life with faith in God at the center. Ron was a great host, conversationalist and story-teller.

Ron is survived by his wife of 57 years, Jackie (nee Ballam), and will be deeply missed by his children and grandchildren.



UDDER NEWS NEXT PUBLISHING DEADLINE: MARCH 6, 2026

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(Spring 2026 Issue in mail: April 7)



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Udder News *CONTINUED*

Kay Frances Toop

December 30, 1934 –
November 11, 2025



Kay Frances Toop (nee Muirhead) was born in Chilliwack, BC on December 30, 1933. A devoted, loving wife to Allan Toop for over 74 years, she helped run their dairy farm in Greendale, while keeping a wonderful home for her husband and two sons, Richard (Patricia) and David. She enjoyed days outside in her garden and spending time at the family pool or the cabin at Cultus Lake with her grandchildren Angela (David), Devan (Alison), and Sarah. In her later years, Kay battled dementia among other ailments, but still spent time learning of the accomplishments of her great-grandchildren May, Yale, Olive, Emmett, and Anna. She passed peacefully at Eden Care Center on November 11, 2025. She fought valiantly, and though she will be greatly missed, we are happy she is free of pain. She leaves behind her sister Audrey Ady in Edmonton, Alberta, but now joins those who predeceased her: parents Pat and Rose Muirhead, son David, and daughter-in-law Jackie.

Gerry Holt

Though we have few details, we wish to acknowledge the passing of Gerry Holt this past Fall. The Holt family dairied in Richmond, BC, until the farm was sold in the 1970s. Gerry developed his Holthaven herd in Matsqui and together with John Brown, Dick Carlson and Pete Beck, they launched the inaugural Dogwood Classic Sale in 1979, which led to the genesis of the BC Holstein News publications. Purebred promotion and merchandising took off like never before – aided by professional photos and ET in the 1980s. With the sponsorship of the Central Valley club, they held two more Dogwood Classics in 1981 and 1983 – coinciding with the 100th National Holstein Convention held for the first time in BC. Some years later after dispersing the herd, Gerry would run a tractor dealership.

John Allan Toop

December 23, 1930 –
December 28, 2025



Allan Toop was born in Chilliwack on December 23, 1930, and passed away peacefully at home on December 28, 2025, at the age of 95. Allan was a lifelong dairy farmer and was often referred to as the “Mayor of Greendale,” where he lived with his wife Kay and raised their sons Richard and David. Devoted to his family, farm, and Chilliwack, Allan spent a great deal of time serving the community, primarily through agriculture and soccer. In 1978, Allan was named Chilliwack’s “Sportsman of the Year.” He served as the president of the East Chilliwack Co-op from 1986-1995, was awarded the “Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal” in 2002, and participated on a vast number of boards and foundations over his lifetime. Allan enjoyed all the talks with friends over the years and was still telling tales and delivering smiles until his final day. Allan was predeceased by his wife Kay Toop, son David Toop, daughter-in-law Jackie Toop, brother Gary Toop, and his parents, Glen Toop and Roberta Stevenson. Allan is survived by his son Richard (Patricia), grandchildren Angela (David), Devan (Alison), and Sarah (Luke), and great-grandkids May, Yale, Olive, Emmett, and Anna. At Allan’s request, no service will be held. After grandson Devan Toop posted the news of Allan’s passing on Facebook, there were multiple responses. These are just three of the many: Richard Bosma: “I went to visit Allan after Kay passed away. He said to me, ‘Do you know the old Ray Price song, You’re the Best Thing that Ever Happened to Me? That’s how I would describe Kay!’ 74 years of marriage and both gone within two months of each other. Keep making them proud!” John Les: “Your grandpa was one of my best friends, spanning almost 50 years. He was a man of insight, good advice, good humor and loyalty. He was one of those rare people liked by all. My condolences to you and your family.” Hal Muxlow: “I had a visit with Allan the day before his birthday. He asked about my family, current affairs and we talked of him being my soccer coach when I was 8 years old. I’m glad to have had that time with him. RIP Allan.”

Remembering
50 YEARS

Retired BC Dairy Inspector, Roger Pannett, shared some poignant recollections of first arriving in Canada 50 years ago, instigating the journey to a wonderful marriage.



“In mid-July 1975, after graduating from ag college, I signed up with the International Agricultural Exchange Association and flew from London, UK, to Calgary. After a three-day orientation at Olds College, I took the overnight bus from Calgary to Vancouver. I settled into three months of working on the Kootstra dairy farm in Pitt Meadows. I became friends with Henrietta Hamming. Nelly Kootstra took me by the Hamming farm so I could say goodbye after my three month exchange ended. Chemistry! Henrietta gave me a writing pad. God’s miraculous plan! I clearly remember thinking – ‘Who is going to be the lucky guy to marry Henrietta?!’ I had no plans of returning to BC as I met two Danish IAEA guys at the Mission train station and we headed off to Banff. We rented a car and explored the Rockies for a few days – completely unprepared for the winter conditions! I flew out of Calgary in a snowstorm on October 24, 1975, thinking ‘Bye-bye snowy Canada!’ While working as a herdsman in the UK, I wrote to Henrietta but not surprising, I got no response from the 23 year old who was busy dating. I moved to the Mid East in October 1977 to become Garzaiz Dairy Farm Manager in Oman for 2 ½ years, continuing to write to Henrietta back in BC, with still no responses. After getting gored by a Holstein bull on Boxing Day 1978, and the life changing letter Henrietta wrote to me while she was heading to Saskatchewan by rail in July 1979, I knew I had to see her. I flew back in September 1979 – that’s when we knew we had a connection. But after two weeks, back to Oman I went managing farms for the Sultan’s Queen Mother for another six months, until March 1980, when I returned to the UK. When Henrietta came to visit me, I proposed to her and she took a chance on me! After deep scrutiny and detailed medical exams (after Middle East), I received my paperwork to emigrate to Canada on June 1st, 1980. We had to be married in 90 days, to avoid me being deported. And the rest is history! Thank you, Lord, for the many miracles that brought Henrietta and I together and for the Kootstra family!”



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Western Canada’s All-Canadian Jerseys

2026 marks the 70th anniversary of the Jersey All-Canadian contest, celebrating the top Jersey cattle and the success of their breeders and exhibitors. Congratulations to the all the Western Canadian bred and exhibited animals who left their mark in the show ring in 2025!

ALL-CANADIAN BREEDERS HERD – LONE PINE JERSEYS, AB



LONE PINE MATT BOUJEE
Exhibitor: Bridon Farms, ON



LONE PINE JORDAN BOOSTER
Exhibitor: Pierre Boulet & Mike Berry, QC
ALSO: RESERVE ALL-CANADIAN 4 YEAR OLD



LONE PINE VIDEO BLASTED
Exhibitor: James & Cathy Mason, ON & Lone Pine Jerseys, AB
ALSO: ALL-CANADIAN WINTER 2 YEAR OLD

ALL-CANADIAN 5 YEAR OLD



STARRCREST WEAPON OF CHOICE
Breeder: James & Kirsty McAvoy, BC
Exhibitor: Quality Farms, ON

ALSO NOMINATED:
LIFETIME COMPONENT COW
BRAMVILLE LEMONHEAD CRICKET
Breeder & Exhibitor: Bramville Jerseys, SK

4 YEAR OLD
LONE PINE VICTORIOUS DONNY
Breeder: Lone Pine Jerseys, AB
Exhibitor: Robella, Prospect Valley & A. Kopecky, SK

JUNIOR 3 YEAR OLD
CHARLYN CERTIFIED VIA ROCKELLA
Breeder: Charlyn Jerseys, ON
Exhibitor: Charlyn Jerseys, ON & Lee Simanton, AB

WINTER 2 YEAR OLD
ROBELLA ZIMMER VIP NAOMI
Breeder & Exhibitor: Robella & Zimmer, SK

New CEO for EastGen

Bonnie Cooper

EastGen, the Guelph, ON, based A.I. company, has appointed **Amanda Stokes** to the role of **Chief Executive Officer**, effective April 1st. Stokes joined EastGen early in 2024 as the Human Resources Director. She was previously employed at Syngenta where she acted as a strategic partner to ag business leaders, led innovative projects, and collaborated with front-line staff to support producers across Canada. A progressive and strategic business leader, she holds a Master of Business Administration degree and has taught courses at the University of Guelph and Conestoga College. Stokes grew up in the rural community of Kawartha Lakes and was surrounded by agriculture from a young age. Stokes will succeed current EastGen CEO Brian O'Connor who is retiring in April.

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IN PURSUIT OF PROGRESS AND PROFITABILITY

Top herds in Western Canada for Reproductive Success

Lactanet is pleased to recognize Western Canadian herds that excel in key metrics of performance and profitability.

In this feature, Lactanet presents the top herds in Western Canada for reproductive success, an achievement that reflects outstanding management, cow health, and attention to detail. These rankings are based on the raw data that contribute to Lactanet's annual Reproduction Benchmarks for 2024. To be included in the

ranking, herds needed to be on milk recording and tested in 2024, and they met the criteria for data quality and completeness. Herds were ranked by pregnancy rate, standardized using a voluntary waiting period of 50 days across all herds. When asked what drives their success, several common practices emerged including the

importance of timely breeding decisions, strong transition cow management, good nutrition that supports reproductive health, and working as a team. Moreover, 91% of the top herds use DairyComp herd management software to capture and track herd information including for reproduction. This ultimately has led to better management with improved decision making.

WESTERN CANADA									
Farm Name/Owner	City	Province	Breed	# of Cows	Pregnancy Rate	Insemination Rate	Conception Rate	1st Service Conception Rate	% Preg at 150 DIM
Kassies Dairy	Lacombe	AB	HO	241	33	73	43	39	82
JTL Cattle Co.	Mill Bay	BC	JE	64	31	73	42	45	90
Vandergroot Farms Ltd	Red Deer County	AB	HO	298	31	67	46	42	83
Hoek Holsteins	Agassiz	BC	HO	329	30	57	55	58	69
Nielsen Farms Ltd	Lacombe	AB	HO	413	30	70	43	42	78
Readore Farms	Notre Dame	MB	HO	132	30	55	57	60	71
Adventure Holsteins Ltd	Rocky Mtn House	AB	HO	147	29	46	65	64	81
Towles Dairy Ltd	Innisfail	AB	HO	225	29	62	48	46	66
Pembina Colony	Darlingford	MB	HO	133	29	51	55	51	86
Liesveld Holsteins Inc / Elbi	La Broquerie	MB	HO	1200	29	57	51	53	75
Cordine Farms	Agassiz	BC	HO	382	28	63	44	45	82
Holt Colony	Irma	AB	HO	135	28	55	53	57	73
Ter Borgh Dairy Ltd	Calmar	AB	HO	345	28	57	52	55	72
Philipsen Farm	Lacombe	AB	HO	99	28	51	57	57	74
Klooster Farming Corporation	Rocky Mtn House	AB	HO	86	28	60	49	52	70
Rock Lake Colony Farming Co. Ltd	Coaldale	AB	HO	96	28	57	51	54	82
Cliffview Farm Ltd	Enderby	BC	HO	227	27	53	54	54	77
Shadow Ridge Dairy	Chilliwack	BC	HO	350	27	70	40	38	77
Rockport Colony	Magrath	AB	HO	94	27	52	54	54	73
Yff Dairy	Red Deer County	AB	HO	336	27	64	42	39	75
Poly-C Farms	Ponoka	AB	HO	479	27	68	43	45	70
Sierra Colony Farms Ltd	Shaunavon	SK	HO	176	27	51	57	56	67
Greenkey Farms Inc	Steinbach	MB	HO	235	27	62	42	41	70
Maarhuis Dairy	Chilliwack	BC	HO	63	26	45	58	64	66
Toop Farms Ltd.	Chilliwack	BC	HO	289	26	60	44	45	71
Springbank Holsteins Ltd	Chilliwack	BC	HO	440	26	55	48	50	74
Road End Farms Inc.	Abbotsford	BC	HO	407	26	66	39	37	57
Huyssoon Dairy	Ponoka	AB	HO	205	26	55	51	52	75
Hilltop Dairy	Fort MacLeod	AB	HO	200	26	57	47	50	71
D / A Dairies	Lacombe County	AB	HO	727	26	60	44	44	70
Lake Francis Holsteins Ltd	Lake Francis	MB	HO	255	26	60	44	39	77
Fehr Farm	La Broquerie	MB	HO	325	26	56	47	49	75
Vos Dairies	Kleefeld	MB	HO	324	26	59	46	46	73



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Young Stock Corner

Mainland Young Milk Producers

Submitted by Amy Balaban

Mainland Young Milk Producers hosted a vibrant and well attended Winter Gala this season, bringing together more than 150 producers and industry partners from across the mainland. The annual event continues to be a highlight for young farmers, offering a chance to connect, celebrate, and strengthen relationships within the dairy community.

MYMP extends sincere appreciation to its generous sponsors – FCC, United Agri, PrairieCoast Equipment, J&D Farmers Dairy Service, Delta Watertec, TD Bank, WestGen, TerraLink, and BC Dairy – whose support ensures events like this remain possible and impactful.

This year's Gala also marked the introduction of two new members, Ryan Meier and Thomas Meier, who farm alongside their families in Sumas Prairie. The association looks forward to their involvement and the fresh perspectives they will bring to the board.



2026 MYMP Directors
Back (L-R): Alex Schwichtenberg, Anton Schmidt, Daniel Huizing, Kevin Werner, Noah Driessen.
Front (L-R): Alicia Postma, Alyssa Vanderkooi, Ryan Meier, Thomas Meier.



4-H News From BC

**Next submission deadline: March 6,
Spring 2026 issue in the mail April 7.**

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CHILLIWACK 4-H DAIRY CLUB Club Reporter: Colton Schurmann



Chilliwack 4-H Dairy is gearing up for another busy year of activities. Our first meeting was held on January 16, and we are grateful to WestGen for hosting our club meetings in their amazing facility. This year we are looking forward to lots of great shows and fairs as well as the National Holstein Convention in April where we will be doing a fundraiser event and helping with the show. Our February meeting will include speeches and the March meeting we will be doing Demonstrations and Speak & Shows. This year we will be learning more about livestock judging, husbandry and animal handling.

Chilliwack 4-H Dairy is also expanding as we welcome some beef animals to our show string, so look for our club at the fairs where our dairy heifers will be beside our beef steers. The beef steers will be sold at the Chilliwack Fair this year, so if you need to fill your freezers please attend the Chilliwack 4-H Sale and support our local kids raising their steers for you.

Chilliwack Dairy would like to thank the following sponsors that have supported our club members: WestGen, National Bank, Kobes Dairy Farm, Pacific Dairy, J&D Farmers Dairy Service, Chinook Farm Innovations, MidValley Manufacturing, Trouw Nutrition, Tripple B Farms, Groothof Trucking, West Coast Robotics, KPMG, Corals Cows Herd Services, Loewen Welding, Gagner Ventures and Greenbelt Veterinary Services. Without sponsors, we wouldn't be able to do all of the club activities, so we really appreciate the support!

If you are interested in joining Chilliwack Dairy or becoming a sponsor, please reach out to us at chilliwack4hdairy@gmail.com.

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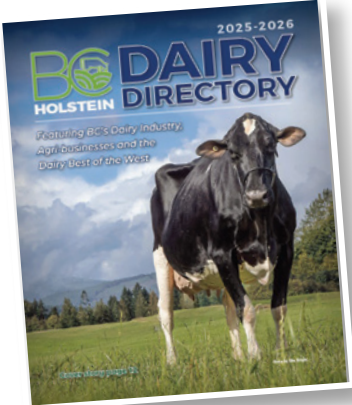
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Finding the Wonderful in Winter

Thanks to all the readers who shared some of their special Winter scenes with us!

(Did you note the epic prairie winter pictures on the front cover?)



ANDRIES STEEGSTRA
ASSOCIATE
B.Sc. Agriculture (Farm and Immigration Consultant)

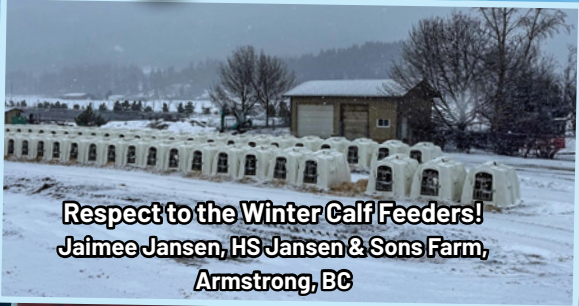
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Seriously... Winter at the Coast??
Karleigh Kobes, Kobes Dairy Farm, Abbotsford, BC



Respect to the Winter Calf Feeders!
Jaimee Jansen, HS Jansen & Sons Farm, Armstrong, BC



Winter Sky on Fire!
Jess Culleton, Evelyn Mountainview Farm, Smithers, BC



Snuggled in for Warmth!
Kate-Leigh Heapy, Blanshard Holsteins, Oak River, MB.



Winter Cow-mouflage.
Sunninghill Holsteins (de Doods), Grindrod, BC. Josh Telford photo.

We're always interested in seeing some special farm pictures. If you have a special Spring farm scene you'd like to share, send to tars@holsteinnews.com by March 15.

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Milk Quality Focus

Robotic Udder Prep – “See it before you believe it”

Erin Cuthbert, MSc, Lead Dairy Inspector, BC AGRI

Automation in dairy has added a world of convenience in reducing the need for human-to-cow interaction during everyday tasks. From manure removal, ration formulation, feed pushing to milking – there’s a robot for that!

Once initial programing stages are complete, and you press “Go,” how often are you ensuring that what the robot says it will do, it’s doing well? Just like with your employees, ensuring that your robot is working well for **your herd** is important, as “one-size-fits-all” settings may need to be tailored to meet your herd requirements. This is especially important for udder prep and post treatment during robotic milking. Not every robot is created equal, but all are designed for efficient udder prep time from initial teat stimulation to attaching the milking machine. A 60 to 120 second prep time allows the cow to release oxytocin and stimulate milk letdown in time for teat cup attachment and extraction, followed by protective post-dipping. But are udder prep and post-milking steps doing the job, or are we racing to ensure that machine attachment occurs “on-time” and the cow can vacate the robot as quickly as possible? This efficiency could come with a cost to our cows, and ultimately, milk quality. Thorough udder prep can decrease the incidence of cow udder infections by not only reducing udder bacterial contamination from the environment but by also reducing bacterial contamination from other infected animals. It is time to sit back and observe your robot in action across multiple animals of all udder shapes and sizes.

Udder Prep

Milk quality and udder health are directly correlated to the cleaning performance during udder prep. Clean teats ensure that bacteria aren’t entering the milking system and contaminating the milk, and it also protects the cow from infections caused by bacteria that enter the susceptible teat canal. Adequate cleaning time and teat coverage is essential to achieve this, as well as keeping teat cleaning cups or brushes clean and in good repair.

To-Do: Once your robot has completed the teat cleaning process, place the robot into manual and wipe the teats with a cotton rag. Is it coming away clean? If not, determine whether teat cleaning time needs to be increased and check your equipment for wear-and-tear. Teat cleaning equipment replaced less than twice per year is a risk factor for high teat contamination on robotic milking systems.

Post-dipping

Post-dipping plays a critical role in preventing bacteria from entering the teat end while it remains open for up to 30 minutes after milking, making the udder susceptible to infection during this time. To prevent infection from occurring, two main goals should be achieved:

Adequate application of post-dip to teats – Guidelines suggest 20ml of teat disinfectant is applied per cow in robotic milking systems. Teats should be thoroughly covered for maximum protection.

Keep your cows standing for 30 minutes – this can be encouraged by pushing feed up frequently at the feed bunk and providing clean, fresh water that cows can access after milking. In addition, keeping stocking density low in the barn (1:1) will prevent stall competition, and cows will be less inclined to seek a lying space immediately after milking. Studies show that cows will prioritize lying time over nutrition – if a stall is available in a crowded barn, it may be her first stop after she is finished milking.

To-Do: Observe your robot in action while it applies teat spray or in-line post dip to the cow’s teats after milking. Is there adequate coverage on the teats? If not, increase the application rate and time.



Make sure teat post-dip is being applied adequately to the teats themselves. If not, as shown here, increase the rate and time settings.



Ensure that teats are thoroughly cleaned before teat cups are attached, as shown.

Lastly, keeping cows clean

It’s important to remember that your robot is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to managing udder health and preventing bacterial contamination of milk. The cleaner the cows are when they enter the robot, the more successful your pre- and post-milking udder procedures will be. Keep udders clipped and tails short and make sure that free stalls are well managed to optimize cow cleanliness and comfort.

To-Do: Assess cow / udder cleanliness when they are visiting the robot. Are teats relatively clean? Are tails clean and clipped? If cows are dirty when they enter the robot, it may be time to revisit free-stall and manure removal management practices.

Holstein Canada Top Registrations in 2025		
Rank	Sire Name	# Female Registrations
1	Vogue A2P2-PP	5458
2	Pine-Tree-I-Pursuit	5075
3	Progenesis Anahita	3641
4	Genosource Johnboy	3580
5	Progenesis Knowhow	3405
6	Westcoast Alcove	3339
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BC Dairy Living Labs: Practical research on the farm

Hannah Woodhouse, PhD
The BC Dairy Producer Lunch and Learn at the Pacific Agriculture Show, sponsored by FCC, had some insightful presentations, including one from the BC Dairy Living Lab team.

The BC Dairy Living Lab is one of 14 Living Labs across Canada, federally funded by Agricultural Climate Solutions and delivered in BC by the Investment Agriculture Foundation. The program brings together producers, scientists, and other collaborators to test on-farm sustainable practices that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), protect soil and water, support biodiversity, and strengthen farm resilience.

In a laboratory setting, researchers control a lot of factors, making it easier to run experiments and measure results. The BC Dairy Living Lab is all about taking research from the bench and partnering with dairy producers to **test new practices under real farm conditions.**

How does a Living Lab work?

A Living Lab approach is very individualized.

Identify the practice: Which sustainable practice is a producer interested in trying and what is realistic given their farm's goals, timing, and equipment?

Implement the practice on farm.

Expert Monitoring: A team of experts tracks results through field observations, soil and crop testing, and economic analyses.

Make Adjustments: The "living" part of "living lab" means that adjustments are expected along the way because learning and improvements are happening in real-time.

Over the past three years, six BC dairy farms have participated in the BC Dairy Living Lab. While these are not large numbers, their experiences are valid to understand. Through producer consultation and a review of Dairy Farmers of Canada's sustainability priorities, the project focused on three best management practices (BMPs):

1. Relay cropping and cover cropping



Relay cropping can help sequester soil carbon and reduce GHGs.

Research suggests that seeding directly into a growing crop (relay cropping) or planting crops after fall harvest (cover cropping) can help sequester soil carbon and reduce GHGs. These practices may also improve soil quality, reduce erosion and nutrient losses, and potentially increase forage yield.

However, the Living Lab experience showed that relay and cover cropping might be difficult to implement on working dairy

farms. They found that this BMP would need clearer, proven benefits before it becomes practical for many farms.

2. Lower-emissions manure spreading



A dribble bar manure application method can improve efficiency and reduce nitrous oxide emissions.

Research suggests that using lower-

emission manure application methods (such as a dribble bar, sleigh foot, or disc/tine injector) can improve manure application efficiency and reduce nitrous oxide emissions. It may also help cut nitrogen losses and fertilizer needs, as well as reduce odour.

A key learning outcome from the BC Dairy Living Lab is that this practice works, but it can be costly. The good news is that there were no negative impacts observed from using this approach. However, the cost-benefit picture depends on the farm.

3. Whole-farm nutrient and nitrogen budgets

Whole-farm nutrient budgets track the movements of nutrients in and out of the farm to

calculate nitrogen efficiency. Nutrient "imports" include purchased fertilizer, feed, livestock, bedding, seed, nitrogen fixation from legumes, and manure imports. Nutrient "exports" include milk, livestock, manure, and sold feed.

For producers, nutrient budgets matter because they can minimize costly nutrient losses, optimize input costs, and benchmark performances from year to year. The Living Lab reinforced that nutrient budgeting is a practical tool to identify opportunities to improve efficiency.

Across participating farms, the takeaway was that **organic matter takes time to build (carbon sequestration)**. Additionally, these trials showed no negative impacts on crops, and costs were described as moderate. This means that these practices are a lower-risk option for farms interested in experimenting.

The BC Dairy Living Lab is in its final project year. Results will help guide future projects and support farmers with BMP implementation.

For more information on BC Living Labs, visit: <https://bclivinglab.ca>.

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Testing Tomorrow’s Farming Today at Innovation Farms

Ailsa McFadyen

This past summer, Farm Credit Canada (FCC) broadened its Innovation Farms network in their ongoing collaboration with Enterprise Machine Intelligence Learning Initiative (EMILI) by supporting the expansion of EMILI’s Innovation Farms. Adding to their 5,500-acre seed farm in Grosse Isle, Manitoba, EMILI’s Innovation Farms now include an 8,500-acre operation in MacGregor, with over 35% of that farm dedicated to potatoes. As one of EMILI’s funders, FCC enables EMILI to test, refine, and showcase a broad array of collaborative innovations in agricultural technology.

Some examples include:

Geco Strategic Weed Management AI Tool

EMILI is working with Geco Strategic Weed Management at Innovation Farms Grosse Isle to test AI software which predicts weed patches using satellite data. Attached to existing equipment, the Geco software employs AI to generate “prescription maps” that target herbicide only in designated zones rather than treating the entirety of a field. Through selective application of herbicide, Geco’s weed management tool helps not only to save money on weed control costs, but also aims to “promote environmental health and sustainability through reduced applications,” as stated in their 2024 project summary.

Agi3 Crop Sentry System

Tested on both the MacGregor and Grosse Isle sites, this in-field technology provides 24/7 crop surveillance. Through LiDAR and multispectral cameras, the Crop Sentry System captures 360° imagery used to monitor crop conditions, such as health and growth measurements, up to 3km away from the base station. This season, EMILI has provided Agi3 with space on Innovation Farms to refine the machine learning algorithms tasked with accurately forecasting crop yields, which could prospectively lead to major advancements in management practices. Agi3’s Crop Sentry System may also be able to help farmers make more informed decisions about crop planning as well as better manage risk factors by “identifying problems before they become severe, optimizing time sensitive applications, and reducing inputs,” according to an EMILI report.



Agi3 Crop Sentry System

Photos by EMILI



Elmer's Manufacturing Hive Motherbin

Elmer’s Manufacturing Hive Motherbin

Innovation Farms does more than develop and test software, it is also interested in advancing sustainable production practices. EMILI describes the Elmer’s Manufacturing Hive Motherbin as a “portable grain storage solution,” which serves as an in-field buffer system to streamline grain harvest, providing either a 5500-bushel or 8250-bushel capacity. Grain carts unload into the Motherbin, and trucks load from it, side-stepping bottlenecks and wait times. The 2024 Elmer’s project results report reduced harvest staff from five to three, reduced combine idle time from 15% to 5%, and reduced grain cart idle time from 32% to 25%.

Providing Field-Ready Tech

The collaborative projects playing out at Innovation Farms have been extremely fruitful in developing cutting-edge ag tech. But developers are conscious of the gap between innovation and implementation within the industry. For this reason, FCC’s Innovation Farm Partnership Manager, Chelsea Gray says

they value “EMILI’s emphasis on real-world technology validation – not just in theory, but on actual farms, with farmer input guiding the process.”

Understanding that integrating novel technology into existing operations can present uncertainty, Jacqueline Keena, Managing Director at EMILI, responds, “EMILI

aims to de-risk the technology, giving farmers increased confidence in its capabilities prior to adopting it on their farm.”

Gray concludes, “We need to ensure agriculture is future-ready – leveraging technology and practices that protect resources while boosting productivity. Canada has what we need to meet that

challenge. Strategically, we want to be able to take advantage of that growing market. Overall, technologies like the ones tested and validated at EMILI’s Innovation Farms have the potential to strengthen Canada’s global competitiveness, improve environmental outcomes, and build a more resilient agricultural sector.”



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