

# The Bullhorn

Spring 2015



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**Your Success... Our Passion.** It's not just a company theme, it's our core belief. We're proud to work side by side with producers from Washington to California – *thanks for your business!*



## From the CEO

Jim Wells, CEO All West/Select Sires

### Making an Impact

The sign of a great cooperative isn't just about giving patronage back to its members, although that's a very important aspect of how All-West works. The sign of a great cooperative is also about making a positive impact in the lives of our member-owners. It's always been our philosophy that for All-West to be a viable, thriving business, we have to put our customers and their interests first. Therefore, we need to focus on making that positive impact.

So what does all that mean to you? Let's take the subject of cash flow first. We enjoyed a great year of milk prices in 2014 and while we're seeing a bit of a downturn this year, we believe that great genetics can still make you money. At some point, everyone will be selling animals from their dairy either for genetics or for beef purposes. With new bulls coming into the lineup in a few weeks, we'll continue to offer you genetics that not only transmit superior genomics but high production, type, genetic merit... the list goes on. And those traits yield tremendous results at every kind of sale.

What about efficiency? Can an A.I. cooperative really impact efficiency? We happen to have launched the industry's most revolutionary herd monitoring system during World Dairy Expo last fall, CowManager. It's taken the dairy industry by storm and we're already seeing interest from the beef industry as well. Suddenly, producers have "eyes in the barn" 24 hours a day, 7 days a week monitoring activity levels, health and rumination. It's mind boggling to think

about how these small ear tags can tell you so much about each animal on your dairy. It's even more impressive to learn how you can utilize that amount of information to make management more efficient! You can read more about CowManager in the pages of this newsletter.

We continue to study fertility and provide excellent research and field trials to test and re-test our semen quality and viability, as well as looking at ways to improve our sorting for sexed semen. You'll hear from Dr. Matt Utt in this newsletter about the latest updates from the department that backs Select Reproductive Solutions™ and the Program for Fertility Advancement™, both of which make a great impact on Select Sires herds in every state, every day.

I'd be remiss if I didn't say that part of our philosophy on making a great impact has to deal with people...people in our company and people that put their trust in us as member-owners. We want to impact our employees by providing them a great "company culture" of learning, advancement, recognition, and team building. We hope that comes through in their interactions with you. Just as importantly, we want to make sure your personal dealings with All-West are ones that you look forward to. Do you get new information from your salesman when he arrives? Do you have tremendous, reliable technician service? Have we worked hard enough so that you don't have to worry about reproduction in your herd because you know we are? If that's the case, than we've earned the best impact we can ask for...your trust.

In 2016, we'll be celebrating 75 years of making an impact in All-West territory and we couldn't have done it without you. Watch our website and Facebook pages, as well as your email inboxes and mailboxes as we count down to this exciting 75 year celebration.

What does making an impact mean to you? Do you want a positive impact on your herd reproductively? Do you want to impact your business for future generations? Join us as we work through 2015 to make a lasting impact on this dairy industry for every one of our member-owners...74 years and counting!

## Making an Impact

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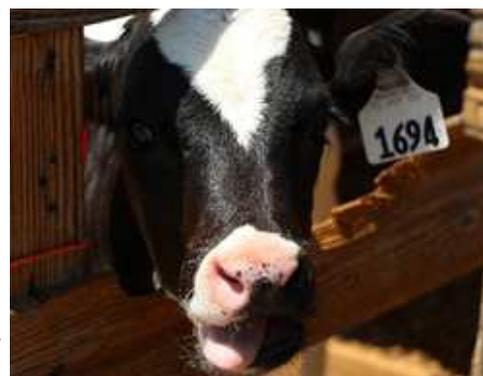
*The Bullhorn*  
Spring 2015

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## Have you checked your mailbox lately?

All-West patronage payments were mailed out the middle of March, so be sure to check your mail and cash-in on the value of being a member/owner! We had another strong year of business and are pleased to pass along those profits to you!

# What's In Your Ear?

Monitoring individual cow activity to show heat detection has been accepted industry-wide as a good way to manage breeding programs. Obviously when cows are walking and moving around more than their normal activity pattern, having a device detect and report that is pretty valuable. What hasn't been universally accepted is the way we retrieve this information. Of course, many of us rely on our own eyesight, the calendar and our instincts, which can be good, but we're human and we're not perfect in that regard. Actual computer systems have used collars and leg bands to detect this activity and they have worked fairly well, but have definite logistical challenges.

Insert a Dutch dairy producer who's interested in research and making estrus detec-

tion easier and you have Gerard Griffioen and the CowManager system. Gerard's farm in the Netherlands became a "living lab" for his quest to develop a system that could detect heat in an easy-to-install measuring device. But could that device also measure other valuable information?

What's been taking the industry by storm is a very small ear tag that fits conveniently over a button tag. With a guaranteed life of five years, the tag will most likely last longer and as an added benefit, is interchangeable between cows.

That in itself is intriguing, but that's not even half the story. This small ear device not only measures activity levels, but temperature and rumination. Creating daily alert lists for all three measurements,

CowManager is truly like having someone watching every cow in your herd 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We don't have room in this publication to go through all the benefits of each individual module or explain the simple "plug and play" setup, but you can find a wealth of information on our website at [www.all-westselectsires.com](http://www.all-westselectsires.com) or be sure to ask any member of the All-West Select Sires team!

To date, CowManager has been installed in 25 states and four Canadian provinces. That's a very brief overview of a system that is easy to install and provides a wealth of information, and we're already hearing feedback from fellow producers in the All-West area who were early adapters. Here's what they had to say.



*Brad Scott  
Scott Bros.  
Dairy Farms LP  
Moreno Valley, CA  
1,000 cows*

"While we don't have our whole herd on tags yet, we did put over 200 cows on the CowManager system in December, and what an experience it has been! Who would have thought we'd have the technology that gives us so much information. In the morning, I'll go to the barn, hit the activity list button, and I get a printout of cows that are flagged for health or fertility. That's pretty interesting. All of a sudden, I have a summary of cows that need to be checked and the information is right in front of me. At the same time, to really understand the entire system and

what it's capable of does take time. I've relied on Rory (Rory White of All-West Select Sires) to help me through it and explain the terminology and reading all the dashboards. If it wasn't for him, we probably wouldn't have the system. He explained what we needed to do before, during and after installation. He's been monitoring our herd from his own house and is available seven days a week if we have questions. He understands cows, computers and technology, so he can sell it and support it. He's been there every step of the way."

"When we have the entire herd fully tagged, and we plan on doing that, it will definitely change the way we breed cows. I hear about some guys who have been using the system and it's so accurate, they don't even tail chalk anymore. I can totally see that in the future. The management and time savings are awesome. We have a piece of technology that can now track every cow, every hour of the day. We have found cows that are high pro-

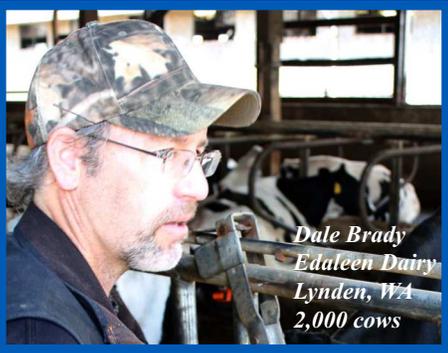
ducers and going through silent heats. We wouldn't have caught them if it weren't for CowManager. And we've also caught cows that are showing sub-clinical signs of being sick, but not showing visible signs of sickness. Four to five days later, they are sick. That's the proof in the pudding – detection of fertility or health issues when you can't see them. It makes it all worthwhile. If a cow comes up on the alert list, you know something happened to her...something is causing her stress. So you can be on top of it."

"Your breeding program is only as good as the person detecting the cows in heat. We're all human and some days we're better at heat detection than others. I'm pretty sure CowManager doesn't have an off-day!"

"We're really looking forward to the way this technology will change the way we manage our herd with improved efficiency and time savings!"

Scott Ruby with World-Wide Sires has the CowManager system on his home dairy of 850 cows, Fir-Ridge Holsteins, in Oregon. Scott said that one of the people responsible for fresh-cow work at the dairy now has half a day he can devote to other duties as CowManager has eased his need to spend time on each cow. Now he only has to focus on the cows needing intervention.





*Dale Brady  
Edaleen Dairy  
Lynden, WA  
2,000 cows*

“One of the reasons we chose the (CowManager) system was that we could select the modules we thought we would use most and if we later decide that we want to add another module, we can do that without having to change or upgrade the ear tag. We researched several sys-

tems and quickly narrowed our choice down to collars or ear tags. One of the things that most impressed me (about CowManager) was that the creator, Gerard, is a dairy farmer. He has extensively tested CowManager in side-by-side comparison with other systems on his own cows. He not only knows the technology side of the system, but he is very in tuned to cow behavior and all aspects of cow health and comfort and helping increase production, and he is always interested in feedback to improve the system.”

“When we first got the system we maintained our tail chalking routine until we had time to build confidence in the information we were seeing. It didn’t take long. The system almost never misses a

cow in heat. We have since dropped tail chalking for heat detection. I am also anxious to compare our (pharmaceutical) bills from last year to this year. We are using less drugs. In addition, we have gained 2 percent on our Pregnancy Rate and days in milk has declined.”

“The information on rumination activity has been a great help in managing our close-up cows to bring them in healthy and at the right weight. We monitor eating and temperature and can catch a case of E-coli or mastitis much earlier and head off problems. I have also found it very easy to check the different alert lists from my phone to help keep a close eye on the herd.”

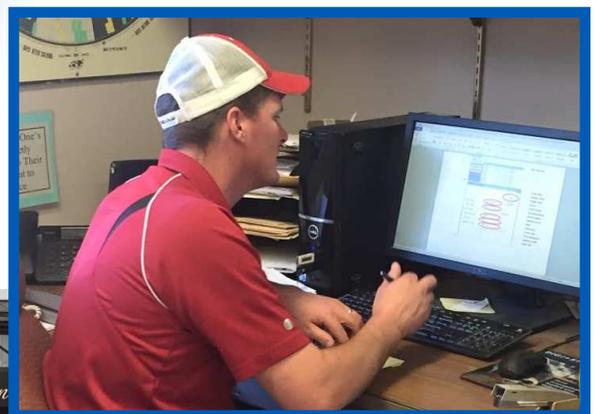
“CowManager is giving me the ability to have information right now and pinpoint different aspects of animal health. We applied a tag to a known sick cow and two hours later the system was already alerting me.”



*Jerry Van Delen  
Everson, WA  
500 cows*



CowManager developer Gerard Griffioen explains how to read the alert reports to Bill Hobby after Modesto Junior College installed the system this spring.



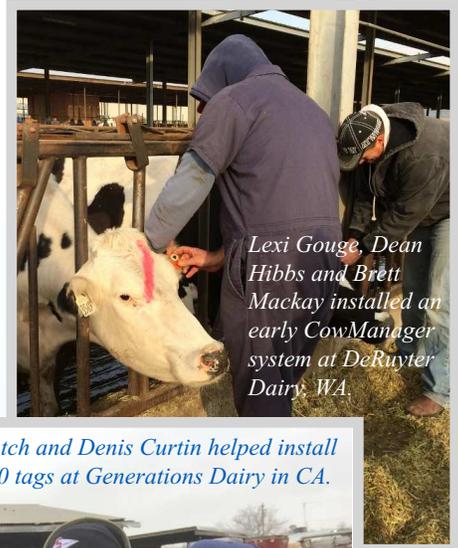
Washington State University installed CowManager with the help of All-West’s Brett Mackay and Kelby Stadt. “I was very impressed with the design of the ear tags. We were able to slide them over existing RFID tags with ease, yet they held firmly in place when installed completely. We all appreciated Brett’s knowledge and courteousness,” said Kelby.



*CowManager booth at the 2015 World Ag Expo in Tulare, CA*



Marvin Correia helps the crew at Air-Osa Dairy, CA, install CowManager tags



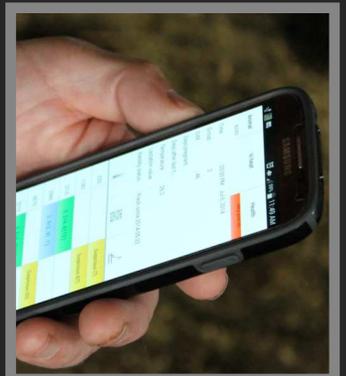
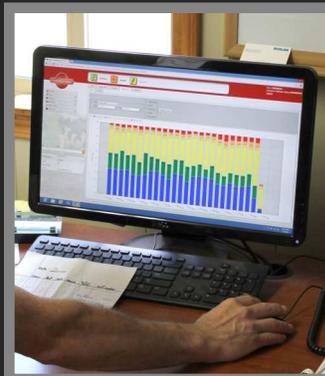
Lexi Gouge, Dean Hibbs and Brett Mackay installed an early CowManager system at DeRuyter Dairy, WA.



Cris Hatch and Denis Curtin helped install over 100 tags at Generations Dairy in CA.



## The Eye on Your Farm, when You're not Looking



Easy to install light weight tag will record animal behavior that wirelessly integrates with herd records and notifies you on a mobile app!



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# It's PROOF TIME!

It hardly seems possible, but proofs are JUST around the corner – April 7th to be exact. Here's a few things you need to know before the big day occurs.

[Proposed changes to evaluation system \(April 2015\)](#) –  
Printed by the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding (CDCB)

## *Sire conception rate and calving traits for all bulls*

*By Joao Durr and Duane Norman*

In December 2014, the CDCB assumed the following data flow payments to the dairy records processing centers (DRPC). These include payment for Records in Progress (RIPs), Calving Ease (CE) Stillbirth (SB), and Breeding records. Bulls from organizations not previously participating in Sire Conception Rate (SCR) will start having their evaluations published in April 2015. Some bulls from organizations not previously participating in Calving Ease (CE) will start having evaluations published in April 2015, and even more in August 2015. Animals will continue to receive genomic evaluations for Calving Ease (CE) and Cow and Heifer conception rate using all data, similarly to what is done for all other traits.

## *Brown Swiss haplotype for polled*

*By Paul VanRaden and Dan Null*

A Brown Swiss haplotype for polled (BHP) was developed using nearly the same methods as for Holstein (HHP) and Jersey (JHP) haplotype tests. Animals known to be heterozygous or homozygous polled and progeny tested bulls not reported to be polled act as the data, allowing polled status for all other animals to be imputed by tracing haplotypes. Most polled BS have the same haplotype and pedigrees tracing to BSUSA000000183024 MEADOW VIEW RENDITION NP, born 1985. All 10 of the known foreign polled bulls had the same haplotype as RENDITION, but some US families had different inheritance and haplotypes. The main BHP haplotype differs from the HHP and JHP haplotypes. The HHP and JHP haplotypes trace inheritance of both the Celtic and Friesian haplotypes within both of

those breeds. Laboratory testing of a Brown Swiss bull homozygous for the main BHP haplotype revealed that he was homozygous for the Celtic mutation, and thus most polled Brown Swiss probably contain the Celtic mutation. By including the status of known polled animals as data, their polled haplotypes should also be traced accurately to progeny. As of February 2015, 18,558 Brown Swiss were genotyped, 152 were heterozygous BHP, and 4 were homozygous polled. The Brown Swiss Association, Dan Gilbert, Lucas Casanova, Zoetis, and CDCB provided data for this research.

## *Productive life standard deviation*

*By Paul VanRaden*

During the December 2014 base change, productive life (PL) genetic standard deviations (SD) for other breeds were adjusted to match the Holstein SD, but should not have been because herd variance adjustments are not applied to that trait. Removal of this SD adjustment will cause the April genetic SD of PL for other breeds to return to their August 2014 SD. This error was detected in September 2014 but too late to fix for December 2014 because data from the new software had already been sent to the Interbull test run and could not be revised until the January test run. The PL SD for most breeds will change by about 10%, but no animals changed in rank for PL, and Holsteins were not affected by the error. Other small corrections from December are that Milking Shorthorns evaluations for PL, heifer conception rate (HCR), and cow conception rate (CCR) were incorrectly converted to and from the Red Dairy Cattle (RDC) base in December multitrait across country evaluations (MACE) but are correctly converted in April, and the precision of adjustments for heterosis and inbreeding are improved. Previously the regression coefficients had been rounded too much when stored. This improves the precision of HCR and CCR evaluations for crossbred animals and Montebeliarde bulls by a few tenths of a percent.

*To visit the site where this information is published, go to <https://www.cdcb.us/reference/changes/eval1504.htm>*

## What's on your schedule?

Following is a timetable for proof week, as well as links where you can find information right away.

### *Tuesday, April 7*

- Official production & type data released
- High Ranking Sire Report available at [www.holstein.com](http://www.holstein.com)
- Canadian proofs available at [www.cdn.ca](http://www.cdn.ca)

### *Wednesday, April 8*

- Price sheet and new lineup sires available from All-West - [www.allwestselectsires.com](http://www.allwestselectsires.com)

### *Thursday, April 9*

- DiamondCuts email newsletter mailed out with new price list and pedigree information on new release bulls
- \*Not a subscriber yet? Visit [www.allwestselectsires.com](http://www.allwestselectsires.com) and hit the "subscribe" button
- Official Top 100 TPI List available – [www.holstein.com](http://www.holstein.com)

### *Wednesday, April 15*

- Holstein and High-Component breed sire directories will be mailed from Ohio to All-West offices

- Both sire directories will also be available online at this time – [www.allwestselectsires.com](http://www.allwestselectsires.com)

# What can we look for? An update from the Sire Analysts



## Jersey Update

By Tim Baumgartner, Jersey Genetics & Marketing Specialist, Select Sires, Inc.

April proofs are just around the corner and with each genetic evaluation comes change and opportunity. Over the last few months, Herby Lutz and I have been traveling different parts of the country to talk about the Jersey Revolution, visit with our customer-owners and see the many

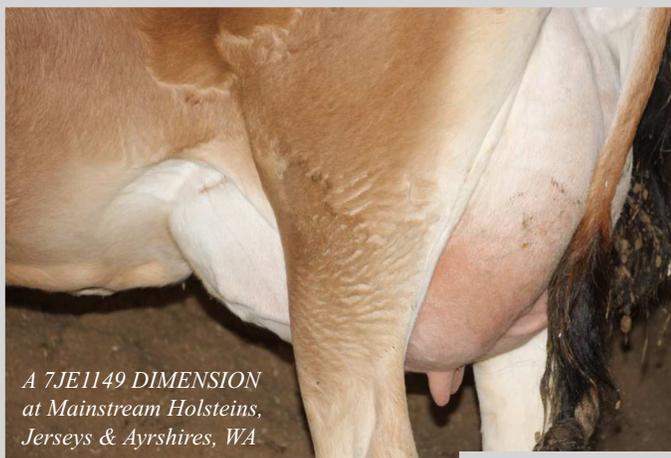
outstanding daughters of Select Sires bulls. Without a doubt 7J1038 Valentino remains the leader of customer satisfaction. What makes our tours even more enjoyable is seeing the daughters of the many other Select bulls that are earning the respect of their owners.

7J1169 Topeka daughters are calving in with tremendous udders and are cows that will mature with a lot of grace and class. Others are complimentary of their 7J1190 Fastrack, 7J1149 Dimension, and 7J1088 Colton daughters. What makes it even more exciting is when we get texts from breeders with notes like “Wow, do these Galvanize daughters really milk!” or “I am really impressed with the milk and good udders from my 7J1184 News daughters.” Even more enjoyable is seeing daughters of bulls like 7J859 Riley, 7J962 Success and 7J1000 Tbone, that continue to impress with each calving, continuing to validate the value of our Select Sires program.

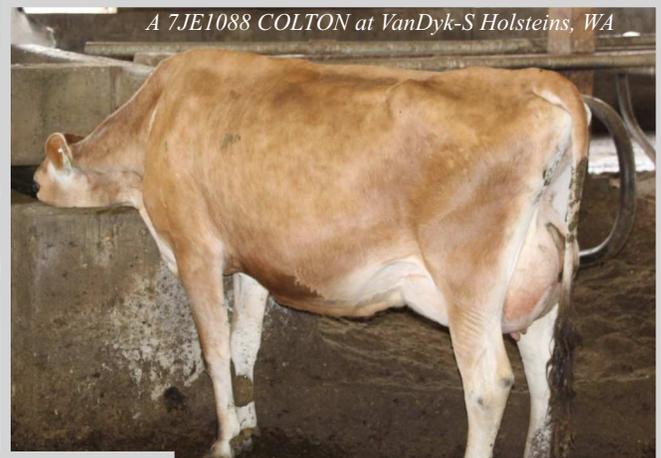
What is most humbling is when we hear comments about the high pregnancy rates

being achieved on farm. The team in Ohio does a tremendous job of producing the highest quality product available in the industry and it is so rewarding to hear about the great conception rates on bulls like 7J1294 Barnabas or 7J5004 Chrome and proven bulls like 7J1036 Pat and 7J1150 Dignitary.

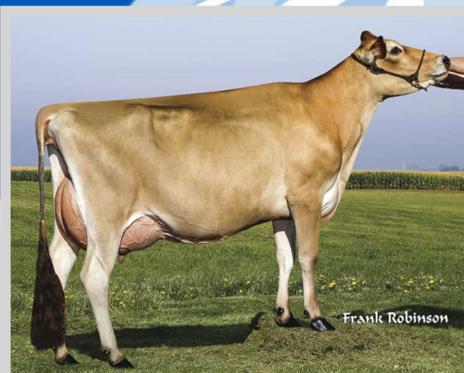
As I stated in the beginning, April proofs are just around the corner and we look forward to the results on April 7th. The list for graduation is unique with bulls that will offer breed leading type, outstanding fitness and capacity for production. There are seven different sire fathers represented in this group of hopefuls. What could make this one of the most exciting graduation days is the potential to tell you that the Select Sires Jersey program will have multiple generations of bulls standing in Ohio! For 50 years Select Sires has been bringing you the best Jersey genetics and Herby and I are diligently working to make sure the next 50 years are even better.



A 7JE1149 DIMENSION at Mainstream Holsteins, Jerseys & Ayrshires, WA



A 7JE1088 COLTON at VanDyk-S Holsteins, WA



Ahlem Dimension Paula  
Daughter of 7JE1149 DIMENSION  
Ahlem Farms, CA



A 7JE1163 IRWIN at Wilsonview Dairy, OR



Sunny Day Topeka Keylime (VG-82)  
Daughter of 7JE1169 TOPEKA  
Amanda Stiles Lutz, SC



## Holstein Update

By Kevin Jorgensen, Holstein Sire Analyst, Select Sires, Inc.

As we head into the next round of sire summaries, I think it's safe to say the substantial lead in high ranking genomic young sires will continue to turn into exciting progeny proven graduates. This is just a few of the potential grads but based on these few there should be cause for excitement.

1.) Sons of Sully Shottle May (EX-90) May has already made a large stamp on the industry with the amount of semen her sons have sold as well as other proven sons in the industry. However, April will be her day to make an even larger splash in the industry as she could very well have four sons reach active status in one summary.

The first is 7HO11283 Mayfield. He is a Domain from May and will be a great source of milk, pleasing type and above average health and fitness traits. His daughters are impressive with great udders, mobile feet and legs and good substance of bone. However his most impressive traits are in calving ease and sire fertility. He could be the new O-Man with a calving ease of 3.8% with over 8,000 observations and +2.8 SCR with over 17,000 breedings.

Next is the most anticipated son of May, 7HO12477 McCutchen. He has been one of our most successful Super Samplers for total sales but now his daughters are calving and a new round of excitement is emerging. I have seen 20 or 30 daughters throughout the

West and Midwest and his type pattern should be extremely impressive. They are the kind that stop you to ask "what is she?" They are above average sized 2-year-olds but milking very well and the early daughters are classifying very well with several VG 2-year-olds already.

Next is the highest GTPI brother at the moment, 7HO11279 Moonboy. He is a Dorcy son of May and although not as high of a production sire, he excels in health and fitness traits for a Dorcy son and his type data is improving as we get more SET data in. Udders are this bull's calling card and they have great attachments and are well above the hocks.

Finally, 7HO11288 Mayor is Moonboy's full brother and he has a legitimate chance of graduating and improve production and type as well.

### 2.) 7HO11207 Punch

In the genomic era, there will be bulls used as sire fathers that do not come back to active service. While they made sound cows and some of the sons will get progeny, they haven't made the cut. Punch is one of those being a Shadow Boxer son, but his dam is Seagull-Bay O-Man Mirror, making Punch a brother to Robust. I had the chance to see several Punch daughters through the winter and the most impressive group was in California at Ru-Ann. Pat Maddox was very happy with his group. They had really good udders and were moderate sized cows with good strength and great mobility.

### 3.) 7HO12488 Branson

Branson is one of the early Observer sons and I had a chance to see several in Ohio recently and they were really eye catching with the kind of udders you would expect from an Observer son. His dam is a VG-86 Ramos granddaughter of PR Barbie so great type is in the pedigree.

### 4.) 7HO11367 Daddy

Daddy is another Observer son that the early daughters are easy to spot in the pens with terrific udders and good production. He is from the well-known Ronelee Outside Dabble (EX-93) and

this might be the most logical cross on Dabble yet. His data may suggest waiting until August but the early daughters are very impressive.

### 5.) 7HO11118 Brokaw

Brokaw has been known as an elite source for type and his daughters are confirming it. They have the kind of udders one would expect from an Atwood son. Surprisingly, they are not as massive in their frames as maybe we expected but maybe that is a good thing. But they definitely have eye appeal and his heifers will continue to be at the head of a lot of heifer classes at the shows this year.

### 6.) 7HO11096 Benetar

Benetar is an early Bogart son that hails from a different fork of Goldwyn's maternal line. His dam is a Baxter sister to the Dec. graduate Boulder and then Gen-I-Beq Shottle Bombi (EX-92). He will most likely be a health and fitness specialist as well as a calving ease sire.

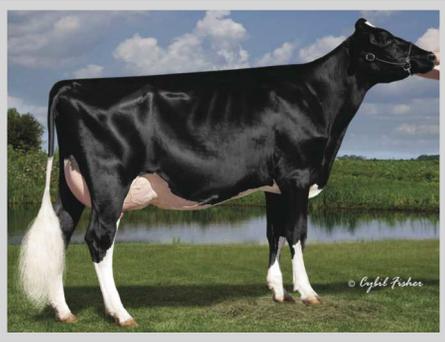
### 7.) 250HO1009 Brewmaster

Hailing from the same maternal line as Benetar, Brewmaster is Garrett brother to Boulder and then Shottle Bombi. Based on the past few months of interim data, Brewmaster will most likely be the new #1 GLPI Sire in Canada. He will be a great cross to Mogul and Planet bloodlines

### 8.) 7HO11351 Supersire

The last of this group is a bit of a wildcard as to whether he will graduate but he has 26 scored daughters and the daughters we have seen as a sire team have given us a lot of optimism. Supersire could soon follow Mogul as exceeding the expectations that were placed on him. His daughters have tremendous udders with great attachments and yet are milking extremely well. Additionally, they have functional feet and legs and are average to slightly above average in stature.

**New proofs - April 7th - watch [www.allwestselectsires.com](http://www.allwestselectsires.com) for the latest information!**



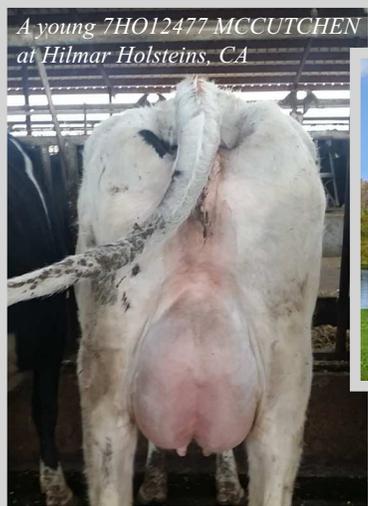
*Whittier-Farms Brokaw Color (VG-87)  
Daughter of 7HO11118 BROKAW  
Whittier Farms, MA*



*Ladys-Manor Mayf Dodi-ET (VG-86)  
Daughter of 7HO11283 MAYFIELD  
My Ladys Manor Farm, MD*



*Clarkridge Brewmaster Muffet  
Daughter of 250HO1009 Brewmaster  
Clarkridge Holsteins, ON*



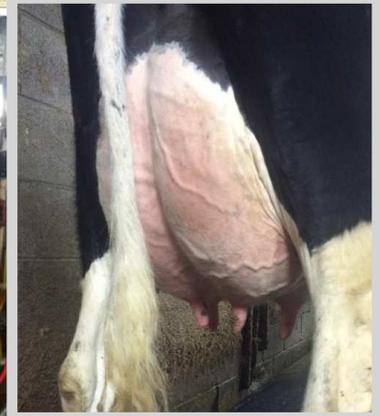
*A young 7HO12477 MCCUTCHEM  
at Hilmar Holsteins, CA*



*Walnutlawn McCutchen Summer  
(pictured at 2-00) Daughter of  
7HO11477 MCCUTCHEM  
Walnutlawn Farms Ltd., ON*



*A 7HO11283 MAYFIELD  
at Betinelli's Dairy, CA*



*A just fresh 7HO11351 SUPERSIRE  
at Cedarwal Farms, BC*

## The Impact of 1%

One percent doesn't seem like a big deal in some measurements. Going from 98 to 99% on a test is still very near perfect. Getting 19 or 20% off on a tool sale is significant, but not drastic. But improving conception rate or heat detection rate by 1% is not only significant, it can totally change the look of your herd's reproductive health.

We talked with one of Select Reproductive Solutions (SRS) specialists, Bill Van de Graaf of Sunnyside, WA, on what a difference 1% can make.

gether with our producers to improve just a little in these areas, the resulting output is outstanding."

"I'm going to use some slides from DC 305 to illustrate just how big of a change improving conception rate or heat detection rate can improve pregnancy rates. It's incredible to see it, and if we can work to-

"In this first slide, I highlighted three consecutive 21-day periods that have the same heat detection rate. Based on this, following are slides to show what the conception rates were for each of those periods."



Date	Nr Elig	Bred	Pct	Pg Elig	Preg	Pct Aborts
5/15/12	551	338	61	539	95	18 14
6/05/12	505	300	59	498	74	15 16
6/26/12	503	262	52	495	36	7 12
7/17/12	562	346	62	553	55	10 17
8/07/12	642	419	65	634	93	15 25
8/28/12	712	427	60	701	83	12 20
9/18/12	792	508	64	784	154	20 32
10/09/12	784	515	66	764	160	21 28
10/30/12	750	496	66	745	183	25 39
11/20/12	683	430	63	675	145	21 28
12/11/12	678	439	65	663	155	23 35
1/01/13	693	428	62	680	134	20 7
1/22/13	668	421	63	650	160	25 28
2/12/13	600	381	64	582	112	19 13
3/05/13	604	388	64	595	132	22 17
3/26/13	590	378	64	580	130	22 8
4/16/13	550	350	64	0	0	0 0 ????
5/07/13	400	295	74	0	0	0 0 ????
Total	10317	6476	63	10138	1901	19 339

**BREDSUM:  
21 day pregnancy risk  
Wait Period 50**

### By Sire from 02/12/13 through 03/04/13

Sire Name	95% CI	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SFC
7H7004	24-55	38	13	21	1	2	35	8	2.6
7H8165	26-48	36	27	47	5	3	79	18	2.7
7H8190	21-38	29	31	76	6	3	113	26	3.5
7H8221	-	24	4	13	1	0	18	4	4.3
7H9107	19-41	28	17	43	3	1	63	15	3.5
7H9264	19-39	28	21	54	2	4	77	18	3.6
7H9420	11-40	23	7	24	3	2	34	8	4.4
7H1110	-	36	4	7	0	0	11	3	2.8
TOTALS	26-35	30	124	285	21	15	430	100	3.3

“To get the preg rate we can multiply the heat detection rate by the conception rate. So for example, in the first period (2/12 through 3/4), it would be 30% conception x 64% heat detection = 19.2% pregnancy rate, while the other pregnancy rates come out to 21.8% and 22.4% respectively. Basically if you improve overall conception by 3%, you will improve your pregnancy rate by 2% if you get over 60% heat detection.”

### By Sire from 03/05/13 through 03/25/13

Sire Name	95% CI	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
7H7004	24-55	38	13	21	1	2	35	8	2.6
7H8165	26-48	36	27	47	5	3	79	18	2.7
7H8190	21-38	29	31	76	6	3	113	26	3.5
7H8221	-	24	4	13	1	0	18	4	4.3
7H9107	19-41	28	17	43	3	1	63	15	3.5
7H9264	19-39	28	21	54	2	4	77	18	3.6
7H9420	11-40	23	7	24	3	2	34	8	4.4
7H11110	-	36	4	7	0	0	11	3	2.8
TOTALS	26-35	30	124	285	21	15	430	100	3.3

### By Sire from 03/26/13 through 04/15/13

Sire Name	95% CI	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
7H7004	24-55	38	13	21	1	2	35	8	2.6
7H8165	26-48	36	27	47	5	3	79	18	2.7
7H8190	21-38	29	31	76	6	3	113	26	3.5
7H8221	-	24	4	13	1	0	18	4	4.3
7H9107	19-41	28	17	43	3	1	63	15	3.5
7H9264	19-39	28	21	54	2	4	77	18	3.6
7H9420	11-40	23	7	24	3	2	34	8	4.4
7H11110	-	36	4	7	0	0	11	3	2.8
TOTALS	26-35	30	124	285	21	15	430	100	3.3

That’s all good to know, but how can a producer improve these conception rates and ultimately pregnancy rates? Bill has had success in herds he works with by improving heat detection (chalking cows on a regular basis), providing herd technicians with refresher courses, and of course reducing heat stress on cows, which will be a prominent factor for All-West customers very soon.

“You can see in this slide that the example dairy drops below 20% conception rate during the summer months, so my job is to look at how they handle heat stress and work on improvements there first.”

### By Calendar Month from 04/23/12 through 04/23/13

Month	95% CI	%Conc	#Preg	#Open	Other	Abort	Total	%Tot	SPC
2012 April	26-42	34	43	84	4	5	131	2	3.0
2012 May	25-32	28	171	430	27	31	628	8	3.5
2012 June	21-29	25	107	326	16	24	449	6	4.0
2012 July	11-17	14	59	369	12	19	440	6	7.3
2012 August	16-22	19	135	567	17	37	719	9	5.2
2012 September	22-28	25	173	516	13	44	702	9	4.0
2012 October	30-36	33	248	505	28	40	781	10	3.0
2012 November	32-39	36	274	497	13	55	784	10	2.8
2012 December	31-39	35	226	422	20	53	668	9	2.9
2013 January	30-37	34	252	494	25	33	771	10	3.0
2013 February	28-36	32	173	366	26	22	565	7	3.1
2013 March	30-38	34	203	394	16	23	613	8	2.9
2013 April	33-43	38	146	240	14	5	400	5	2.6
TOTALS	29-31	30	2210	5210	231	391	7651	100	3.4

In a Hoard’s Dairyman online article, “Boosting preg rates pays multiple dividends,” author Jeff Stevenson of Kansas State University states, “The value of each percentage point bump runs about \$66, so moving two points would yield an additional \$132 per cow. As herd pregnancy rate rises, the value of the increase lessens but is still significant in herds with 20% preg rate.” He also explained “Payback from improvements in pregnancy rate will take time.” Benefits include more milk revenues, more calf revenues and increased value of culls/dairy sales of cows.

*Kit Watson who’s an All-West technician and SRS specialist knows this all too well. He works with herds in the same east central part of Washington state.*

When talking about raising reproductive performance by 1%, the 21 day pregnancy rate must be the measurement we use. There are an infinite amount of factors that influence reproduction performance, and the 21 day pregnancy rate is the closest metric to measure overall re-



production on a farm. The impact of raising this rate by 1% can be converted to an economic value, which is encouraging to farmers. The lower the preg rate is, the greater the economic return can be. As a higher preg rate is achieved, that economic value of a 1% gain is marginally decreased. This value is controlled by milk income over feed costs, newborn value, reproductive costs, and culling and mortality costs.

Farmers I work with like to see that dollar value on changes made in their reproductive program. I get excited when I see opportunity to improve a preg rate and get the farmer more value in his cows. Even small changes on the farm can convert into big dollars. I often look to improve things like semen handling, heat abatement, stress, and synchronization protocols. Every change we make to the reproductive program can be monitored and evaluated to measure the success and calculate the added economic value. When evaluating these small 1% gains, I like to monitor the farm frequently to understand not only how those changes are taking place, but to discover other avenues of increasing performance in the future.

Overall, increasing preg rate by 1% can equate to real dollars in your pocket. These savings can be significant. Paying attention to the details pays off.

# Always thinking ahead: research and Select Sires



*Matthew D. Utt, Ph.D.  
Director of Research  
Select Sires, Inc.*

Select Sires has always made a commitment to deliver our customers both high-quality genetics and superior fertility. Research has been, and will continue to be, a major component of meeting this commitment. The research team at Select Sires consists of

many years of scientific expertise in male and female reproduction. The scope of our research program can be broadly divided into the following major areas:

- 1) Sperm quality evaluation and prediction of bull fertility
- 2) Enhancing sperm tolerance to cryopreservation
- 3) Maximizing sperm harvest
- 4) Enhancing female fertility
- 5) Alternative technologies
- 6) Competitive grants
- 7) Program for Fertility Advancement™ (PFA™)

**Sperm quality and prediction of bull fertility.** It is important to note that prediction of bull fertility is a difficult endeavor due to the inherent imprecision of fertility estimation. Therefore, attempting to discern subtle differences among bulls is an exercise in futility more than utility. However, there is merit to investigating certain features or characteristics of sperm from those bulls that pass our stringent quality system and either float to the top or sink to the bottom of the fertility pool. When considering the journey of a single spermatozoon from deposition in the uterus through fertilization and initiation of embryo development, the possibilities throughout this journey of where sperm might experience failure or success are seemingly endless. The experience and reproductive knowledge of our research team coupled with tools such as flow cytometry, computer-assisted sperm analysis (CASA), various types of microscopy, and others provides a strong platform for investigating additional potential “make it” or “break it” sperm characteristics that affect fertility. With that being said, there is likely no “silver” bullet that determines fertility as semen contains diverse groups of sperm that differ in multiple traits. At the end of the day, it is how this information is used by the quality control team to determine what semen should NOT be released for sale to producers. Last year Select Sires discarded approximately 1.6 million doses of semen after freezing, which allows the highly screened samples release for sale to achieve the highest level of fertility in the industry.

## **Enhancing sperm tolerance to cryopreservation.**

Sometimes I marvel at the fact that we can freeze semen, thaw it 30 years later, and have motile sperm capable of creating a pregnancy. The system works well, but a significant portion of sperm are damaged by the cryopreservation and thawing process. Select’s research team is continually in search of new techniques, procedures, and extender formulations that may help to diminish the magnitude of damage caused by cryopreservation. Assessment of progress in this area is facilitated by the use of technologies such as flow cytometry and CASA.

**Maximizing sperm harvest.** Although maximizing sperm harvest has been a focus of Select Sires research for decades, the genomics era has certainly added a new twist and heightened interest. As more and more market demand shifts from proven sires to genomic young sires that produce approximately one-third the numbers of sperm, straw production efficiency declines accordingly. The team has to work harder and harder just to keep pace, not to mention trying to grow. In addition, accelerating age at puberty in the genomic race to ensure earlier arrival to the market place is more important. Select has conducted both in-house projects and sponsored numerous University efforts in the last 25 years designed to reduce age and puberty in males and increase semen production as mature sires. Dairy producers world-wide are now reaping the benefits of those efforts through greater access to semen from high demand young sires, some of which have been capable of producing more than 100,000 doses of semen before three years of age.

**Enhancing female fertility.** Even with the diligence and pride we put into making our quality semen products, it is all for nothing if the fertility of the females in the herd is the limiting factor. Select Sires has been an industry leader in conducting and sponsoring research designed to enhance female fertility. These efforts include development of novel, more effective techniques to synchronize estrus and management techniques to enhance conception rates. Each year Select Sires sponsors a symposium gathering the premier researchers from across the country to brainstorm on the next promising avenues of study.

**Alternative technologies.** Select Sires routinely investigates new technologies to offer customers unique products. Two prime examples of this are the product launches of activity monitoring systems and sex-sorted semen. Research trials conducted prior to the launch of our activity monitoring systems provided a basis of knowledge for optimal timing of AI. Select Sires was the first major bull stud to bring sex-sorted semen to the marketplace. Field trials conducted prior to the product launch provided the basis for fertility expectations of using the product. We continued to work with Sexing Technologies to enhance performance for years after product launch.

**Competitive Grants Program.** Select Sires sponsors the largest competitive grants program in the A.I. industry. Each year, Select solicits grant proposals from universities across the country. These proposals cover all aspects of beef and dairy management ranging from enhancement of male and female fertility, nutritional management, and enhanced genetic evaluations, to name a few. In the past 30 years, Select has invested in excess of \$2 million into university research on behalf of beef and dairy producers world-wide.

## **Program for Fertility Advancement™ (PFA™).**

Most semen quality and sperm experiments begin in the laboratory, which is the easy part. If promising data are achieved in the lab, it is important to verify the impact on field fertility before making changes to routine processing procedures or launching a new product. This is where Select’s PFA program comes in. The PFA program consists of approximately 150 herds and 200,000 cows that can be utilized for these fertility trials. The PFA program has been an invaluable program, and has served as a litmus test for new extender additives, formulations, new technologies, and more.

Select Sires has enjoyed success for many years and continued growth is a reality. Research will play a vital role in discovery of innovative technologies and solutions for our customers in addition to maintaining a tradition of highly-fertile semen in the wake of continued growth.



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## I'll Never Be Without It!

Boudewyn DeHoop really likes using BioFresh boluses as a preventative treatment for his cows. Originally operating an organic dairy of over 800 Holsteins and crossbreds, DeHoop used BioFresh if cows were over 200,000 SCC. "I'd give those particular cows two boluses to bring the SCC down closer to our herd average, which was 130,000. As we're transitioning to a conventional Jersey herd, every new cow gets BioFresh and PastePlus as soon as they step off the truck. I will never be without it!"

*Boudewyn & Audrey DeHoop, Klamath Falls, OR*

