

Go along on a Canadian Holstein tour

Foundation matriarch of the herd

BY JOYCE BUYP

Staff Correspondent

TORONTO, Canada — Six of Canada's top registered Holstein herds opened their barn doors last week to York County Holstein members taking part in the group's annual farm tour.

Warm hospitality, impressive cattle, and delightful spring weather greeted the York dairymen at the herds of Hanover Hill, Roybrook, Romandale, Rowntree, Browndale and Ebyholme. All six of these outstanding operations are located on the rolling farmland on the outskirts of Ontario's largest city.

Hanover Hill has its roots in New York state, and just ten years ago relocated to the Canadian province. A 1972 dispersal of the former Tara Hills herd paved the way for the move north, where many of the herd's customers were located and an excellent export market for young sires exists.

From the initial herd of 45 cows in the Hanover Hill operation restarted in 1974 at Port Perry, numbers have grown to about 375 total head, with 105 in the milking string.

30 Excellents

A roomy stall barn for 45 head houses top animals, including the farm's 30 Excellents, and some of the 35 VG and 30 GP individuals. Overflow animals are kept in an adjacent loose housing facility, and switched to the stalls for milking.

Two of the herd favorites were familiar to most of the York visitors. Brookfield Tony Charity, 1982 All-American winner by Mars Tony, was a several-times national show winner, including taking top honors at the 1982 Harrisburg All-American show.

She is fresh since July and continues to milk over 100 pounds per day with a 3.9 fat test, projected to 28,000, and bred back to Valiant. In November, Charity was selected champion of Toronto's Royal Winter fair.

Matriarch of Hanover Hill is Tara Hills Pride Lucky Barb, born in 1966 and given her own special large boxstall in one of the farm's airy pole buildings for housing young stock. Scored 2E-94, Barb is the dam of the popular Red Holstein sire, Hanover Hill Triple Threat-Red, seeing heavy use in herds on both sides of the border.

Hanover Hill continues to use Triple Threat, as well as other popular sires including Elevation, Fond Matt and Citation R, according to Ken Trevena, co-owner of the farm with Peter Heffering.

Focus on hay

Feeding program for this type-conscious herd is typically Canadian, focusing on hay, which is fed four times daily. Haylage goes into the feed troughs twice a day, with once-daily corn silage feedings.

While silage corn can be grown in the short warm season, corn grain cropping is not compatible with the climate, and most feed grains and concentrates are purchased into Canadian feeding programs.

Hanover Hill supplements their ration with a mixture of cottonseed and beetpulp to producers topping 70 pounds daily, boosting the energy, protein and fiber levels of the feeding program.

Calves are hutch-raised, then moved into an enclosed, insulated small-pen barn at weaning age. Older calves and yearlings are housed in large group pens, with each animal identified by sire on large, overhead blackboards.

"Small is beautiful" might be considered the philosophy at Roybrook Farms, Brooklin, where an intensely linebred herd of 33 milking animals includes some of Canada's outstanding individuals of the Holstein breed. Seven of the only 600 "Elite" cows in Canada are at Roybrook.

Balsam Brae Pluto Sovereign, affectionately dubbed the "white" cow, was the foundation of the Roybrook herd, which today averages over 18,000 milk with a 4.2 test. Included on the honors listed beneath her picture which hangs in the milkhouse are All-Canadian aged cow in 1956 and winner of the best udder at the Royal Winter Fair that same year.

Seven generations of descendants from her are currently in the milking string, and every animal traces back to her, some with five generations of Excellents in their pedigree. Her son, Ace, by Lakefield Fond Hope, turns up somewhere in the pedigree of every milking string member as well.

Numerous herd sons have seen popularity in the A.I. industry, including such well-knowns as Starlite, Telstar and Tempo.

Starlite worked extremely well at Roybrook. Of the herd's seven Excellents, five are by Starlite, and several milk over 1,000 pounds fat.

Supports 4 families

This small operation owned by Roy Ormiston, supports four families through milking and merchandising, and has a total of about 75 head. Calves are raised in



With Hanover Hill co-owner Ken Trevena is Tara Hills Pride Lucky Barb, one of the farm's foundation individuals. Now more than 17 years old, she is the dam of Hanover Hill Triple Threat-Red and scored 2E-94.

an environment-controlled barn and several of the most valued brood cows are given individual boxstall housing.

Top pedigrees

Romandale Farm is located near Unionville, and the herd is managed for owner Stephen Roman by Dave Houck. Early pedigree background on the herd includes the bloodlines of Canadian greats, ABC Reflection Sovereign and Lakefield Fond Hope. Sons of ABC, like Romandale Dividend and Romandale Reflection Marquis, added additional pedigree strength.

A crossing of the herd's Pet Crysta, a former All-American, to Citation R, resulted in a son that sold to Japan but has been a modern building block of the Romandale breeding. Count Crystan has eight outstanding daughters in the herd, three scored Excellent, four VG and one scored GP.

Romandale has been well-known to York Holstein breeders as the co-owner of the George Knight family's Northcroft Ella Elevation, EX-97-3E. Ella remains at the Knight's Woodbine farm in York County, but two of her daughters are milking in the Romandale herd. They are by Roybrook Starlite and Romandale's own County Crystan.

York breeders welcomed



Romandale herd superintendent Dave Houck welcomes York breeders with a brief history of the bloodlines of this world-famous herd.

Two of her sons are at Canada's United Breeders, one sired by Rowndale Sir Christopher and one by Fleetridge Monitor. She is one of only four milking females in the Holstein breed to be four times All-American, and won the Royal Winter Fair, and All-Canadian Aged Cow in 1981.

Pa.-bred cow

Another Pennsylvania-bred cow also holds a prominent place in the Romandale herd. Valley Pond Astro Ann, an Astronaut daughter, was bred by the Hershey Bare family at their Lebanon R2 farm.

Rowntree Farms heavily into embryo transfer work from their 31 Excellents, 65 Very Goods and a few GP individuals, with a herd average of over 18,500 and 3.9 test on 305 days. Three years ago, the Brampton herd was Canada's highest on test.

Originally the owner of Em-Tran, the embryo transfer specialist firm at Elizabethtown, Rowntree now operates Via-Pax, their own ET subsidiary located just a few miles from the main farm.

As Canada's third largest exporter of cattle, and leading bull exporter, Rowntree has sent 500

head to South America and Russia since last October. Two or three young sires are also syndicated annually, including this year's favorite from their Symbol family, Rowntree Replicator-ET, by Tidy Burke Elevation.

Showing is a major part of the focus on merchandising at Rowntree during the past ten years, 26 All-American, All-Canadian, or reserve honors have been won by Rowntree's outstanding individuals.

The milk will follow

While sire selection is largely in response to market trends, emphasis is put on good udders, feet and legs, and body strength and capacity.

"If those requirements are met," says breeder and merchandiser Tom Rowntree, "milk production will follow."

Bob Brown and his sons operate Browndale Farms, near Paris, a 45-head milking herd with production averaging over 20,500 milk and 805 fat.

Breeding of this herd is largely along the lines of the farm's own-bred sires, several of them from their Excellent 1972-73 All-

Boyers talk with Canadian host



York's state Holstein director Tom Boyer and his wife, June, talk with Brian Eby of Ebyholme Farm.