



Penn State Cooperative Extension Capitol Region Dairy Team

NET MERIT INDEX CHANGES

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Net Merit indexes for AI bulls in the August 2003 sire summary include three new traits and are based on different weights than the previous version of Net Merit. The three new traits are daughter pregnancy rate (DPR), service sire calving ease (SCE), and daughter calving ease (DCE).

DPR receives a relative weight of 7 percent in Net Merit, and SCE and DCE each receive minus 2 percent of total emphasis. This emphasis has to come from other traits already in the index, meaning that something else loses ground. The traits with less emphasis were production traits and productive life (PL), where total weight for milk, fat, and protein declined from 62 percent to 55 percent impact on Net Merit. Yield will still improve, but a little less rapidly than with the old index.

The decline in emphasis for PL was from 14 to 11 percent, but genetic progress in PL should actually increase because selection for more fertile daughters (from positive weight on DPR) and for less calving difficulty (from negative weight on SCE and DCE) will increase longevity.

Over a 10-year period, selection on Net Merit would decrease SCS by -.44, changing the breed average SCS for Holsteins from 3.10 to 2.66. That's an impressive change, but it would be gradual enough that many dairy producers might notice fewer cases of mastitis and less culling or death loss from severe mastitis. Ten year's selection for better fertility through Net Merit would im-



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prove DPR by about 1 percent (from about 20 percent pregnancy rate to 21 percent for an average Holstein cow).

DPR will change more slowly than some other traits because of low heritability, but perhaps more importantly because of a genetic antagonism with milk production. Genes for higher milk tend to be associated with genes for lower fertility. However, fertility will improve over time with the new index, whereas selection on any of those indexes that emphasize production and ignore fertility can't make that claim. The changes in Net Merit make it even more clearly the "index of choice" for commercial milk producers in the U.S.

Editor's note: This article was written by Dr. Bennet Cassell, extension dairy scientist, genetics and management, Virginia Tech. It appeared in the August issue of "Dairy Pipeline."

Shultz Brothers Holstein 'Celebration Sale' Oct. 3

DAVE LEFEVER Lancaster Farming Staff

JERSEYTOWN (Columbia Co.) — To dairy farmers looking for registered Holsteins in Pennsylvania since the late 1960s, the name Shultz probably rings a bell.

In the past 35 years, the partnership of brothers Leo, Clark, and Paul Shultz had sold 693 head of Holsteins for dairy purposes, offering the animals at various consignment auctions and selling them directly off the farm.

The Shultz partnership dates to 1953, when they began dairying together on the home farm. In 1962, they built a 60-stall

dairy barn with the goal of keep the herd size within its limits.

"We figured if couldn't make it with 60 (cows), we'd try something else," said Paul Shultz. That commitment to keeping the herd size down has allowed the brothers to sell a lot of animal over the years.

At 76, Paul is the youngest of the three brothers. Clark is 79. Leo Shultz passed away two years ago.

The Shultzes have always paid attention to good genetics and herd health. They used AI from the start, have maintained a closed herd since 1962, and are certified Johnes-free, according to Paul.

Patrick Family Shows Ayrshire Champion, Honored For 40 Years In The Ring



The David Patrick Family of Maple Dell Farm, Woodbine, Md., is honored for exhibiting Ayrshires at the All-American for all 40 years of the show's existence. Shown here, from left, are Pennsylvania Ayrshire Princess Amanda Brant; Michael Pechart, executive assistant to the Pennsylvania secretary of agriculture; Pam Werley, Pennsylvania alternate dairy princess; Charlie Itle, All-American Dairy Show manager; the Patrick family; Carla Martin, Pennsylvania dairy princess; and Obie Snider, All-American board of directors president.

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Tuesday was a big day for the David Patrick family of Maple Dell Farms.

The Ayrshire breeders from Woodbine, Md., not only won the grand champion banner in the Mid-Atlantic National Ayrshire Show, the family also received a milk can handpainted with a scene from their farm.

The gift, presented by the All-American Dairy Show committee, was in honor of the Patricks exhibiting Ayrshires at the All-American ever since the show began 40 years ago.

Maple Dell Trident Song, a 4-year-old cow exhibited by the Patricks, was named grand champion of the show.

The Shank and Creek families

of Palmyra Farm Ayrshires, Hagerstown, Md., also received a painted milk can for their long-time devotion to the All-American. According to Ralph Shank Jr., the 40-year family tradition of showing Ayrshires here began with his father Ralph W. Shank, and continues with Ralph Jr., his wife Mary Shank Creek, and other members of the Creek family.

Doug Evans of Sunny Acres Farm, Georgetown, N.Y., showed the reserve grand champion.

Junior champion was an intermediate calf owned by Jamie Place of Lincolnshire Farms, Ontario, Canada.

Craig and Bonnie Hawksley of West Kingston, R.I. had the reserve junior champion, a senior yearling heifer.

Curtis Day judged the show.



The Shank and Creek families of Palmyra Farm Ayrshires, Hagerstown, Md., receive a painted milk can for their dedication to the All-American for 40 years. Pictured here, from left, are Amanda Brant, Pennsylvania Guernsey Princess; Michael Pechart, executive assistant to the Pennsylvania ag secretary; Charlie Itle, All-American Dairy Show manager; Pam Werley, Pennsylvania alternate dairy princess; the Shank and Creek families; Carla Martin, Pennsylvania dairy princess; and Obie Snider, All-American board of directors president.



Joining the Ayrshire grand champion lineup, from left, are Amanda Brant, Pennsylvania Guernsey princess; Tim Horn and Everett Hopper of Pennfield, champion sponsor; Curtis Day, judge; Derek and David Patrick with the grand champion; Doug Evans, reserve; and Pennsylvania dairy princesses

All-American Class Results Next Issue

Complete class results for All-American Dairy Show are scheduled for next week's edition of Lancaster Farming.

The Shultz farm is located along Rt 254, about one and a half miles west of Jerseytown. The auction begins at 11 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 3.

Potential buyers and other interested people are also invited to an open house at the Shultz farm on the evening of Oct. 2.