



Aaltje 154 VG86, dam of Dudam Surprise, current lifetime yield 115,217kg of milk at 3.98% fat and 3.34% protein



Three-year-old Ursela 17 VG85, Surprise daughter. Production: 10,213kg of milk at 4.72% fat and 3.54% protein



Three-year-old Adrie 38 VG85, Surprise daughter. Second-lactation photograph. Production: 11,675kg of milk at 4.35% fat and 3.52% protein



**Dudam Surprise**  
(Dustin x Festival)

Noorder Dustin, sire of Surprise

Production proof 166 daughters in 148 herds  
(DairyCo breeding+, Interbull August 2008)

kg milk	% fat	% prot.	kg fat	kg prot.	PIN	PLI
+259	+0.09	+0.08	+16.7	+14.6	£31	£151
<b>Longevity:</b> 419 (exceptional)						
<b>SCC:</b> -15 (exceptional)						
<b>Calving ease:</b> 106 (very easy)						
<b>Temperament:</b> 101 (average)						
<b>Milking speed:</b> 100 (average)						
<b>Type Merit:</b> +0.84						

# Surprise keeps on surprising

The mother of this early Dustin son reached the 100,000kg limit before she was 10 years old

**Dudam Surprise continues to become more and more important after each Interbull proof run. His strong health trait breeding values and late maturing daughters are characteristics that come from both his father Noorder Dustin and his productive mother, Aaltje 154.**

Walking, as usual, with her 45 herd mates, Aaltje 154 still has lots of 'get up and go' even after yielding around 115,000kg of milk. Cleaner, after a short wash, this 11-year-old Delta Luxemburg daughter belonging to Henk and Dini Damhuis still exhibits a high attached rear udder and fine boned legs. "Nowadays you're supposed to want cows that are a bit bigger, but she has a real milky frame and she's as strong as a bear," says Henk. At 1.45m tall Aaltje 154 is not the biggest cow in the herd, but she's now proven herself as an adaptable cow. As well as a high lifetime yield reached when she was still relatively young – she achieved the 100,000kg milk barrier before she was 10 – she's the mother of one of CRV's most popular sires at the moment, Dudam Surprise.

## Dustin son

Dudam Surprise was first given a breeding value in May 2007, making him

the first son of Noorder Dustin to achieve breeding status. Since Surprise first appeared on the sire map, his popularity has risen along with his production breeding value. "Surprise has inherited genes from persistent late-maturing cows," says Tonny Koekoek, a member of the breeding staff at Holland Genetics (CRV). It was Tonny who advised the combination of Dustin and Luxemburg daughter Aaltje 154. "Aaltje 154 is a great cow for udders and legs, but she could use a bit more strength in the frame. This is why the combination with Dustin went so well." Dustin was not a sire father at the time, but was given that status when the breeding world started giving the breeding values for health characteristics more weight. At the time Dustin got his sire status, Surprise was not born yet, so he moved on at once to HG's breeding figures.

Dudam Surprise ('Dudam' is short for 'DUstin' and 'DAMhuis') was the fourth naturally born calf of Aaltje 154. "Aaltje 154 was an early daughter of Delta Luxemburg," says Henk. "Her yield was good, and HG wanted to mate her with Woudhoeve Russel." That resulted in two heifer calves and a young sire which could not be used because of the BLAD factor. "We've never had much luck with ET sessions," Henk says, pointing to previous ET sessions, the results of which, apart from Aaltje 154, were disappointing. Sunny Boy daughter Aaltje 129 was crossed with Luxemburg, from which as well as Aaltje 154, another sire was born. This young sire was not used in the end for veterinary reasons. Aaltje 148 (Jabot x Aaltje 129) was also used as a sire mother, but her two Zandenburger Royal sons never made it to breeding bull status.

## Family history

The Aaltjes have long been present at this 30-hectare unit. "We bought our first Aaltje in Friesland in 1947, just after the war," Henk remembers. "Today, we talk about durability, but that was something the first Aaltje already had: she lived to 18 years of age." The cow family has bred and grown

steadily and, of the 47 dairy cows today, in 2008 around two-thirds of the herd carry the name Aaltje. They perform well, given the rolling annual average of 10,012kg of milk with 4.46% fat and 3.55% protein. "When it comes to breeding, we've been following the mating advice programme for years," says Henk. "Good milk yield, high fat and protein inheritance, strong udders and legs and a cow with no problems. In fact, we usually breed what everyone tries to breed." Asking further, we find that Henk's thoughts are a little more qualified when

it comes to ultimately choosing sires. "I'd rather not use sires with extremely high or low fat and protein content inheritance, as these produce cows that tend to grow too fat too quickly, while descendants of sires with low contents never put any fat on their ribs."

## Breeding goals

Improving yield is a top breeding goal. "I'd like to have long life, hardy cows, but not at the expense of milk yield. The Aaltjes are cows that start quietly – they don't give 40kg each day as heifers. The yield really gets going in the second lactation, though. But I don't want to breed any cows where I have to wait a few years before they give 50kg milk either."

Henk also thinks character in a cow is important. "I don't like awkward cows, but I like seeing cows like Aaltje 154 who are always at the front when I'm feeding and who never leave any concentrate behind. If a cow's ill, I'll look after it for a week, but if it doesn't improve – if she doesn't show any character to get better – she's out," he says, resolutely.

Even Aaltje 154 doesn't get any special treatment, according to Henk. "She calved in August last year, and is still giving 40kg of milk a day, without any special attention at all." Dini looks at her

## A bit more condition

"I saw a number of Surprise daughters last year and they've now developed well as second calvers." So says producer Marten Knol, of Kampen, who recently selected cows to take part in the NRM daughter group. "These are average cows, some carry a bit more condition, but above all their legs are strong. Their udders are good, and the front teats are wide in a number of animals. Surprise meets CRV's new product line well – easy-to-manage, problem-free, producers' cows."

With good spacing between the rear teats, Surprise is an ideal bull to use on cows that are difficult to milk due to poor rear teat placement. Add to this his easy calving status and excellent health traits, and a somewhat different pedigree and Surprise is a bull that can be used widely. He is available from Avoncroft priced at £19 per straw.

husband now and then, saying: "I think if anything really happened to Aaltje 154, we'd make an exception and try to get her on her feet again for 14 days. But there's absolutely no question of that for the moment."

Jaap van der Knaap

