

Buckeye son rises to the top of the daughter-proven rankings

Levi finally heads sire list

Former Gold Cup finalist and respected Holstein breeder

Willy Ley shares his views on the latest daughter-proven and genomically-tested lists following the August bull proof run.

text Rachael Porter

There's a change at the top of the Profitable Lifetime Index rankings, published in August by DairyCo Breeding+, but close analysis of the figures reveals continued stability among the leading Holstein bulls. And it's not the number-one daughter-proven bull, Morningview Levi, who has now finally risen to the leading position helped by an improved daughter Fertility Index of +5.7, which has caught renown breeder Willy Ley's attention.



Willy Ley

It's the connections between the daughter-proven and genomically-tested lists that have got him all fired up.

Exciting times

"To me what's most fascinating this time around is to see how intermingled the two lists are. A bull like Planet, for example, who is at number 18 and still rising through the rankings in the 'conventional' list, has a grandson who's third and a son who is 16th in the genomic list. It's all a bit topsy-turvy and it's also exciting," he says.

"You could say that Planet has been or will be somewhat 'usurped' by his grandson McCutchen and by his son Bookem. Why would a breeder use Planet when they can use either of the

younger generations and predict, with a degree of certainty, that they'll get genetically-superior daughters from them.

"You could have a great grandson in the genomic ranking before you even get a daughter proof of a sire's son. It's mind blowing to see just how quick the genetic progress within a herd has the potential to be."

Willy has used Planet on his herd: "We're milking some of his daughters – they're just coming to the end of their first lactation. And they're great. Fat and protein could be a little higher, but they're some of the best heifers we've seen for years.

"I have been using some Bookem semen and have some yearlings on the ground.

But it'll be McCutchen that gets my attention now – why use the grandfather or the father when you can have the next and improved generation now? I suspect a lot of breeders will feel the same way.

"But, that said, there will always be breeders who prefer to stick with conventionally proven sires."

Good production

So, back to the conventional rankings and the leading Buckeye son. From an OMan x Durham dam, he goes back to the famous Whittier-Farms Lead Mae EX95. Now with a PLI of £256, Levi sums up all this index stands for, transmitting good production and superior fitness.

"I haven't used Levi, but I did use Buckeye. I have to say that I didn't get on well with his daughters and found them a little narrow in the rump, so I avoided his son. But, with figures like that, maybe I shouldn't have," says Willy.

He hasn't used any semen from second-ranking bull on the list Guarini. Having risen two places, this German-bred Goldwyn son is the best somatic cell count improver in the top 100 (SCC Index -31) and who now weighs in with a PLI of £249.

"I plumped for his brother Wyman. I think he caught my eye first and we've some of his calves on the ground that look promising.

Number-three bull, Lynbrook Jancen (PLI £246) is a former number-one sire and exhibits all the commercial strengths for which he is well known, while fourth

name	sire	mat. grandsire	supplier	production							functional traits				conformation			
				rel.	milk	fat kg	prot. kg	fat%	protein%	EPIN	EPLI	SCC	lifespan	fertility ind.	dCE	F&L	udder	TM
Morningview Levi	Buckeye	O Man	Genus	83	+680	+31.9	+25.9	+0.06	+0.05	51	256	-16	0.4	5.7	2.3	1.59	0.84	1.31
Guarini	Goldwyn	O Man	Bullsemen.com	75	+572	+23.5	+25.4	+0.01	+0.08	47	249	-31	0.4	2.4	1.3	1.89	2.14	2.32
Lynbrook Jancen	O Man	Manat	Bullsemen.com	75	+384	+31.2	+23.0	+0.20	+0.13	54	246	-13	0.5	1.9	1.4	-0.09	-0.41	-0.29
Ballycairn Tiergan	Goldwyn	Garner	Cogent	94	+353	+32.5	+18.1	+0.23	+0.08	47	241	-20	0.4	2.2	1.5	1.28	1.64	1.67
Goldfire	Goldwyn	O Man	Bullsemen.com	78	+579	+25.0	+22.7	+0.03	+0.05	43	238	-18	0.4	6.8	1.7	2.04	1.19	1.86
Danillo	Goldwyn	O Man	Sterling Sires	80	+533	+26.0	+20.4	+0.06	+0.04	41	236	-18	0.4	4.6	1.8	3.33	2.26	2.97
Co-Op Oman Logan	O Man	BW Marshall	Bullsemen.com	83	+903	+35.0	+28.0	-0.01	-0.01	52	235	-25	0.4	-0.6	1.2	1.05	0.21	0.61
Whitman O Man Awesome Andy	O Man	Zade	Bullsemen.com	83	+362	+29.0	+15.2	+0.18	+0.04	39	234	-24	0.7	5.3	2.2	0.74	-0.12	0.16
D Omar	O Man	Lukas	Viking Genetics	79	+458	+29.2	+22.6	+0.13	+0.09	50	232	-23	0.3	3.6	1.1	0.66	0.11	0.42
Cogent Twist	Shottle	Major	Cogent	95	+589	+39.7	+23.3	+0.20	+0.05	56	230	-11	0.3	-2.5	0.0	1.66	0.64	1.12
Mainstream Manifold	O Man	BW Marshall	Semex	83	+843	+33.9	+25.9	+0.01	-0.02	49	228	-9	0.3	4.7	3.2	0.11	1.08	0.99
ALH Dakota	O Man	Durham	Dairy Daughters	85	+955	+31.5	+31.8	-0.07	+0.01	54	225	-10	0.3	0.1	2.9	1.80	-0.11	0.44
Smiddiehill Saratoga	Goldwyn	Shottle	GB Bulls	78	+584	+36.4	+23.2	+0.15	+0.05	53	223	-16	0.3	-0.9	0.1	—	—	—
Long-Langs Oman Oman	O Man	Aaron	WWS UK	83	+789	+30.8	+31.5	+0.00	+0.07	57	223	-6	0.1	0.0	2.6	0.99	1.51	1.69
Gomez	Goldwyn	Lancelot	Sterling Sires	72	+356	+30.2	+19.0	+0.20	+0.09	47	220	-6	0.2	5.9	1.4	1.96	0.74	1.26
Laurelhill Classic	O Man	Laudan	Genus	87	+332	+19.9	+18.9	+0.08	+0.10	39	219	-22	0.4	6.6	1.9	0.06	1.42	1.25
Ufm-Dubs Altaesquire	O Man	Mark Sam	Alta	86	+539	+38.0	+24.1	+0.20	+0.08	57	217	-5	0.1	1.4	2.3	1.14	0.21	0.56
Ensenada Taboo Planet	Taboo	Amel	Dairy Daughters	95	+956	+26.3	+26.4	-0.13	-0.05	40	214	-5	0.5	1.9	2.2	1.49	2.57	2.45
Woudhoeve 1042 Impuls	O Man	Jesther	Avoncroft Genetics	78	+572	+27.3	+25.8	+0.06	+0.09	51	213	-14	0.1	4.9	1.0	0.25	0.01	0.20
Co-Op Oman Loydie	O Man	BW Marshall	Bullsemen.com	85	+534	+27.6	+25.2	+0.08	+0.09	51	213	-13	0.2	1.9	2.1	1.43	0.08	0.59

Table 1: Top 20 sires available in the UK ranked on PLI (source: DairyCo Breeding+ and Holstein UK)

position features the leading UK-bred and tested bull, Ballycairn Tiergan.

Tiergan's PLI at £241 has scarcely changed since the last proof run, as improvements in Fertility and Lifespan Indexes have been countered by a slight reduction in yield.

However, he holds the position of the highest percentage fat improver in the top 30.

In fifth position, Goldfire is the full brother to second-placed Guarini. With a PLI of £238 and a Fertility Index of +6.8, Goldfire is the best daughter fertility improver in the top 10.

In sixth position is newcomer, Danillo (Goldwyn x OMan), who is the highest type transmitter among the leading bulls. From the popular Markwell Bstar Raven EX95, Danillo is also the only bull from the Netherlands in the top 10.

Different view

Willy is surprised by how much the addition of the genomic list has changed his view of the bulls available. "It's also doubled the choice of sires, in my opinion.

"There are so many bulls with a PLI of more than £200 – there's something for

everyone – and it should be easier than ever before to avoid inbreeding."

Willy admits that he's drawn to the genomic table: "It's a little more exciting, but then only in comparison with the conventional list – it's interesting to view the two side by side," he says, adding that he thinks many other producers will feel the same.

"But there will always be people who like to play it safe – and that's a good thing too.

"Daughter proofs add a 'safety net' and a degree of stability to the whole job. They're still very important." I

Guarini



Morningview Levi



Efficient top-notch performance with red-and-white sires

There are no weaknesses in the transmission pattern of red-and-white genomics bull De Vrendt Aram (+242 NVI), according to Avoncroft. A high milk yield (+649kg), good longevity (+584 days), great udder health and strong conformation, he has it all. And, as an added bonus, he has an interesting pedigree with Award x Fiction.

In the list of daughter-proven bulls, Ju Tobias is CRV's highest ranked bull with +187 NVI. This Lionel son out of a Kian daughter transmits a high milk yield (+906kg)

and very good conformation (112), which he already displayed with his daughter group at the All-Holland Dairy Show in June. With a calving ease score of 111 he is very suitable for use on maiden heifers.

The captain of this ranking is Topspeed Kodak (+217 NVI, Kevin x Stadel). He retains the pole position he acquired in the April 2012 index run. With his consistent scores, where he excels in longevity (696 days) and calving ease (112), he is an animal of outstanding quality.

Topspeed Kodak

