


SLOTBOOMS PILOT
 (MASCOL X JOCKO X FATAL)

Production proof: 182 daughters in 152 herds
 (Source: GES/DairyCo breeding+, August 2012)

kg m	% fat	% prot.	kg fat	kg prot.	PIN	PLI
+356	+0.04	+0.05	+17.7	+15.9	£32	£127

Longevity: **+350 days**SCC: **-7**Calving ease: **106**Temperament: **100**Milking speed: **104**Fertility: **101**
Conformation traits: 110 daughters in 88 herds

	88	100	112
frame	107		
dairy strength	107		
udder	109		
feet and legs	106		
total score	111		

stature	103		
chest width	102		
body depth	106		
angularity	104		
condition score	101		
rump angle	104		
rump width	102		
rear legs rear view	104		
rear legs side view	105		
foot angle	95		
locomotion	107		
fore udder attachment	103		
front teat placement	105		
teat length	91		
udder depth	106		
rear udder height	105		
central ligament	107		
rear teat placement	110		

Sound and trouble free

"The cattle breeders that we asked to put forward their Pilot daughters for the NRM show group didn't know them from memory. The Pilots really are inconspicuous – they're invisible," says CRV's Bastiaan Vernooy. Together with fellow breeding committee member, Cees de Jong, Bastiaan set up the NRM Pilot daughter group. "These daughters are sound, trouble-free cows that stand well on slightly sickled legs. I have only seen the low score for foot angle in one of the Pilots." Bastiaan uses Pilot in his own herd on milky cows with straight legs.

Anton Slotboom: "The Geertje family always breeds in a way that results in 'invisible' cows"

Flying start for Pilot

The Geertje family is relatively new in the breeding world but, thanks to Pilot, it has got off to the very best possible start with an exciting and exceptional breeding bull. During the NRM, the All Holland Dairy Show in the Netherlands, the Mascol son surprised people with his uniform daughter group.

 text **Florus Pellikaan**

Anton and Bianca Slotboom, from Neede in the Netherlands, had never been on the NRM podium until last June when the bull bred by them, Slotbooms Pilot, entered the ring with a daughter group. "It was a really exciting moment. You hear the speaker talking about your bull and your herd name is on the board for the group – that's brilliant," says Anton.

For many people, both the cow family behind Pilot, the Geertjes, and their breeders, the Slotboom family, were new names in breeding. However, there is absolutely no question of this being a fluke. "We don't go to shows because we have not grown up with them, but we do have a love for breeding," says Anton. "For many years we have been more heavily involved than the average producer in bulls and combinations. We always try to compensate for the weak points in a cow. Protein, feet and legs, udder health and late maturity are particularly important."

Well rounded

From this philosophy the Slotboom family has, for many years, built on the Geertje family and Anton's parents have also contributed. "My grandfather came to this farm in 1925 and he already had the Geertjes at that time. The oldest Geertje that I can remember is Geertje 39 and today we're milking Geertje 581," says Anton.

"Three quarters of our 80 dairy cows are Geertjes. They are not large cows but they are sound and robust and are late maturing and persistent. With each lactation they produce more milk and

accrue more points for type. The two Mascol sisters of Pilot scored 83 and 84 points as heifers and today they scored 86 and 87 points. Besides, the Geertjes are always the better production cows in the herd."

Anton also describes the family as perfect cows that have no characteristics that need to be bred in or out. "The family always breeds the way you want it to. I think that this is because the family is so well rounded in all characteristics."

Sound cows

CRV sire analyst Tonny Koekkoek has known the Geertje family for almost 20 years and he confirms the description. "They are sound cows with superb rumps that really achieve continuous development and high lifetime production. I regularly ask Anton to let me see the Geertjes again in their following lactation because you know that they are continuously developing. That has nothing to do with breeding or care, this cow family is just so late maturing," says Tonny.

Geertje 222 was the first cow in the Geertje family who attracted the attention of AI companies. The Sunny Boy daughter is the great great grandmother of Pilot, produced 129,000kg of milk in her lifetime and also gave 10,000kg of fat and protein. "She achieved lactations of well into the 120 lactation value and scored highly for our old selection criteria," says Tonny. At CRV's request Geertje 222 was flushed with Labelle, but that did not result in an AI bull.

According to Anton, around the same time the United Nick daughter of



Jocko daughter Geertje 358, Slotbooms Pilot's mother

Geertje 222 was flushed as a yearling with Dombinator. A bull from this flushing did go to AI but was ultimately rejected because of the udder depth of its highly productive mother, who produced a total of almost 85,000kg of milk. The bull Fatal then follows in Pilot pedigree, after United Nick. "With many cow families, Fatal was ill-fated but the Geertje family could take it and Geertje 270 even scored another 85 points for legs," says Tonny.

The technical breeding interest really got into its stride from the Jocko mother of

Pilot, Geertje 358. "Owing to greater width and capacity Jocko was ideally suited to the Fatal daughter," he explains. "Geertje 358 developed into a heavy cow and was the first on our farm achieved 89 points." She also turned out to be a good producer and in her third lactation produced more than 13,000kg of milk with 3.57% protein in 305 days.

Her lifetime production reached around 72,000kg of milk. The Jocko daughter was a bull mother throughout her life, but CVM played a lot of tricks on her.

The whole pedigree structure of the Geertje family was dealt with by Anton, until Geertje 358 has to be flushed.

Frame improver

"Tonny let me choose from Ramos, Apina Fortune and Mascol. Both Tonny's and my preference was Mascol because he inherited higher values than Ramos. I found Fortune to be less suitable because, after Jocko, he would be a second 'fat reducer,'" explains Anton.

The flushing with Mascol resulted in Pilot and three heifer calves, two of which are still in production.

From a flushing with Buckeye, one young bull went to Germany. But owing to its

own type it was not put into service. As the first AI bull put into service from the Geertje family, Pilot was therefore promoted directly to an AI bull.

"You can see the cow family traits in the Pilots. They are sound, not too big, have superb rumps and develop very well. Pilot can really improve a lot in frame characteristics," says Tonny.

"The bull does everything right, including the health characteristics and that is his strength. Above all, Pilot is free from OMan, Shottle and Goldwyn blood.

While Pilot's breeding values are slowly improving, Tonny is continuing to work with the Geertje family on a successor.

With Slotbooms Urbanus (Brilliant x Geertje 436, the full sister of Pilot) a young bull is already waiting for the time to be put to use. The Mascol sisters and a Gibor daughter from Geertje 436 are under contract at CRV, just like Snowman, Brilliant and Jordan daughters. Other AI organisations are also showing interest. "In 2011 30 calves were born from bull contracts and, together with the start of Pilot, we have had a busy year", says Anton.

"We haven't the faintest idea where it will end, but we are enjoying the breeding." |

