

Outstanding fertility and udder health sire  
tops bull rankings

# Awesome by name – and by nature

Former Gold Cup finalist and respected Holstein breeder

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

text **Rachael Porter**

**A**nother OMan son has taken the top spot in the latest bull proof run and Devon-based breeder Willy Ley isn't surprised.

Ranked on Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI), US-bred Whitman OMan Awesome Andy (OMan x Zade) leads the list. He rises from fourth position, predominantly by virtue of the outstanding health and fitness seen in his daughters. With an exceptional daughter Fertility Index (7.1) and good udder health (SCC Index -23), he also becomes the breed leader for daughter lifespan, at 0.8. This means his daughters will, on average, last nearly a full lactation (0.8) longer than an average cow. Awesome's overall PLI is £260.

"He's a great bull, particularly for the price of his semen, with lots of second-crop daughters in the US. I've not used him as his type linear didn't do it for me. But he's a winner – a sound commercial bull. How else would he be at number one?" says Willy.

With a PLI of £259, former front-runner Guarini maintains his strong position and, with an SCC Index of -32, he

remains the best cell count improver of the breed. "I have used him on my herd. He's a good all rounder. I have some heifers on the ground, which are looking great, but none are milking at the moment."

## UK bull

The new number-one UK-proven bull – Ballycairn Oman Pello – sits in third position with a PLI of £248. "He looks very sound and he offers high type merit," says Willy, adding that he's another OMan son and has certainly caught his eye this time around. This sire has improved on daughter fitness and production traits, rising from sixth position in the December 2012 rankings. With a Predicted Transmitting Ability (PTA), which includes 981kg of milk, he is the highest milk transmitter in the top 60.

"I have to admit that I'd not really looked at him seriously before, but I'm certainly looking at his proof in detail now. I may have a dabble but, as I always say, you can't use them all."

Willy has used semen from Buckeye son,



Willy Ley

Morningview Levi on his herd and Levi remains among the top PLI bulls of the breed. He's suited to producers seeking trouble-free calvings. Both his direct Calving Ease Index at 2.5 and his maternal Calving Ease Index at 2.0 indicate that his calves are likely to be born with ease, while his daughters themselves should go on to have trouble-free calvings. His PLI is £243.

The highest brand-new entry in eleventh place is De-Su Observer, whose PLI is £227. Observer is one of the early Planet sons and has already been used heavily as a sire of sons on the basis of his outstanding genomic index – calculated from the bull's own DNA. As a result, he already has three sons among the top 10 genomic young sires available in the UK, confirming the confidence producers give UK genomic predictions.

## Genomic confidence

"I have to say that my confidence in the genomic rankings grows every time there's a proof run," says Willy. "I may well give Observer a go, if I can get hold of some semen. He's a Planet son and I've used Planet before. I've plenty of daughters milking in my herd with good type merit and giving plenty of milk. I know he can produce the goods."

The genomic ranking offers a 'new flush' of sires that will, undoubtedly, pep up UK breeding. That said, the

Guarini



De-Su Observer



Morningview Levi



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
Wh. O Man Awesome Andy	O Man	Zade	Bullsemen.com	84	+371	+30.8	+15.7	+0.20	+0.04	41	<b>260</b>	-23	0.8	7.1	1.8	0.88	0.18	0.44
Guarini	Goldwyn	O Man	Bullsemen.com	75	+588	+23.8	+26.1	+0.01	+0.08	48	<b>259</b>	-32	0.5	1.5	1.1	1.84	2.16	2.33
Ballycairn Oman Pello	O Man	Goldwyn	Genus	91	+981	+38.3	+31.4	+0.00	+0.00	58	<b>248</b>	-7	0.2	3.1	2.0	1.81	0.87	1.32
Morningview Levi	Buckeye	O Man	Genus	83	+670	+31.6	+25.2	+0.06	+0.04	50	<b>243</b>	-17	0.3	5.5	2.5	1.88	0.77	1.34
Mainstream Manifold	O Man	BW Marshall	Semex	86	+977	+37.4	+29.7	-0.01	-0.02	54	<b>241</b>	-12	0.2	3.8	3.0	0.07	1.32	1.06
Lynbrook Jancen	O Man	Manat	Bullsemen.com	75	+408	+31.4	+23.4	+0.19	+0.12	54	<b>240</b>	-12	0.4	2.3	0.8	-0.22	0.03	0.01
Ensenada Taboo Planet	Taboo	Amel	Dairy Daughters	97	+949	+30.9	+25.8	-0.07	-0.06	43	<b>239</b>	-5	0.6	4.0	1.8	1.54	1.62	1.72
Cogent Twist	Shottle	Major	Cogent	95	+596	+40.2	+24.6	+0.20	+0.06	58	<b>236</b>	-10	0.3	-3.3	0.0	1.60	0.82	1.23
D Omar	O Man	Lukas	Viking/Nordic Genetics	79	+453	+29.9	+22.6	+0.15	+0.09	50	<b>236</b>	-23	0.3	3.9	0.6	0.63	0.23	0.52
Gomez	Goldwyn	Lancelot	Sterling Sires	73	+431	+33.2	+21.1	+0.20	+0.09	51	<b>235</b>	-8	0.2	6.1	1.1	1.87	0.73	1.22
De-Su Observer	Planet	O Man	WWS UK	82	+819	+26.0	+24.5	-0.07	-0.02	41	<b>227</b>	-14	0.4	4.4	1.8	1.39	3.33	3.21
ALH Dakota	O Man	Durham	Dairy Daughters	85	+903	+30.3	+30.4	-0.06	+0.01	52	<b>226</b>	-11	0.3	0.8	2.3	2.22	0.24	0.87
Ballycairn Tiergan	Goldwyn	Garter	Cogent	95	+357	+31.3	+18.2	+0.21	+0.08	47	<b>223</b>	-20	0.3	1.0	1.8	1.27	1.51	1.57
Pirola Goldwyn Wyman	Goldwyn	O Man	WWS UK	82	+346	+26.8	+19.7	+0.16	+0.10	46	<b>220</b>	-23	0.2	2.3	2.1	2.73	1.61	2.29
Delta Astro	Goldwyn	O Man	Avoncroft	79	+483	+30.4	+20.8	+0.14	+0.06	47	<b>218</b>	-7	0.2	3.7	0.4	2.45	1.35	2.02
Crockett-Acres Eight	O Man	Mtoto	Semex	97	+305	+20.2	+17.6	+0.10	+0.10	38	<b>218</b>	-10	0.4	10.4	1.9	1.56	0.58	1.06
Veneriete 252 Tempo	Goldwyn	O Man	Avoncroft	80	+219	+22.2	+13.8	+0.17	+0.08	35	<b>214</b>	-17	0.4	7.4	3.1	0.99	2.04	2.02
Laurelhill Classic	O Man	Laudan	Genus	93	+418	+18.7	+18.4	+0.03	+0.06	35	<b>214</b>	-22	0.5	6.4	1.4	0.04	1.25	1.07
Co-Op Oman Logan	O Man	BW Marshall	Bullsemen.com	85	+725	+27.8	+23.4	-0.01	+0.00	43	<b>212</b>	-23	0.4	1.2	1.0	1.02	0.42	0.72
Kolthorner Joy Symbol	O Man	Jocko	Dovea Genetics	82	+452	+28.8	+19.0	+0.13	+0.05	43	<b>212</b>	-17	0.4	2.7	2.5	-0.19	0.22	0.15

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

list's number-one bull, Rosylane-LLC AltaBarney, retains the position he held in the previous index run.

At £270, he has a Profitable Lifetime Index some 10 points ahead of the leading daughter-proven sire, and brings the prospect of improving production and fitness traits across UK herds.

"In this list, the sires' genetics don't change but the parent average will over time. So bulls will move around a little. And Planet sons seem to be doing exceptionally well in this ranking at the moment – I counted at least 16 in the top 25," says Willy.

"If you look at these Planet sons' lifespan and type merit scores, they're an impressive bunch and it's hardly surprising that they're on the list. Planet's daughters milk very well, stay in the herd and work hard – they're good cows. It's no surprise to see so many sons of his in this list."

Six of the top-10 bulls also featured in the December 2012 index run and there are also three complete newcomers in the ranking.

In fifth position is Farnear-TBR-BH Lewis Flynn, sired by Lewis, whose own sire, Badger-Bluff Fanny Freddie, features in many of the pedigrees of young genomic sires. Flynn has daughter fertility and fitness running through his pedigree and will appeal to UK breeders who were never able to use his sire or breed-leading grandsire. Flynn's PLI is £253.

At number seven, Welcome Armitage

Pesky is also new to the rankings and as a son of Armitage (whose semen was not available in Europe) and out of a Jose dam, he will appeal to those with an eye for something different, says Willy. Pesky's PLI is £250.

Another new face among the high-fliers is equal ninth ranking Hammer-Creek

OB Keyboard, the third son of Observer in the top 10. Keyboard's PLI is £249.

"The cross over between the two rankings – daughter-based and genomic – is interesting and reassuring for breeders using genomic sires. My own use of genomic bulls is creeping up a little as a result," adds Willy. |

## New arrival in British Friesian rankings

British Friesian Deangate Tarquin retains the number-one PLI at £197, thanks to his strong all-round performance in production and fitness traits. He stays comfortably ahead of the high production transmitter Morcourt Hilton (PLI £174) in second position. A new arrival ranked third comes in the shape of Catlane Carl. With early daughter information, this Catlane Speaker x Bureaucrat earns a PLI of £165, ahead of Lakemead Randolph who displays good longevity at 0.5. The highest daughter Fertility Index is reserved for Deangate Quentin who ranks fifth.

### Jersey

Among the Jersey sires, long-time leader DJ Hulk now shares the number one spot with another Danish-born Jersey, DJ Broiler – both with PLIs of £227. All Lynns Maximus Vernon holds on to third place (PLI £216) and Sunset Canyon Anthems Allstar now ranks

fourth. DJ Invest rounds off the top five, making significant gains since the last index run in December.

### Ayrshire

The top of the Ayrshire rankings remain unchanged, with Swedish Red, V Foske leading the way ahead of new entry Asmo Andrei. This Finnish Ayrshire excels in production and is followed by another Swedish bull and daughter fertility specialist, Gunnarstorp.

### Other breeds

Little change within the other breeds leaves Odislait holding on to number-one position amongst the Montbeliardes (PLI £170); Sniders Option Aaron taking the top slot on the Guernsey Merit Index ranking (GMI 389); Huray staying ahead for the Brown Swiss breed (PLI £216); and Cotley Custodian taking the lead for the Shorthorns.