

Cow family is key to genetic progress with plenty of production and type

Sneekers steam ahead

Success for the Newhouse Sneeker family is thanks to a continuing focus on production and the key role played by Sneeker 247. We spoke to her breeder to find out more about this exceptional cow and how her sons and grandsons are serving to spread her genetic influence.

text **Inge van Drie**

The genes of the Newhouse Sneeker cow family, belonging to Jan and Pauline Nieuwenhuizen in the Netherlands, are spreading quickly at the moment. After the success of Sneeky and Ricky, it is now the turn of Banker and Gofast. And as far as the genomic bulls are concerned, Skyfall and Clever are already on their way. Sneeker 247 plays a major role within the family. She is now nine years old and her lifetime production amounts to almost 90,000kg of milk with 4.41% fat and 3.58% protein. Nevertheless the powerful body of Newhouse Sneeker 247 shows no trace of wear and tear. Less than a month ago she boosted her final score up to 89 points. "With 89 points for feet and legs," says her breeder Jan Nieuwenhuizen. "For her age she has very good quality legs."

As if to give more clout to these words, the strong OMan daughter walks away from the feeding rack at a robust pace. "She is an easy cow to work with, but she is definitely the boss in the herd.

"She calmly pushes other cows out of the way at the feeding fence," adds Jan. Newhouse Sneeker 247's influence in the herd is considerable. In total she has 22 daughters in the herd. "Individually they all score above the 100 lactation value", says Jan.

Sneeker 247's genes are also steaming ahead outside the herd, due to her large number of male descendants. Two of them in particular stand out at the moment: Newhouse Banker, via Mascol daughter Newhouse Sneeker 307 who is a grandson of Sneeker 247; and her son Newhouse Gofast. Both Goldwyn sons combine an excellent NVI with high-quality type and above-average health breeding values.

AI-bull status

The two Newhouse bulls are not the first ones from the family that have reached the status of an AI bull. It all began with Newhouse Sneeky. In the first instance the Jimtown son was not suitable for a place on the bull map, due to his poor



Jan Nieuwenhuizen: "I prefer to use bulls with an Inet of a minimum of 300"

figures for development. But with the increase in attention to lifespan the support for Sneeky also grew. Two years later Major son Newhouse Ricky followed.

Both bulls go back to the original cow Sneeker 125 (a Sunny Boy daughter), who was registered with 85 points and was a thoroughbred dairy cow that made the annual ranking of top producers several times in her province. In total she produced 96,141kg of milk with 4.81% fat and 3.82% protein. "She was the first Sneeker that we flushed", says Jan.

The Ingrid family – known particularly for Newhouse Ronald – had been in the picture with AI organisations for several generations. In the meantime the tables have been turned. The Sneekers have outpaced the Ingrids in the cubicles. Some 80% of the herd now consists of Sneekers, according to Jan.

From the original cow Sneeker 125, Jan bred Sneeker 138. He combined this full sister of Sneeky, who produced a total of

Fidelity daughter Newhouse Sneeker 472, VG88
Production: 2.02 294 10,168 4.63 3.34



Goldwyn daughter Newhouse Sneeker 378, VG87
Production: 2.01 791 25,749 5.04 3.75



84,388kg of milk with 4.85% fat and 3.53% protein, with Addison. This pairing resulted in Sneeker 171, one of Jan's favourites, who has since left the herd. "She had so much style and she was the perfect cow on our unit."

The Addison daughter was registered with 89 points and produced a total of 79,064kg of milk with 4.38% fat and 3.63% protein. A flushing with O Man resulted in the above-mentioned Sneeker 247.

"In the beginning I was not so enthusiastic. She was rather fat and initially produced just 25 litres. Her mother had so much power and was a magnificent cow. I couldn't say the same about this cow."

But things changed and slowly but surely Sneeker 247's talents came to the fore. "She starts her lactations slowly, but she persists for a long time. She's been in her third lactation for more than 600 days and is still producing 35kg of milk per day," says Jan.

Production index

This ability to do things independently comes in use among the 120 cows at the Dutch Zevenhoven, where the cows are not mollycoddled.

"Our cubicles are relatively small. In order to obtain the maximum number of litres of milk from the herd we endeavour to achieve high milk production and we milk three times a day."

The cows record a rolling annual average of 11,813kg of milk with 4.23% fat and 3.41% protein and the cell count during the past two years remained below 70,000cells per ml.

Production is also important to Jan when setting breeding goals. "We aim for cows that have a high lifetime production with good udders and legs. A high Inet is



O Man daughter Newhouse Sneeker 247, VG89. Production: 7.07 608 27,086 4.34 3.42

therefore a main factor in the choice of bull. I prefer to use bulls with an Inet of a minimum of 300. At the end of the day we earn our living from producing milk."

The Sneekers fit perfectly. "They score highly for Inet, produce a lot of milk, and fat and protein, and live a long time," says Jan.

His view is shared by CRV sire analyst Eric Lievens, who visits Zevenhoven regularly.

"The Sneeker family is every inch Inet oriented and now, with a bull like Goldwyn, it also has type. The family also has an above average score with regard to cell count and fertility. "Moreover, the cows are not pampered – in the cubicles there is a natural selection with regard to hardness and durability.

"Within CRV the Sneeker family is currently one of the most used families", adds Eric Lievens. He has several animals

under contract and each one scores around 300 NVI.

A considerable number of them go back to Sneeker 247, like two Cricket daughters and a Fidelity daughter that is registered with 88 points and is from different full sisters of Gofast. With the yearlings, among others, an Epic, a Hill and a G-Force descendant may be of interest.

Genomic bulls

The excellent results are also due to Jan's confidence in genomic selection. "He dares to take risks. He has also used young bulls as bull fathers."

For Jan that is only logical. "Breeding gives an enormous drive, but it must take place in an efficient way. Genomic selection is a good aid to this. At an early stage you can already see which genes an animal possesses.

"Of course we take into account a certain range and the basis remains that you take a good look at the animal to be paired, but at the moment 80% of the bulls we use are genomic."

There are also Newhouse bulls on the insemination list, such as Gofast and the newest male offspring of the family Newhouse Skyfall.

The semen of the G-Force son from a full sister of Gofast, which was recently used as InSire test bull, recently sold out within a few days, just like that of his nephew. Newhouse Clever (G-Force x Goldwyn).

"With flushing we use Skyfall intensively. And, if things go well, we also use him on the Sneekers," says Jan. "Breeding cattle with top-quality genetics give us a buzz." |

