

Gap between proven and young sires grows wider

Genomic bulls storm ahead

Lancashire-based Holstein breeder James Tomlinson is, by his own admission, like a kid in a sweet shop when it comes to the latest bull-proof run. It's difficult to choose between the top sires.

text **Rachael Porter**

The first thing James Tomlinson says about December's genomic sire list is that the top 20 are all so good, he could use them all.

Quite a statement from someone who's renown for delving deep into pedigrees and picking through sire stacks. But the latest list, compiled by AHDB Dairy, offers clear and compelling evidence of the speed of genetic progress within the Holstein breed. With six new entries in the top 10 since the August index run and every one of the top 20 exceeding a Profitable Lifetime Index of £700, it is no wonder that more than 60% of the UK's black-and-white inseminations are now to genomic young sires. And it's hardly surprising that Lancashire-based producer James is so excited. "There's nothing between any of them really – they're all just so good. This list is shooting ahead of the daughter-proven list and making some colossal leaps forward."

DG Charley



James Tomlinson: "The genomic sires are shooting ahead of those on the proven list"

The brand new headline bull is Westcoast Perseus, an early son of Penmanship who, as a young sire, held the number-one position from December 2014 for 16 months. And he's certainly captured James' imagination. "I've already made enquiries about his price, as I'd really like to have some straws in my AI flask – who wouldn't?" Perseus is out of a Doorman dam, and

Gen-I-Beq Lavaman

features high percentages of fat and protein (+0.12% and +0.10% respectively), combined with a good Lifespan Index (+0.6) and a high daughter Fertility Index (+10.5). With a PLI of £779 and a Type Merit (TM) of +2.37, this all-rounder is aged just 12 months, while his sire – who still features in the top 30 young sires of the breed – is not yet three years old.

In second place is a sire who is also new to the £PLI list, and the highest ranking of no less than nine top-20 sons of Cogent Supershot – a bull which came to the UK with a fanfare in 2013. This number-two £PLI bull is Bomaz Alta Topshot, a transmitter of high production with an impressive +41.8kg fat. Out of an Alta Embassy dam, he has a PLI of £762.

James says he'll do his best to get hold of some straws – and possibly also some from fourth-place sire De-Su 13181 Quantum, another Supershot son. This one transmits the highest weight of protein in the top 20 at +33.9kg. His dam is by Mogul and his PLI is £753.

"When Supershot first hit the scene, he was hailed as one of the best bulls ever and everyone wanted him. His semen was about £700 per straw – way out of our price range. But these two sons give us a chance to see what his genetics can do in our herd. And I'll definitely be using either sire – or hopefully both – if I can get hold of some semen at a reasonable price."

Supershot sons

The high type and production transmitter Endco Argo debuts in third place with a PLI of £761, a TM of +3.04 and long daughter lifespans (Lifespan Index +0.7). His breeder's prefix features three times among the top 12 bulls. "And



name	sire	mat.	grandsire	supplier	production						functional traits					conformation			
					rel.	milk	fat kg	prot. kg	fat%	protein%	EPLI	maint	SCC	lifespan	fertility ind.	dCE	F&L	udder	TM
genomic sires																			
Westcoast Perseus	Penmanship	Doorman	Semex		67	+635	+35.3	+28.8	+0.12	+0.10	779	17	-24	0.6	10.5	1.0	2.37	2.30	1.38
Bomaz Alta Topshot	Supershot	Embassy	Alta/Global Genetics		67	+849	+41.8	+32.4	+0.10	+0.06	762	6	-14	0.6	8.6	0.8	1.36	1.18	1.24
Endco Argo RC	Silver	Supersire	Cogent		67	+811	+39.2	+29.2	+0.08	+0.03	761	12	-21	0.7	5.7	0.3	3.04	2.79	2.49
De-Su 13181 Quantum	Supershot	Mogul	Genus		67	+899	+35.0	+33.9	+0.00	+0.05	753	15	-16	0.6	7.5	0.5	2.60	2.49	1.90
Endco Superhero	Supershot	Número Uno	Cogent		67	+848	+33.1	+27.8	+0.00	+0.00	737	14	-17	0.7	10.9	0.1	2.86	2.73	2.04
Peak Alta Recoil	Spring	Jacey	Alta/Global Genetics		67	+668	+25.2	+25.4	-0.01	+0.04	734	5	-13	0.6	12.9	0.1	2.95	2.63	2.66
ABS Mayday	Tailor	Balisto	Genus		67	+552	+33.4	+25.6	+0.14	+0.09	729	12	-25	0.6	7.4	-0.2	2.96	2.89	1.32
DG Charley	Supershot	Mogul	Genus		67	+968	+34.3	+28.8	-0.04	-0.03	723	5	-20	0.7	8.8	0.9	2.38	2.09	2.02
S-S-I 1stClass Flagship	1stClass	Supersire	WWS		67	+840	+39.6	+25.7	+0.07	-0.02	723	9	-19	0.6	9.1	0.5	3.11	2.89	2.17
Progenesis Unicorn	Spring	Tango	Semex		67	+583	+28.2	+20.1	+0.06	+0.01	720	6	-24	0.6	14.8	-0.1	2.77	2.44	2.03
proven sires																			
Kings-Ransom Erdman	Planet	Ramos	Bullsemen.com/AIS		85	+505	+24.5	+15.3	+0.06	-0.01	659	-23	-21	0.9	12.5	0.8	0.38	0.42	0.18
Co-Op Robust Cabriolet	Robust	Planet	Bullsemen.com/AIS		85	+463	+34.1	+19.4	+0.19	+0.05	638	-17	-5	0.5	8.9	1.7	1.03	1.02	0.99
De-Su Rookie 11057	Bookem	Bronco	WWS		81	+652	+38.2	+22.3	+0.15	+0.01	625	9	-22	0.4	7.8	0.3	1.74	1.70	1.54
Tollenaars Alta Micro	Plan	O Man	Alta/Global Genetics		82	+477	+20.0	+18.6	+0.01	+0.04	623	-2	-13	0.5	17.8	1.3	0.55	0.13	1.00
Teemar Shamrock Alphabet	Shamrock	Ramos	Genus		82	+538	+16.2	+17.8	-0.06	+0.00	621	-20	-6	0.6	17.0	2.6	0.29	-0.07	1.12
Gen-I-Beq Lavaman	Man-O-Man	Goldwyn	Semex		99	+251	+21.2	+20.4	+0.14	+0.15	618	-5	-1	0.2	14.2	1.1	1.30	1.09	1.49
Seagull-Bay Supersire	Robust	Planet	WWS		95	+1049	+41.1	+33.1	+0.00	-0.01	615	18	-13	0.6	1.8	0.7	1.48	1.38	1.19
S-S-I Bookem Morgan	Bookem	Shottle	WWS		85	+675	+25.9	+22.6	-0.01	+0.01	598	7	-14	0.5	11.2	-1.4	1.89	1.80	1.19
Co-Op Robust Jitterbug	Robust	Ramos	Bullsemen.com/AIS		83	+137	+21.0	+9.7	+0.20	+0.07	589	-7	-13	0.4	16.7	2.2	1.39	1.21	1.05
S-S-I Shamrock Mystic	Shamrock	Shottle	WWS		82	+551	+24.4	+19.3	+0.03	+0.02	587	1	-19	0.5	12.8	-0.7	0.94	1.04	0.51

Table 1: Top 10 daughter-proven and top 10 genomic sires available in the UK ranked on PLI (source: AHDB Dairy and Holstein UK)

he's a great sire too – there's absolutely nothing wrong with him. He has the second highest type score in the list and I'll be doing a little more digging on him. I may even use him."

The third Supershot son in the top-20 ranking is Endco Superhero. He gives yet another chance for James to tap into this exceptional sire's bloodline. In fifth place Superhero has a good Lifespan Index (+0.7), which contributes to a PLI of £737. Out of a daughter of Número Uno, this bull is another high type transmitter (TM +2.86). Eighth position (PLI £723) is shared by the highest type

Seagull-Bay Supersire



transmitter in the top 20 (TM +3.11) in the shape of S-S-I 1stClass Flagship (Alta 1stClass x Supersire), and the highest milk transmitter, DG Charley (Supershot x Mogul). Charley combines 968kg milk with good daughter longevity (Lifespan Index +0.7) and he's also caught James' eye, not least because he's the fourth Supershot son in the list. "His high milk is a factor, but he's also from the Wildcrest Crimson cow family. I'm keen to get my hands on some straws."

Daughter-proven list

Tempting as the genomic offering are, James also scours the daughter-proven list. This run sees father and son taking the two top slots in the rankings for the first time in recent memory.

Ranked on Profitable Lifetime Index (£PLI), the bulls are the long-standing leader, Kings-Ransom Erdman (PLI £659), and his son, United-Pride Erdman Evan (PLI £647).

Erdman himself is noted for transmitting outstanding fitness, while his breed-leading Lifespan Index of +0.9, indicates his daughters produce milk for almost a full lactation longer than those of an average sire. He combines this with good daughter fertility (Fertility Index +12.5) and a superb Maintenance Index of -23, indicating his daughters will cost less to feed for maintenance than those by

other Holstein bulls. "Ordinarily, he's just a little too low on type for me. But his lifespan score has made me notice him and I may consider using him now. He's certainly got staying power."

Moving into third position is Co-op Robust Cabriolet with a PLI of £638. This calving ease specialist (+1.7 direct CE%) also transmits high percentages of fat and protein (+0.19 and +0.05 respectively) and low maintenance costs (-17).

James is excited about the Bookem son, De-Su Rookie 11057, who maintains his fourth position with a PLI of £625, good transmission of low cell counts and one of the higher Type Merits in the top 10 at +1.74. "His figures, particularly his type score, are impressive – he's a good allrounder and I may have to dabble."

The next sire on the list to interest James is the well know production bull, Seagull-Bay Supersire. Transmitting a phenomenal 1,049kg milk and 74kg fat plus protein – by far the highest in the top 100 and earning him a PLI of £615 – James said he can't be ignored. "His milk yield is colossal and I have used him in the past. He's been around for a while now and, on the back of these figures and the daughters that I already have on the ground, I will use him again. I'm extremely pleased with my Supersire heifers and there's still space for him in my AI flask." |