

Perfect timing by Grandprix

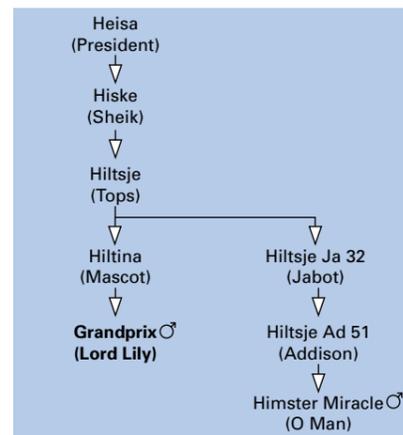
Himster Grandprix passes the one-million-doses of semen milestone

In just six years, Himster Grandprix has produced one million doses of semen for AI company CRV. The powerful son of Etazon Lord Lily and Hiltina has good all-round breeding values and these have attracted a lot of attention – both nationally and internationally. The man who bred him, the Dutch breeder Auke Landman, is still looking for good matches for well-known show cows.

You have to have a bit of luck to achieve something like this. To be honest, Grandprix was born just at the right time.” Dairy farmer Auke Landman is down-to-earth in his response when congratulated on the fact that a sire bred by him, Himster Grandprix, has recently passed the milestone of producing one million doses of semen. In the CRV sire barn in Beers, where Grandprix plies his trade, they did pause to celebrate the landmark. A son of Lord Lily, he was born in 1997, and after getting a breeding value in 2002 has made the one million mark in record time.

According to Jan Willemse, head of the CRV sire barn in Beers, the 11-year-old Grandprix is still a ‘very spirited sire’. “He never refuses. Grandprix has achieved two jumps three times a week for five years. There aren’t many sires that can manage that.”

Himster Hiltina (by Mascot)
Production: 2.01 305 9,640 4.24 3.60



According to Jan, Grandprix still has plenty of life in him. “He is a strong sire, yet he has never been photogenic. But when you bring him out of the stall he always makes a big impression, he shows real character.”

Himster Hiltstje (by Tops)
Production: 5.04 305 10,771 3.90 3.73



From 2003 to 2005, Grandprix was the most used bull in the Netherlands, and even now he is still in the top 10 most popular bulls. But demand for Grandprix semen also comes from abroad. Last year, Grandprix was CRV’s best-selling export sire, says CRV’s Bertil Muller. “Almost 40% of all straws sold go abroad. He is popular in the UK and in Germany, but requests also still keep coming in from Australia, South Africa and Brazil. Grandprix daughters seem to perform well under extensive management conditions.”

Right qualities

According to Auke, who bred Grandprix, his popularity is also due to the spirit of the times. “When Grandprix was first awarded breeding values the period of breeding for high milk yields, was just on its way out. As a result, cows had become generally rather narrow producing high yields. Grandprix transmits just the right qualities to correct that. He was, and still is, a great fit for those types of cow.”

Grandprix’s production figures are certainly not sky-high, but he can produce good results with a high-milking cow that is just a bit too angular. “Out of any cow, Grandprix will breed a cow with a good udder. Grandprix is a son of Lord Lily, but he can also give a bit of strength, thanks to the influence of his

Tops grand dam.” Saying this, Auke casts an eye over Grandprix’s pedigree. Auke bought Grandprix’s great-great-grand dam Heisa, a daughter of President, in Germany in 1981. Heisa was heavily in calf with Hiske, a daughter by Sheik. “Hiske was a thin cow classified VG89. Ultimately, she did not make ‘Excellent’ because of her legs”, says Auke. “It was because of her type that Tops Monitor Legend was such a good partner.” He is still enthusiastic about Hiltstje, a Tops daughter out of Hiske who did achieve the ‘Excellent’ category, and easily made the grade with 10,000kg of milk with 3.80% protein. Auke carried out numerous embryo transfers from Hiltstje, and she gave rise to more than 50 offspring by sires including Jabot, Celsius, Labelle, Prelude, Dombinator and Bellwood. The mating with Mascot resulted in Hiltina VG 88, the dam of Grandprix.

Matings with top cows

Grandprix was first awarded a breeding value in May 2002. What was immediately noticeable was the excellent udder quality he transmitted, combined with high scores for durability. The fact that he was also a calving ease sire soon made him one of the most used bulls. Grandprix has also done well as a sire of sons. CRV has 17 sons in their lay-off barns, most of which will get a breeding value this year.

Auke knew better than anyone how to maximise the qualities Grandprix was able to transmit to his offspring. He asked two breeders whether they would flush their celebrated breeding show cow Oslo (by Juror) to Grandprix. “Oslo is outstanding in frame and type, but could do with a bit of support in the udders and legs. That is why I thought Grandprix would be a really good fit. In the end all the genes combined well.” The mating resulted in Himster Olga, who was made reserve champion in the intermediate class at the CR Delta Cow Expo.

Looking for trouble-free cows

Auke is now a retired dairy farmer, and has passed some of his cattle on to his daughters and sons-in-law. Among them are two Grandprix daughters out of the well-known Sunny Boy daughter Möhoeve Sonni 84. “I had an idea that she would make a good combination with Grandprix, so I asked her owners to flush her. From this mating we now have two superb heifer calves, and their full brother is with an AI company.”

It is not just the mating of Grandprix with well-known breeding cows that produces AI bulls – Grandprix’s own Himster family also still arouses a lot of AI interest. Two O-man daughters out of Addison daughter Himster Ad 51 are international bull dams, and the first daughters of their full brother, Himster Miracle, will calve this autumn.

Auke follows developments in this cow family closely. “Again, you need a bit of luck, but the Grandprix family is simply right for these times, when everyone is looking for trouble-free cows.”

Jaap van der Knaap

Himster Grandprix on his way to semen collection