

New number-one proven sire and joint genomic leaders top lists

High flyers and outliers

Renowned pedigree breeder and runner up in the 2017 NMR/RABDF Gold Cup competition, James Tomlinson shares his thoughts on the latest daughter-proven and genomic sire proofs

text **Rachael Porter**

It's all change at the top in the daughter-proven rankings, for the April 2018 bull proof run, with a new number-one sire taking the lead. Morgan son Mocon is a German-bred maternal grandson of Snowman and his Predicted Transmitting Ability (PTA) features high milk production (826kg), low somatic cell counts (-23) and a very favourable Maintenance Index (-22), which indicates that his daughters have relatively low maintenance costs for feed. With a PLI of £689 he's not to be ignored. But James says he's not a sire he'll be using on his herd. "He's a really great sire – he wouldn't be at the top if he wasn't. But I'm looking to increase chest width, body depth and rump width in my cows. He scores low here, so he's not for me. But he'll be on many wish lists across the UK."

'Mr Consistency'

Second in the ranking is Lavaman, with a PLI of £684. "He's 'Mr Consistency'," says James. "And again you can't really fault him." Particularly impressive is his high score for Lameness Advantage – a new index introduced by AHDB this month, which is based, in part, on actual lameness events recorded on farm and digital dermatitis recorded by Holstein UK classifiers. This positive score of +6.7 indicates 6.7% fewer Lavaman daughters are predicted to have lameness incidents than a bull with a score of zero.

Apina Norman



James Tomlinson

Positions three to seven are taken by bulls that have all featured previously in the top 10 and whose daughter performances continue to support their impressive indexes. These include, in third position, S-S-I Shamrock Mystic (£654 PLI) with a very high daughter Fertility Index (+19.8). In fourth is high protein (30.6kg) sire De-Su 11236 Balisto, who now has 473 UK daughters contributing to his production figures. Balisto progeny also display greater TB resistance than their cohorts, indicated by his TB Advantage of +3.3. Rounding off the daughter-proven top 10 is another new entry, Apina Norman. And he's got James' attention. This former number-one genomic young sire also has the highest Type Merit of the top 10 £PLI sires at +2.15. "That appeals to me, as well as his longevity and he's also high on milk at +520kg. I'm looking at prices for him." An outlier, in eleventh position, has also captured James' imagination. EDG

Peak Alta Depot



Rubicon offers 44.8kg fat and a Type Merit of +3.08, which means that he's on James's wish list for this proof run. "He has a strong linear with nothing too extreme, which makes him one for us. I'll certainly be making some enquiries."

Looking to the genomic young-sire list, it's a similar story. James says that the 11th bull on the list, just missing the top 10, is the one that he's most excited about. He's the UK-bred Prehen Lancaster, who has favourably low maintenance costs (-5), a PLI of £754 and +620kg of milk. "There is a degree of patriotism in this too – he's a UK sire holding his own in the rankings, which is no mean feat. The competition is fierce. And I think it's important to support British breeding," says James.

Impressive sires

Not wishing to detract from the achievements of the two young sires that share top place in the genomic table, James says that Mr Rubi-Agronaut and the De-Su 13050 Spectre son ABS Outback, each with a PLI of £814, are impressive sires. Agronaut retains the position he previously held, with an index which features high milk quality (PTA +0.24% fat and +0.10% protein) and the highest Type Merit, at +3.12, among the top £PLI bulls. Meanwhile, Outback stands out for low feed costs for Maintenance (-2) as well as a strong rating for the newly released Lameness Advantage at +2.3.

"But they're not for my herd, due to their teat length. There's been a trend towards sires that shorten teat length and ours are short enough."

James much prefers the number-three sire ABS Crimson (£784 PLI). Crimson is a production specialist, transmitting 952kg milk with 49.7kg fat. "He's not so high on

Mocon



New Holstein indexes

Three new genetic evaluations – Lameness Advantage, Calf Survival and the Dairy Carcase Index – were launched by AHDB Dairy in April and are now published for bulls who either have progeny in the UK, or who have had their genotype submitted for assessment by AHDB Dairy.

Calf Survival (CS)

This PTA has been developed using close to three million animal records from the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS), which show that calves of some sires are more likely to survive their first 300 days of life than those sired by other bulls.

CS has not yet been incorporated into the UK's national breeding index, Profitable Lifetime Index (£PLI), but is planned for inclusion later this year. A stand-alone

list for CS is on AHDB Dairy's website. CS is published on a scale of about –5 to +5. It represents survival between tagging and 300 days. Each percentage point represents a 1% improvement in survival of a bull's progeny.

Lameness Advantage (LA)

This is calculated directly from on-farm lameness incidents recorded by the milk recording organisations, NMR and CIS. This information is combined with existing data for locomotion and feet and legs, together with bone quality scores and digital dermatitis records from the National Bovine Data Centre (NBDC) type classification system.

LA will be incorporated into £PLI later this year. A stand-alone list for LA is also published on the AHDB Dairy website.

LA is published on a scale of about –5 to +5. For each percentage point, 1% fewer daughters go lame.

Dairy Carcase Index (DCI)

This is primarily based on average daily carcase gain and carcase conformation calculated from weight and age data from most major abattoirs in the UK.

The DCI will be of particular interest to dairy farmers producing young stock for the beef supply chain or rearing their own beef. The DCI is not included in £PLI. A stand-alone list for DCI is published on the AHDB Dairy website.

DCI is published on a scale of about –5 to +5. For each percentage point, an improvement is predicted in both carcase conformation and average daily carcase gain in a bull's progeny.

type, but everything else is 'right', so I'm looking at prices for him."

James is also making enquiries about fifth-place Peak Alta Depot (PLI £781), a health and fertility specialist. His life span looks good – we're trying to increase that in our herd. I'm just

not sure about his pedigree – there are a couple of Good Pluses in there. But I'll take a closer look and I may give him a go."

New, in eighth place, is the Jedi son Bomaz Skywalker (£760 PLI). And this high protein transmitter (PTA 32.7kg),

who scores well for Calf Survival at +2.5, is the next sire to catch James' eye. "I think he's my pick of the list. He's good for fat and protein and I'm keen to get some Jedi blood into the herd. He has a balanced linear and is a modern 'appealing' sire." |

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

name	sire	mat.	grandsire	supplier	production					£PLI	functional traits					conformation			
					reliability	milk	fat kg	protein kg	fat%		protein%	maint.	SCC	lifespan	fertility ind.	dCE	F&L	udder	TM
genomic sires																			
Mr Rubi-Agronaut 73287	Rubicon	Shotglass	Cogent		68	+399	+35.3	+21.5	+0.24	+0.10	814	4	-29	0.7	11.9	0.1	2.51	2.02	3.12
ABS Outback	Spectre	Troy	Genus		67	+781	+37.4	+30.1	+0.08	+0.06	814	-2	-19	0.7	10.1	1.3	1.59	1.60	2.07
ABS Crimson	Spectre	Rubicon	Genus		67	+952	+49.7	+32.5	+0.14	+0.02	784	8	-18	0.6	8.9	0.5	1.22	1.00	1.62
VH Balisto Brook	Balisto	Denim 646	Viking/AIS		69	+447	+38.8	+23.7	+0.25	+0.11	783	3	-36	0.7	8.2	1.0	0.68	0.88	1.41
Peak Alta Depot	Hotshot	Montross	Alta/Global Genetics		67	+528	+27.3	+18.8	+0.08	+0.02	781	2	-37	0.9	17.1	0.6	1.06	1.18	1.77
Westcoast Perseus	Penmanship	Doorman	Semex		67	+654	+33.4	+29.5	+0.09	+0.10	766	13	-26	0.6	9.8	0.6	0.98	1.89	1.64
Claynook Casper	Hang-Time	Bombero	WWS UK		67	+659	+31.7	+28.1	+0.07	+0.08	764	15	-21	0.6	11.7	0.2	1.21	2.75	2.13
Welcome-Tel Bromley 3195	Alta Spring	Jacey	WWS UK		68	+688	+23.3	+25.7	-0.04	+0.04	764	6	-28	0.8	13.5	-1.3	1.67	2.51	2.94
Bomaz Skywalker	Jedi	Cabriolet	Genus		67	+783	+37.9	+32.7	+0.08	+0.08	760	2	-13	0.5	7.5	0.9	1.61	1.87	2.66
Progenesis Doctor Pb	Superhero	Delta 1427	Semex		67	+776	+33.7	+28.5	+0.04	+0.04	757	-5	-23	0.7	8.9	-1.1	1.07	1.88	1.90
proven sires																			
Mocon	Morgan	Snowman	Bullsemen.com		82	+826	+25.8	+28.1	-0.08	+0.02	689	-22	-23	0.7	6.0	0.6	0.35	0.96	0.89
Gen-I-Beq Lavaman	Man-O-Man	Goldwyn	Semex		99	+333	+19.1	+25.1	+0.07	+0.17	684	-8	-4	0.3	15.7	0.9	0.98	0.79	0.64
S-S-I Shamrock Mystic	Shamrock	Shottle	WWS UK		83	+593	+23.0	+19.9	+0.00	+0.01	654	0	-20	0.6	19.8	-0.8	-0.04	0.56	0.85
De-Su 11236 Balisto	Bookem	Watson	Genus		99	+495	+29.7	+30.6	+0.12	+0.17	652	11	-21	0.5	1.4	0.3	0.92	1.01	1.41
View-Home Littlerock	Cashcoin	Robust	Semex		82	+674	+25.8	+24.6	-0.01	+0.03	646	-17	-18	0.5	8.7	0.6	0.81	0.95	0.65
Teemar Shamrock Alphabet	Shamrock	Ramos	Genus		83	+514	+14.9	+17.0	-0.06	+0.00	636	-22	-3	0.8	18.5	2.4	0.65	-0.30	-0.08
VH Cole Clark	D Cole	Lambad	Viking		81	+449	+2.3	+16.5	-0.18	+0.02	636	-22	-4	0.8	21.2	2.5	1.23	-0.57	0.52
Larcrest Commend	Balisto	Robust	Genus		77	+192	+28.2	+20.3	+0.26	+0.17	633	-5	-19	0.4	7.2	-0.3	0.60	1.00	1.13
Co-Op Robust Cabriolet	Robust	Planet	AIS		96	+716	+38.9	+25.9	+0.12	+0.03	628	-16	-8	0.4	3.8	1.0	1.26	1.11	1.86
Apina Norman	Número Uno	Ramos	CRV Avoncroft/AIS		92	+520	+31.7	+19.1	+0.13	+0.03	622	6	-10	0.6	12.0	0.5	0.75	2.06	2.15