

Debutants shake up young sire rankings, while proven list remains stable

# New rankings spark interest

We spoke to renown pedigree breeder and runner up in the 2017 NMR/RABDF Gold Cup competition, James Tomlinson to find out what's caught his eye in the latest sire lists.

text **Rachael Porter**

**A**ugust's genomic young sire list, following the publication of genetic evaluations by AHDB Dairy, highlights many newcomers who represent the pinnacle of Holstein breeding.

All have been scrutinised by Lancashire-based breeder James Tomlinson and, as always, he says that there's not a lot between them. "They're all excellent bulls and, when the selection is this good, you can afford to be picky."

Improvement to the way the ranking tool, Profitable Lifetime Index, is calculated brings further relevance to the data as the new Lameness Advantage (LA) and Calf Survival (CS) indexes as well as Body Condition Score (BCS), become part of the £PLI formula.

The number-one bull is new entrant Pine-Tree CW Legacy, who rises straight to the top with a massive PLI of £924. This value is more than £100 greater than the top bull's £PLI in the April ranking, reflecting this sire's exceptional genetics on many fronts and – to a degree – the ability of the new £PLI to capture more of the impact genetics can have on farm profitability. He combines this with high production, as well as positive fat and protein percentages. James is, indeed, impressed with his



*James Tomlinson: "There's a trio of genomic sires that really caught my eye"*

modern sire stack. But he says he won't be using him, due to teat length. "That's all I can fault him on and, to be fair, short teats are, in my view, becoming an issue across many of today's popular sires. And I think it's going to be a problem that's going to get worse."

In second place is Denovo 7921 Atrium, who is also new to the list. A son of ABS Achiever, (who himself ranks only just outside the top 10 with a PLI of £804), Atrium transmits high fat (+0.20%) as well as strong health and outstanding daughter fertility (FI +12.6). This figure caught James' eye, but he says that this bull falls down because he has minus scores for stature, chest width and body depth. "I could overlook one minus

score, but not three. So he's not for me." That said, he is the best bull for reducing feed costs in the top 20 (–11 Maintenance) and he wraps up many desirable traits in a PLI of £897. So he will suit many breeders' objectives.

ABS Outback (PLI £866), the equal first-ranking bull from April, has now been edged into third place despite increasing his £PLI. He transmits excellent lameness improvement (LA +3.1), with good daughter lifespan and fertility. "He has plenty of milk, at +807kg, but, again, teat length is the issue here," says James. VH Balisto Brook remains in fourth position at PLI £849 with excellent milk components.

## New sires

And fifth place goes to ABS Crimson (PLI £848), who is one of the highest kilogrammes of fat and protein transmitters in the top 20 (combined at 79.3kg). He's the first sire on this list of interest to James. "He's quite appealing and I will be enquiring about price."

Sixth-ranking Pine-Tree Durable (PLI £843) is a Charley brother to the number-one bull and has a Lameness Advantage of +3.7 – the best score in the top 20.

But the bulls in places seven to nine are where it's really at, according to James. All three are newly available sires, highlighting the speed at which genomics can identify new genetics with the potential to improve the breed, and they're the trio that have got James fired up this time around.

In seventh place is Sandy-Valley Imax Batman (PLI £842); a high fat transmitter

*S-S-I Shamrock Mystic*



*De-Su 11236 Balisto*





Mr Rubi-Argonaut 73287



Mocon

(+46.6kg and +0.18%), followed closely by the highest protein transmitter in the top 20, De-Su 14222 Kenobi (PLI £831).

“Batman ticks all the boxes for me and I’ll definitely be making enquiries. He has a solid linear with no extremes. He’s an Imax from a Jedi and he’s also from a solid cow family.

“And Kenobi has the highest milk score in the top 10 at +1,018kg. He’s a Jedi from an AltaSpring and, again, he has a solid cow family behind him. He’s an exciting sire and, depending on price, I’d like to use him on my herd.”

UK-bred Glamour Boghill Victor also makes his debut in ninth place with a PLI of £827. This Verona son comes out of a Supershot dam from the well-known Cosmopolitan family. “I’ll definitely be using him, not least because he’s a UK-bred sire. His modern breeding is also appealing. He’s just got everything that I’m looking for in a sire.

### Proven sires

The proven Holstein sire rankings have remained relatively stable since April’s proof run, with little re-ranking among the front-runners and the gradual appearance of a few young sires, which were formerly in the genomic rankings. Keeping top spot is Mocon. He retains his

lead with a £PLI of £738. Transmitting excellent feed savings for maintenance (Maintenance -20) while being a high milk volume bull (+857kg of milk), he demonstrates how smaller cows can make efficient milk producers.

“His milk figure caught my eye. I’ll enquire and if he’s not too expensive – and available – then I’d like to use him.” In second position is S-S-I Shamrock Mystic (PLI £719), an exceptional daughter fertility improver (Fertility Index +19.4) who is level pegging with Larcrest Commend, a bull with the best milk solids package of the top 10, at +0.29% fat and +0.19% protein.

Climbing into the top 10 are fourth placed Cookiecutter Harper (PLI £708), another bull transmitting high weights of fat and protein, and Weigeline Jacey Tabasco (PLI £704), one of the highest milk yield bulls in the top 20 (+1039kg). New in the proven bull listings, and the only other sire in the ranking to capture James’ imagination, is S-S-I Headway Alltime (PLI £701), who transmits excellent resistance to mastitis (Mastitis Index -4). “He’s a good outcross for us and he’s a balanced sire too. And, again, he’s got a solid and balanced linear – there’s nothing too extreme there. I think he’s suit our cows well.”

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						functional traits					conformation			
				rel.	milk	fat kg	prot. kg	fat%	protein%	£PLI	maint.	SCC	lifespan	fertility ind.	dCE	F&L	udder	TM
<b>genomic sires</b>																		
Pine-Tree Cw Legacy	Frazzled	Yoder	WWS	67	+953	+44.7	+32.6	+0.08	+0.02	<b>924</b>	-5	-32	0.7	8.5	0.1	0.63	1.79	1.72
Denovo 7921 Atrium	Achiever	Delta	Genus	67	+724	+45.9	+27.7	+0.20	+0.05	<b>897</b>	-11	-23	0.6	12.6	0.5	1.40	1.16	1.80
ABS Outback	Spectre	Troy	Genus	67	+807	+37.0	+30.2	+0.06	+0.05	<b>866</b>	-2	-19	0.7	12.6	1.3	1.54	1.55	1.98
VH Balisto Brook	Balisto	Denim	Viking/AIS	69	+501	+41.0	+25.6	+0.25	+0.11	<b>849</b>	3	-37	0.7	8.5	0.8	0.65	0.75	1.30
ABS Crimson	Spectre	Rubicon	Genus	67	+920	+48.1	+31.2	+0.13	+0.02	<b>848</b>	8	-20	0.6	10.1	0.6	1.21	0.97	1.65
Pine-Tree Durable	Charley	Yoder	Genus	67	+953	+34.5	+33.9	-0.03	+0.03	<b>843</b>	-6	-15	0.6	9.7	0.4	1.52	1.64	2.14
Sandy-Valley I Batman	Imax	Jedi	Semex	67	+792	+46.6	+35.0	+0.18	+0.11	<b>842</b>	14	-14	0.5	9.4	0.0	1.15	1.76	2.11
De-Su 14222 Kenobi	Jedi	AltaSpring	Genus	67	+1018	+38.1	+37.1	-0.02	+0.05	<b>831</b>	4	-17	0.5	9.0	-0.1	0.69	1.90	2.18
Glamour Boghill Victor	Verona	Supershot	Genus	67	+890	+30.9	+32.3	-0.05	+0.04	<b>827</b>	-3	-29	0.6	10.1	-0.6	0.74	1.04	1.54
Mr Rubi-Agronaut 73287	Rubicon	Shotglass	Cogent	68	+410	+34.8	+20.8	+0.23	+0.09	<b>815</b>	4	-31	0.6	14.0	0.2	2.50	2.01	3.21
<b>proven sires</b>																		
Mocon	Morgan	Snowman	Bullsemen.com	82	+857	+26.1	+28.8	-0.09	+0.01	<b>738</b>	-20	-22	0.7	7.6	0.6	0.40	0.91	0.87
Larcrest Commend	Balisto	Robust	Genus	80	+201	+31.5	+21.5	+0.29	+0.19	<b>719</b>	-4	-18	0.4	10.4	-0.2	0.59	0.93	1.07
S-S-I Shamrock Mystic	Shamrock	Shottle	WWS	84	+630	+25.0	+20.9	+0.00	+0.01	<b>719</b>	0	-22	0.7	19.4	-0.7	-0.01	0.57	0.92
Cookiecutter Harper	Balisto	Epic	Genus	80	+499	+33.0	+27.5	+0.16	+0.14	<b>708</b>	5	-21	0.4	5.6	0.7	0.69	1.02	0.96
Weigeline Jacey Tabasco	Jacey	Bookem	Bullsemen.com	82	+1039	+25.3	+33.7	-0.18	+0.00	<b>704</b>	17	-22	0.3	13.4	-0.4	0.92	1.24	1.21
S-S-I Headway Alltime	Headway	Supersire	WWS	75	+632	+27.4	+25.6	+0.03	+0.06	<b>701</b>	14	-29	0.5	8.9	0.4	1.22	1.71	1.89
View-Home Litterlock	Cashcoin	Robust	Semex	83	+668	+24.9	+25.0	-0.02	+0.04	<b>699</b>	-10	-19	0.4	12.3	0.7	0.78	0.91	0.75
Co-Op Robust Cabriolet	Robust	Planet	UK Sires Direct/AIS	98	+659	+39.6	+24.0	+0.16	+0.03	<b>679</b>	-17	-8	0.3	1.9	0.9	1.17	1.13	1.80
De-Su 11236 Balisto	Bookem	Watson	Genus	99	+584	+31.8	+32.9	+0.10	+0.17	<b>679</b>	11	-23	0.5	-0.4	0.2	0.86	0.93	1.21
Gen-I-Beq Lavaman	Man-O-Man	Goldwyn	Semex	99	+332	+19.0	+24.4	+0.07	+0.17	<b>675</b>	-8	-5	0.3	16.1	0.9	0.98	0.78	0.66