

Spoiled for choice

Twice runner up in the NMR/RABDF Gold Cup competition and renowned pedigree breeder James Tomlinson is excited about the latest bull proof run. And, he says: “It’s about time.”

TEXT RACHAEL PORTER

It’s significant that Lancashire-based producer James Tomlinson wants to begin by talking about the sires on the proven list when discussing the latest bull proof rankings. That’s because he’s excited about Bomaz Alta Topshot, who has climbed to number-one position in the new Profitable Lifetime Index (PLI) proven Holstein bull rankings, published by AHDB Dairy. Bomaz has a lot of sires high up on the list – but it’s just a small US-based family-run herd. “This is intriguing,” says James, adding that he’s getting a price for this sire. “I like his good, balanced linear and I’m surprised I’ve not really noticed him before – he slipped under my radar.”

Topshot graduated from the genomic list in summer 2019 and took second position on the proven-sire list. He’s continued to edge upwards as more daughters have come into milk, earning him a PLI of £788.

A son of the UK-owned Cogent Supershot, Topshot’s Predicted Transmitting Abilities (PTAs) for production include an impressive 1,151kg of milk and 35.3kg protein. Also moving up the list is View-Home Littlerock (PLI £749). This Cashcoin son has the highest Lifespan Index (LS) of the top 20 sires at +225 days, with a strong daughter Fertility Index at +12.4. The only sticking point for James is his chest width score of -1.32.

“There are plenty of other excellent sires to choose from – on both the proven and genomic list – so I can afford to be extremely picky, even when a sire is this good.”

New entries in third and fourth positions are Seagull-Bay SR Stardust (PLI £732) and Peak Alta Recoil (PLI £728).

Both are sons of Alta Spring and display strong daughter

fertility figures at +12.4 and +13.4 respectively. “Recoil looks interesting – he wasn’t on the HUK list. But he has a solid cow family behind him and I’ll be getting a price for him too,” says James, adding that Stardust is also a ‘may be’ for use on his herd in 2020.

Prolific producer

Moving to fifth place is prolific producer of top genomic young sires, Melarry Josuper Frazzled. Offering 1,097kg of milk, with excellent udder health (-38 SCC, -3 mastitis) and calf survival (+3.9), it’s no surprise that James has already used him across the Bilsrow herd. “And I’ve already ordered some more semen,” James says. “He has a solid pedigree and a balanced linear – he ticks all the boxes for me.” He has also used his sire, Josuper, across the herd who now boasts an impressive PLI of £721.

Sixth-ranking Siemers Bloomfield (£716 PLI) is, of course, another superb sire. But James says he’ll swerve him simply because his pin height is just a little too high for his liking. “Other than that, I can’t fault him,” he explains, referring to his calving score of +4.4, which makes him the best in the top 20, and his good cow lifespan figures at +219 days.

Seventh ranking AOT Silver Helix is the highest production transmitter available with an incredible +52.6kg fat and +39.6kg protein, helping to earn him at PLI of £712. “He’s interesting because he’s a Silver son and his milk figure is massive,” says James. “That said, his lifespan score is the lowest in the top 20.

Velder Starmaker



AOT Silver Helix



Bomaz Alta Topshot



That's his only drawback, but it may stop me from using him."

Looking to the genomic list, James is also suitably inspired, starting with the young Holstein sire, Bomaz Fynn, who has taken number-one position in the genomic rankings, with a PLI of £878. "He's a Frazzled off a Rubicon and I'm already on the list for some straws," says James, adding that such is the demand for this special sire that semen is being allocated on a regional basis. "Only so much will be sold in each area of the UK, to make it fair. I should get my hands on some straws in early 2020."

Solid PTAs

Denovo 14566 Crosby moves up to second place, also with solid PTAs for production and the highest Lameness Advantage of the top 20 bulls. This high-ranking son of DG Charley has a PLI of £871. He's also caught James' eye. "I have already used quite a lot of him, but I have ordered some more semen. These figures confirm what I've seen in heifers on the ground."

Also making gains is Melarry Frazz Arrowhead, now ranking third with a PLI of £870. Another Frazzled son, he has excellent daughter maintenance scores (-10) and good SCC (-33), and he is the best improver of daughter fertility in the top 20 (+14.2). But James says that, for him, he falls down due to his rump and chest-width scores. The former number-one sire, Bomaz Alta Cabot, continues to show excellent PTAs for milk quality at +0.17% fat and +0.06% protein. Low cell counts and excellent mastitis resistance (-4) help earn him a PLI of £867.

James says he's already used him, but this latest run reveals his linear to be not quite as good as it was. "So I may swap him for another sire this time - there are better bulls on offer this time around."



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

Peak Alta Leap, who climbs to number five with a PLI of £860, will remain in James' AI flask though. "I've used a lot of him and his calves are due next year. I've ordered more - he really does have everything that I'm looking for," explains James, adding that his semen is 'fertile'.

Dutch-bred Starmaker

A new entry in sixth place is Dutch-bred Velder Starmaker (PLI £852). This son of Adorable transmits one of the best survival ratings in the top 20 (+3.5 calf survival, +222 cow lifespan) and has solid figures for daughter fertility (+12.2).

James skips to the number-10 sire, Peak Alta Zarek (PLI £847), with one of the best scores for Lameness Advantage (+3.6) and strong production figures with more than two points for type. "I will be getting a price for him. He's a Topshot off a Rubicon and there's nothing not to like."

He admits that even the sires he's dismissed for use on his herd are exceptional in both the proven and genomic rankings. "Once again we can revel in being spoiled for choice. And it's a bit of a relief really as the past few proof runs have been disappointing. These are the most exciting lists I've seen in a while, and it's a great way to start 2020 and a new decade." |

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 x mat. grandsire | supplier | production | | | | | | | functional traits | | | | | conformation | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------|--------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------------|-----|----------|----------------|------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | | % reliability | kg milk | kg fat | kg protein | % fat | % protein | £ PLI | maint. | SCC | lifespan | fertility ind. | dCE | F&L | udder | TM |
| genomic sires | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bomaz Fynn | Frazzled x Rubicon | Genus | 64 | +997 | +51.0 | +32.4 | +0.13 | +0.00 | 878 | 2 | -30 | 183 | 6.3 | 0.2 | 1.55 | 1.48 | 2.43 |
| Denovo 14566 Crosby | Charley x Rubicon | Genus | 64 | +1035 | +42.5 | +33.2 | +0.02 | +0.00 | 871 | -1 | -28 | 201 | 7.8 | 0.1 | 1.52 | 0.80 | 1.37 |
| Melarry Frazz Arrowhead | Frazzled x Profit | WWS UK | 64 | +763 | +36.7 | +25.4 | +0.08 | +0.01 | 870 | -10 | -33 | 219 | 14.2 | 0.8 | 0.63 | 0.89 | 0.89 |
| Bomaz Alta Cabot | Topshot x Cabriolet | Alta | 65 | +777 | +45.4 | +30.2 | +0.17 | +0.06 | 867 | -7 | -28 | 158 | 6.7 | 0.1 | 1.48 | 1.31 | 1.86 |
| Peak Alta Leap cd | Quantum x Alta Spring | Alta/AIS | 64 | +865 | +31.8 | +33.7 | -0.03 | +0.07 | 860 | 9 | -32 | 237 | 10.3 | -1.0 | 1.21 | 1.73 | 2.03 |
| Velder Starmaker | Adorable x Mobile | CRV Avoncroft/AIS | 63 | +631 | +30.2 | +26.6 | +0.06 | +0.07 | 852 | 7 | -36 | 222 | 12.2 | 0.1 | 1.73 | 1.30 | 1.71 |
| Denovo 15158 Admiral | Torque x Yoder | Genus | 64 | +823 | +49.2 | +27.5 | +0.19 | +0.01 | 848 | -6 | -24 | 201 | 7.5 | 0.5 | 1.81 | 1.24 | 1.84 |
| Denovo Invictus | Achiever x Supershot | Genus | 63 | +839 | +37.7 | +28.1 | +0.05 | +0.01 | 848 | -8 | -24 | 228 | 13.1 | -0.6 | 1.14 | 1.68 | 1.43 |
| Progenesis Monet | Guarantee x Jedi | Semex | 63 | +1263 | +41.0 | +37.1 | -0.10 | -0.04 | 848 | 7 | -29 | 204 | 7.4 | -1.0 | 0.49 | 1.33 | 1.44 |
| Peak Alta Zarek | Topshot x Rubicon | Alta | 65 | +1072 | +42.0 | +32.3 | +0.00 | -0.03 | 847 | 4 | -26 | 207 | 8.6 | 0.6 | 1.52 | 1.73 | 2.18 |
| proven sires | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bomaz Alta Topshot | Supershot x Embassy | Alta | 76 | +1151 | +38.4 | +35.3 | -0.08 | -0.02 | 788 | 5 | -23 | 149 | 8.3 | 0.1 | 0.98 | 0.76 | 1.36 |
| View-Home Littlerock | Cashcoin x Robust | Semex | 91 | +823 | +25.2 | +27.3 | -0.08 | +0.01 | 749 | -13 | -18 | 225 | 12.4 | 0.5 | 0.65 | 1.28 | 1.21 |
| Seagull-Bay Sr Stardust | Alta Spring x Jacey | Genus | 72 | +783 | +34.6 | +27.0 | +0.04 | +0.02 | 732 | -3 | -13 | 137 | 12.4 | -0.6 | 1.41 | 1.19 | 1.52 |
| Peak Alta Recoil | Alta Spring x Jacey | Alta/AIS | 70 | +948 | +22.9 | +29.7 | -0.16 | -0.01 | 728 | 0 | -12 | 189 | 13.4 | 0.1 | 1.71 | 1.96 | 2.65 |
| Melarry Josuper Frazzled | Josuper x Shotglass | WWS UK | 79 | +1097 | +35.6 | +28.6 | -0.08 | -0.08 | 721 | 0 | -38 | 158 | 3.6 | -0.3 | 0.62 | 1.51 | 1.54 |
| Siemers Bloomfield | Mr Delta x Numero Uno | Semex | 76 | +376 | +41.4 | +15.2 | +0.32 | +0.04 | 716 | 3 | -16 | 219 | 11.9 | -0.8 | 0.99 | 2.17 | 2.40 |
| AOT Silver Helix | Silver x Supersire | WWS UK | 82 | +1299 | +52.6 | +39.6 | +0.02 | -0.03 | 712 | 17 | -4 | 64 | 6 | -0.8 | 1.10 | 1.37 | 2.18 |
| VH Balisto Brook | Balisto x Denim | Viking/AIS | 79 | +271 | +33.3 | +20.0 | +0.28 | +0.14 | 710 | 2 | -38 | 195 | 6.2 | 0.5 | 0.93 | 0.92 | 1.43 |
| Bellefont Perks | Pesky x Esquire | Cogent | 85 | +543 | +30.9 | +28.5 | +0.11 | +0.13 | 710 | -3 | -10 | 76 | 10 | -0.5 | -0.10 | 1.43 | 1.04 |
| Co-Op Robust Cabriolet | Robust x Planet | UK Sires/AIS | 96 | +594 | +38.4 | +24.6 | +0.18 | +0.06 | 709 | -21 | -12 | 88 | 3.1 | 0.8 | 1.44 | 1.06 | 1.48 |