

Fiction breeds good cows – fact

Three bulls from the ‘new’ Jaantje family took the April proof run by storm

The first O Man son from CRV is an easy calving red-and-white carrier. Fiction possesses several qualities that make him interesting besides his high score in the PLI list. The cow family behind Fiction is relatively new to the breeding world, but it’s one that has had immediate success.

The ‘arrival’ of first sons of the unique front-runner O Man have been anticipated for some time now. The question on many breeders’ lips was which Dutch bull would become the first great O Man son? It was Fiction and he has immediately established himself high up in the NVI list. And due to his red factor he is of interest to both black-and-white and red-and-white breeders.

There has, however, been a good measure of luck in Fiction’s history. “We had to flush Jaantje 14 for CRV’s black-and-white breeding programme,” explains the company’s sire analyst Henk Buijs, who suggested using the new breeding bulls Lancelot and O Man.

“Both bulls looked promising, and I had the choice of either,” recalls his breeder Frans Rovers. “Jaantje was classified in her second lactation with VG89. On paper, O Man crossed with Ronald was perhaps not the ideal combination. And certainly not in view of the fact that robustness was not so much in vogue then as it is now.

“But because Jaantje’s indices were not particularly high, I was set on using the highest index bull, and that was O Man. I was able to get hold of a couple of straws so eventually we did manage to flush her with O Man.”

Fifteen embryos resulted in eight calves – four bulls and four heifers. The embryo from which Fiction was born was implanted as a fresh embryo immediately after flushing.

Hereditary factors

Small hereditary factors play a large role in the Jaantje family. Ronald daughter Jaantje 14 inherited the red factor from her red-and-white grand dam Jaantje 9.

Through her Lord Lily mother, however, she also inherited the disadvantageous CVM gene as well. Two of the four bulls by O Man were CVM-free, and of them, Fiction also had the red factor. It was precisely the latter, according to CRV, that was the crucial factor in its decision to use Fiction.

As a matter of fact, the Jaantje family was discovered, not in CRV’s black-and-white breeding programme, but in its red-and-white breeding programme.

“We are constantly on the lookout for good red-factor cows for the red-and-white programme. Jaantje 14 was high on the list of possible red-factor carriers, and the Ronald cross Lord Lily lineage was interesting in terms of red,” says the company’s red-and-white breeding expert Henk Verhey. “Jaantje also had a good fat:protein ratio and, with her lovely frame proportions and her excellent udder and legs, she appealed to me right from the word go.”

As a heifer, the Ronald daughter produced 9,083kg of milk in 311 days, with 3.83% fat and 3.77% protein. She classified VG86 as a heifer and was upgraded to VG89 as a second calver, when Henk decided to contract her to Kian. “Due to the red factor and the CVM, flushing was really the only option for obtaining a red-and-white bull calf, because it takes an average of 16 embryos,” Frans explains. “The flushing resulted in 18 embryos – we sold fifteen of them and implanted three straight away. From these, three CVM-free red-and-white bulls were born.”

Two of them went to CRV – Engineer and Enterprise. Engineer debuted in April with very good scores, but it remains to be seen whether he will make a career

as a breeding bull. Enterprise got his first scores in January and has lost a bit of ground recently.

“They have some strong competition from other good Kian sons like Apina Curtis. Together with Fiction, though, these first three bulls are showing what this fledgling family is capable of,” says Henk.

Still strong

On Frans and Karin Rovers’ farm, Jaantje 14 was the first cow of the family that really stood out. “Her mother was a good producer, but VG86 Lord Lily daughters are two a penny. In the breeding world, you really need to have something exclusive,” says Frans.

“And Jaantje 14 was precisely that, so we have flushed her a total of 26 times with bulls including Kian, O Man, Stadel, Pericles, Classic, Dominator, Roumare, and later on with Goldwyn and Shottle.

According to Frans, out of his 120-head herd the Jaantjes are robust, reliable cows that produce easily. “They are not brilliant in the show ring, but you wouldn’t expect them to be with, for example, O Man crossed with Ronald.”

At just over nine years old, Jaantje 14 is still going strong in Henk’s barn. At the moment she is dry and is in-calf to Planet. So far she has produced 68,489kg of milk with 4.25% fat and 3.67% protein. Her red-factor O Man daughters, Jaantje 25 and

Jaantje 14, mother of Fiction RF



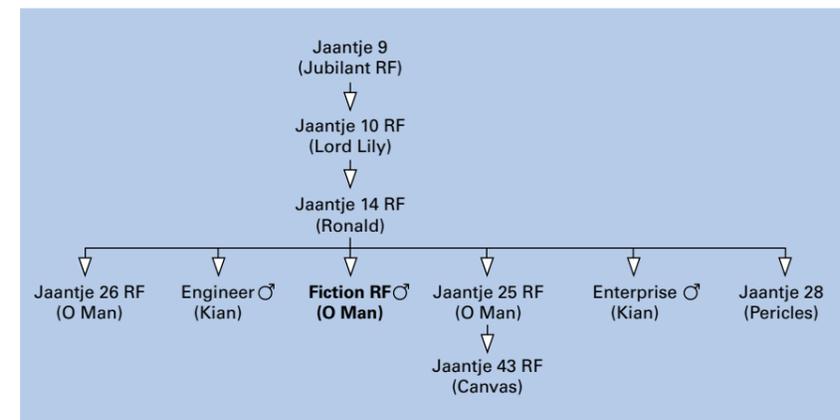
Canvas daughter Jaantje 43, cousin of Fiction

Projected production: 2.05 305 10,778 3.67 3.31 lv 119

Jaantje 26, have also been flushed many times, and there is still a lot of interest in them.

Out of Jaantje 26, there is a Spencer son with good markers that’s worth keeping

an eye on until he gets taken into the programme. “Of the two O Man sisters, Jaantje 25 has the best markers. Her fresh Canvas daughter, Jaantje 43, who is not yet scored, will soon be flushed for CRV.



Fiction RF
(O Man x Ronald)

Production Proof 125 daughters in 109 herds (DairyCo breeding+, Interbull April 2009)

Kg M	% fat	% prot.	Kg fat	Kg prot.	PIN	PLI
+567	+0.01	+0.03	+22.7	+20.6	£38	£193

Longevity: +253 days (above breed average)
 SCC: -16 (excellent, very low)
 Calving ease: 106 (easy calving)
 Temperament: 102 (average)
 Milking speed: 95 (below average)
 Type Merit: +1.46

“They lose no condition”

“The Fiction daughters are well developed, not only in size but in weight and width,” says Avoncroft’s David Matthews, who has now seen more than 10 Fiction daughters. “They are high producing cows that lose no flesh.” His breeding values for condition score and body weight confirm this picture. Fiction has more than 560kg of milk with 43kg of fat and protein and positive percentages. The daughters have good health and fertility traits with excellent locomotion and are easily born.”

Jaantje 28, the red-and-white Pericles daughter out of Jaantje 14, was number 11 on the Dutch red-and-white index at the end of her first lactation.

Fiction was taken onto CRV’s red-and-white breeding programme as a bull sire very early. “His breeding value was high, and O Man, with his good secondary characteristics, is a great addition to the red and white line,” says Henk. “There are now 10 sons by Fiction, the first of which will be taken onto the programme next month. Since January we have been using him again as a bull sire in both the black-and-white and the red-and-white programme. I expect him to be very influential in Holstein breeding.”

Florus Pellikaan