

Anderstrup Holsteins: New Function for Nr.1 Production Herd in Denmark

Dairy farmer: The name indicates exactly what this universal occupation means. Or calling? Either way, the Haahr family has all the necessary qualities in their genes. With an average production of 16,078 kg/35,445 lb, their herd is the most productive in Denmark. Anderstrup Holsteins is especially known as the source of numerous AI bulls all over Europe. While four years ago, a new business strategy was adopted, their underlying passion did not change. 'We really enjoy milking beautiful cows,' emphasizes Niels Erik Haahr.

JORDEN STEGINK

Several Anderstrup sires have been used. For example, the VikingGenetics sires Mandel (MOM-Didrik; Tirsvad Luke Classic family) and Miracle (Massey-Roumare; Tir-An Calano Kristine family), together good for 40,000 daughters: Or Anderstrup Clash-P, a Powerball also from the Classic family, and currently the highest scoring on the Italian progeny proven list. A current young topper from the Anderstrup herd is the German top-5 bull Carengo (see Intriguing Sires in this HI issue). Also in Red Holstein breeding, Anderstrup is developing influence via numerous sons of SPH Croteau Brekem Saigon-Red, such as Sting, Gonzales and Marsden-P in Germany and Sky-Red in Scandinavia.

VISION

Investing in solid cow families from Europe and North America, and selling AI bulls out of them: This was the future goal pursued by Niels Erik Haahr in his early twenties, and later realized in the meantime. By the way, he did not do it alone. Significant contributions were also made by his brother Christian Haahr, herdsman Rasmus Bulow and brother-in-law Erik Haahr Pallesen, who besides being a full-time swimming coach, is a cow man at heart. But today we meet, Niels Erik, who besides being a successful breeder of sires is also an experienced judge. Haahr was the one in 2013 to decisively award Suard-Red Jordan Irene her first European title. In Irene, he recognized the flawless and long-lasting conformation quality that he likes to see in Holstein cows. At the same time, in his own herd, he esteems the descendants of Anderstrup Snow Heaven VG-87, undoubtedly one of the most extreme production talents in recent European Holstein history. Niels Erik Haahr is truly at home in every Holstein market.

AGRONORD

Denmark now has various farms with at least 1,000 milking cows. Anderstrup is currently milking 600, good for no less than 9 million kilograms of milk annually. 'It is not the average production but what is left over, the bottom line, that counts,' comments Haahr, who shares that

his family farm was initially well-known for its good show results. Despite the expansion of the herd and intensive elite breeding, the passion for shows never diminished. In March, Anderstrup Laureen EX-91 (Willsbro Mikosh-Bradnick) was selected as Supreme Champion of the AgroNord Show. This regional show provided more reason for celebration. That day, the import enterprise AI Total Denmark, established by the Haahr family in 2016, displayed the winning collection of milking cows. Niels Erik: 'The launching of this company coincides with our new business strategy. A number of years after the arrival of genomics, more and more AIs started to develop their own nucleus program. Since then, they have purchased significantly fewer bulls from

'High production stands or falls with two impeccable start-up weeks.'

breeders. In addition: many of the breeding decisions that we had to make in order to continue to have an opportunity at marketing AI sires, did not coincide with the choices that we would have made ourselves, to breed cows according to our own preference, and which we think are the most profitable within our system. For that reason, we decided to stop trying to produce possible sires and embryos for AIs. At the same time, we decided to expand from 300 to 600 cows, and to focus on the breeding and management of high-producing cows with good conformation, with special attention to superb udders and feet & legs.'

TRANSITION

The newly selected strategy directly impacts sire selection at Anderstrup. Haahr: 'Since January 2020, we are exclusively using sires from the five AIs from which AI Total Denmark (AI Total, Ascol,

Inseme, Intermizoo, Xenetica Fontao) imports semen. As soon as we have expanded to 750 milking cows, 325-350 two-year-olds will calve out here annually. This corresponds with 10-15 daughters from the 25-30 best sires from those programs. In this way, our customers can come and see the results of our breeding philosophy, while breeders who have a preference for progeny proven sires also have an opportunity to see daughters of those sires.' Besides gaining an impression of the daughters, farmers can also learn about outstanding management at Anderstrup. Niels Erik, who milks the recently fresh and treated cattle each day, summarizes the most important assignment. 'High production stands or falls with two flawless



Team Anderstrup: L-R herdsman Rasmus Bulow, Christian, Niels Erik's wife Anja, Niels Erik, Erik Haahr Pallesen.

Anderstrup Holsteins in Denmark

- Located in Skørping, 30 km south of Aalborg
- Owned by the Haahr family
- 600 milking and dry cows, 500 head of young stock, 40 bulls
- Average production: 16.078kg/35.445lb 3.99% 3.50%
- Classification: 86.8
- Milking cows: TMR (29.5 kg DM) of corn silage (30 kg), grass silage (8.5), processed grain (4.2), molasses (1), soya/canola (5.4), concentrate (5.4), minerals, straw and 12 litres of water. Dry cows first three weeks 11.5 kg DM, last three weeks, 14 kg DM
- Sire selection: Adaway, Arrow, Eba Davinci, Gigi-Red, Harris, Have It All, Jazz, Kelvin, Kitami-PP, Moon, Mirand-PP, Otto-Jbt, Palmer, Pairing, Sound System, Stardancer

start-up weeks, and in the period immediately preceding that, a good dry period. During the last three weeks of the dry period, our cows receive concentrate in the ration to provide extra energy. Subsequently, all second lactation cows or older receive a TechMix YMCP Vitall bolus within 12 hours after calving. The results are tremendous; cows start eating earlier and subsequently chew their cud.'

DESIRE

At Anderstrup Holsteins, they do not overlook the role of breeding. 'Fertility in our herd is the Nr.1 reason for culling. It is always a pity when a productive and sound cow needs to end her career due to fertility issues. We prefer to use

high-tested sires with especially a balanced and faultless profile. Positive fertility is certainly part of that. Sometimes you have Holsteins that continue to produce lots of milk even though they do not become pregnant. However, for most of them, that is not the case. It is best to have them pregnant after 150 days in milk. After that, due to an increase in body condition, it only becomes more difficult.'

One of the exceptions that Haahr has in mind is a Boss daughter of the earlier mentioned Snow Heaven. While this Boss has calved just twice, she has already given 80,000 kg/176,000 lb milk. 'I personally think that she could even complete 100,000 kg/220,456 lb.' Haahr considers the extremely milky Heaven family, despite

its below average fertility, to be one of the best cow families at Anderstrup. He also has great appreciation for the proven Classic family, and the recently developed Bynke Myself family, from which, besides the earlier mentioned gRZG topper Carengo, bulls like Jerez, Kensington, Myway and Stronghold have been bred. In addition, Haahr mentions by name the Laurie Sheiks, the family to which AgroNord Champion Laureen belongs. 'I really enjoy milking beautiful cows, with an emphasis on "beautiful". I want a combination of type and index.' And Niels Erik's deepest desire, explained in the earlier breeder's report about Anderstrup Holsteins (HI 08/1999) has not changed a word in the intervening two decades. ●

Conformation is never forgotten at Anderstrup, as proven by this two-year-old Anderstrup Ilsa VG-89 (Emilio-Windbrook). Her projected production: 305d 13,821 kg/30,470 lb 4.2% 3.4%.

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