

Drolie Holsteins

Flourish at Home and Beyond



At the centre of this photo, and central to an important cow family in the Drolie herd, is Drolie Rudolph Fantasy (VG-87-4*) who is seen here with four of her daughters. From left: Drolie Goldwyn Fatima (VG-86), Drolie Talent Faraday (VG-88), Fantaisy, Drolie Igniter Fiesta (Ex-90-3E), and Drolie Stormatic Fantella (VG-87). Photo by Vicki Fletcher.

BY TARA REYNOLDS

Pierre Drolet and his wife Henriette Ghielen weren't even sure they could get away from their St-Raymond, Quebec, farm in January to attend a banquet following the Holstein Quebec annual meeting. Leaving a 95-cow milking herd is never an easy thing to do. However, at the last minute their son Pier-Luc convinced a friend to help him with chores, so the couple made the one and a half hour drive to Victoriaville. As they settled in with friends and family to enjoy a meal and banquet honouring their province's latest qualifiers for Master Breeder awards, little did they know how much the evening would mean to them.

Master Breeder recipients themselves in 2000 under their farm name of Drolet & Fils, Pierre and Henriette were all too familiar with the challenges involved in capturing Holstein Canada's highest breeding accolade. It was a lifelong goal for Pierre who purchased his first purebred Holstein 40 years ago at the



Pierre Drolet and Henriette Ghielen of Drolet & Fils, St-Raymond, Que.

Pierre Drolet and Henriette Ghielen's children are, from left: Pier-Luc, Geneviève and Samuel Drolet.



age of 11. He spent his own \$600 to buy that animal whose daughter, the first to carry the Drolie prefix, became the herd's first Star Brood cow.

At the banquet, an audio-visual presentation featuring the cows who had been influential in assisting the 2008 recipients with earning their shields was shown. A smile came to Pierre's face as he recognized Drolie Aeroline Daisy (VG-88-3*) who was named as a contributor to 2008 Master Breeder winner Ferme Arthur Lacroix Ltee. Then a short time later, when Drolie Nick Odyssey (VG-85-8*) drew praise for contributing to Ferme Giard Enr.'s 2008 Master Breeder award, Pierre and Henriette were ecstatic. The knowledge that animals they sold did so well for others was even better than winning their own Master Breeder shield!

With an average herd score of 73 percent Very Good or better today, the Drolie herd of 12 Excellent, 55 Very Good and 25 Good Plus cows averaging 11,709 kg milk, 3.8% fat, 3.2% protein (252-255-255) is a great source of pride for the couple and their family. Henriette is equally proud of her splendid perennial beds beautifying their farmstead. It should come as no surprise then that she was quite obliging to allow 12-year-old herd favourite Drolie Rudolph Fantasy (VG-87-4*) to pose among them last September for a photo featured on the cover of this issue of the *Holstein Journal*.

Fantaisy is a special cow indeed. This 2008 finalist for "Vache coup de coeur" (My Favourite Cow), a provincial award with one cow nominated from each regional Holstein club, is fresh since early March. She produced 68 kg milk on her last test and will be flushed again this lactation. In addition to producing more than 111,000 kg milk to date and earning one Super 3 and five Superior Lactation awards, this third generation Very Good is also an accomplished brood cow.

Dam of the aforementioned

Daisy cow who had sons sampled at the Semex Alliance and is also a 2008 "Vache coup de coeur" nominee for her region, Fantaisy has one Excellent and six other Very Good daughters. Still spreading her influence in the Drolie herd is Fantaisy's 7-year-old daughter Drolie Igniter Fiesta (Ex-90-3E) whose own daughters include the eye catching Drolie Morty Funky (Ex-91) who was first 5-year-old and Beauty and Utility winner at Expo Portneuf in 2008, and a "Titanic" scored Very Good at 2 years and testing 4.6% fat this lactation. Fantaisy's youngest daughters in milk are a trio of 2-year-old "Goldwyns" scored Very Good in their first lactation.

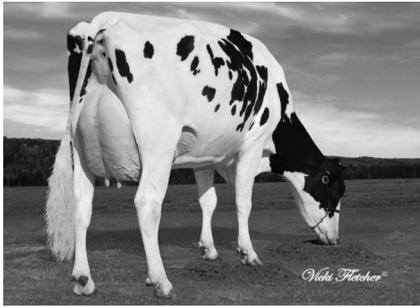
"Goldwyn" has done a great job in this herd full of deep-bodied, good uddered, hard working yet long-lasting cows. Other bulls such as "Stormatic", "Duplex", "Shottle", "Sanchez", "Damion", "Roy", "Laurin", "Alexander" and "Jasper" have been or are being used as service sires. The latter bull sired Drolie Jasper Spicy (VG-87) who is known by the Drolet family as the cow who made Pierre's 83-year-old father, Valmont Drolet, cry. They were tears of joy that he shed when Spicy was named first senior 2-year-old and grand champion at the 2008 Expo Portneuf, making Spicy the very first grand champion title winner for the farm. Everyone else in the family was proud, too. "We had a big party after," they recall. Third in her class at Expo Quebec last year, Spicy is backed by a Very Good-87 dam by "Rudolph" – a bull who also worked well in the herd. Spicy traces on her maternal side to Fleuve Ruby Rockman (GP-4*), a cow who established a strong family in the herd.

Another herd builder was Drolie Anthony Nadia (VG-85-3*) whose dam was Ghielen Blackjack Diane (VG-86-2*), a cow bred by Henriette's father, Master Breeder Jean Ghielen. Today half of the Drolie herd traces to this cow. Nadia had an Excellent son proven at Semex and her Very Good-86, 4-Star "Jubilant" daughter is the dam of Drolie



DROLIE IGNITER FIESTA (Ex-90-3E)

Already proving her own brood cow prowess with one Excellent and one Very Good daughter to date, this "Igniter" daughter of Drolie Rudolph Fantaisy (VG-87-4*) produced 14,290 kg milk, 4.1%, 589 kg fat, 3.5%, 502 kg protein (265-288-284) in 365 days at 4 years.



DROLIE MORTY FUNKY (Ex-91)

First 5-year-old and Beauty and Utility winner at Expo Portneuf in 2008, this "Morty" daughter of Drolie Igniter Fiesta (Ex-90-3E) has 4-year-old credits of 15,273 kg milk, 3.9%, 596 kg fat, 3.2%, 491 kg protein (259-270-264) in 365 days and daughters by "Jasper" and "Baxter" in the Drolie herd.

Stardom Hiris (VG-87-16*), a cow whose influence on the herd is obvious. Among Hiris' impressive group of five Excellent and 31 Very Good descendants to date is Drolie Colorado Lewis (Ex-91) who is out of Hiris' Very Good-86, 2-Star "Rudolph" daughter.

Pierre and Henriette continue to make improvements to their farm where they grow corn silage, haylage, hay and barley on 400 acres. Recent building projects have enabled the herd to thrive



DROLIE JASPER SPICY (VG-87)

First senior 2-year-old and grand champion at Expo Portneuf in 2008, this "Jasper" daughter has produced 66 embryos by "Shottle", "Duplex" and "Goldwyn". Spicy has 2-year-old credits of 11,949 kg milk, 4.1%, 487 kg fat, 3.2%, 388 kg protein (251-268-252) in 365 days and is out of a Very Good-87 "Rudolph" who traces to herd foundation cow Fleuve Ruby Rockman (GP-4*).

in a very clean and comfortable environment right from baby calves up to milking cows. Right now there are 15 cows in the milking line-up that have already produced more than 60,000 kg milk. With long-lasting cows such as these, the Drolets sell about 25 fresh young cows each year.

Noting that they do not use bulls rated less than +14 for conformation, they prefer to emphasize type rather than production when making matings. Furthermore, Pierre feels if a cow is superior for conformation, then she should naturally be healthy and therefore lead a long and productive life.

Pierre and Henriette are extremely supportive when it comes to encouraging their children to achieve their goals. Daughter Geneviève, 23, is a University of Laval graduate in agricultural sciences and currently Holstein Quebec's Representative for Central Quebec, son Pier-Luc, 22, is full-time on the farm, and son Samuel, 19, is studying agriculture. The three were all successful at showing calves, with Geneviève earning reserve champion showmanship honours at the 2007 Scotiabank Classic while showing Jacobs Dundee Voltage who was nominated for All-Canadian 4-H senior heifer calf that year. Samuel's most recent success came in 2008 when he escorted Crasdale Dundee Liza to champion calf honours at The Classic - Canadian Junior Dairy Show and went on to earn the All-Canadian 4-H summer yearling title with her last year. In 2007 his project calf Hautpre Florie Jasper was Reserve All-Canadian 4-H junior yearling. While all three calves were borrowed from their relatives at Ferme Jacobs, Cap-Sante, Que., this year Samuel has his eye on a showy "Roy" heifer from Drolie Stormatic Bentley (Ex-92), a sixth generation Very Good or Excellent whose dam just happens to hail from a strong family in the Jacobs herd.

When Pierre began establishing a purebred herd he purchased one or two good pedigreed individuals each year. This practice continues today. At the Vente Classique earlier this year he bought a full sister to 2007 All-Canadian nominee Velthuis Goldwyn Elligant (VG-85) from the Krull Broker Elegance (Ex-96-3E-GMD-DOM-1*) family. Another recent purchase the family says was "bought by Pier-Luc and paid for by Pierre" was a "Mr Sam" from the Laurie Sheiks who scored Very Good-87 in her first lactation. With newcomers such as these, and their own long-established families, the Drolie herd continues to evolve. In addition to selling bulls to A.I. units, embryos have been exported to countries such as Germany and Algeria.



DROLIE STARDOM HIRIS (VG-87-16*)

A fifth generation Very Good, Star Brood cow, this "Stardom" left one Excellent and 13 Very Good daughters and produced 14,241 kg milk, 440 kg fat, 486 kg protein (283-234-304) in 305 days at 5 years. In keeping with the family ability to transmit, four of her daughters are already Star Brood cows.

Future goals for Pierre and Henriette and their family include earning a second Master Breeder shield. That first purebred Holstein that Pierre bought for \$600 came from the herd of a local Master Breeder recipient, Henri Cayer. In the early 1980s, Pierre went back and purchased another baby calf from the Cayer herd. Today this animal, Cay Elevator Delight (VG-85-5*), has many descendants in the Drolie herd including Drolie Dundee Anso (VG-87), one of one Excellent and six Very Good daughters of Drolie Mason Angie (VG-86-4*).

Although it might seem easy to buy into the life's work of another Master Breeder and watch those animals excel for you, Pierre Drolet and Henriette Ghielen have worked hard to further enhance the families that, in turn, made them Master Breeders. They sincerely hope the Drolie cattle they market will do the same for others. Like Henriette and her horticultural skills, the exchange of Master Breeder cultivated genetics is similar to buying a beautiful new perennial from award winning nursery stock, taking pleasure in watching it grow as you nurture it yourself, and then dividing the roots and passing it on to others with the hopes that they, too, will reap rewards. ■



DROLIE STORMATIC BENTLEY (Ex-92)

Backed by five generations of Very Good or Excellent dams with 30 Stars, this "Stormatic" produced 13,387 kg milk, 4.2%, 565 kg fat, 3.1%, 412 kg protein (261-294-244) in 365 days. Bentley has ten young daughters in the herd by "Roy", "Lou", and "Goldwyn".