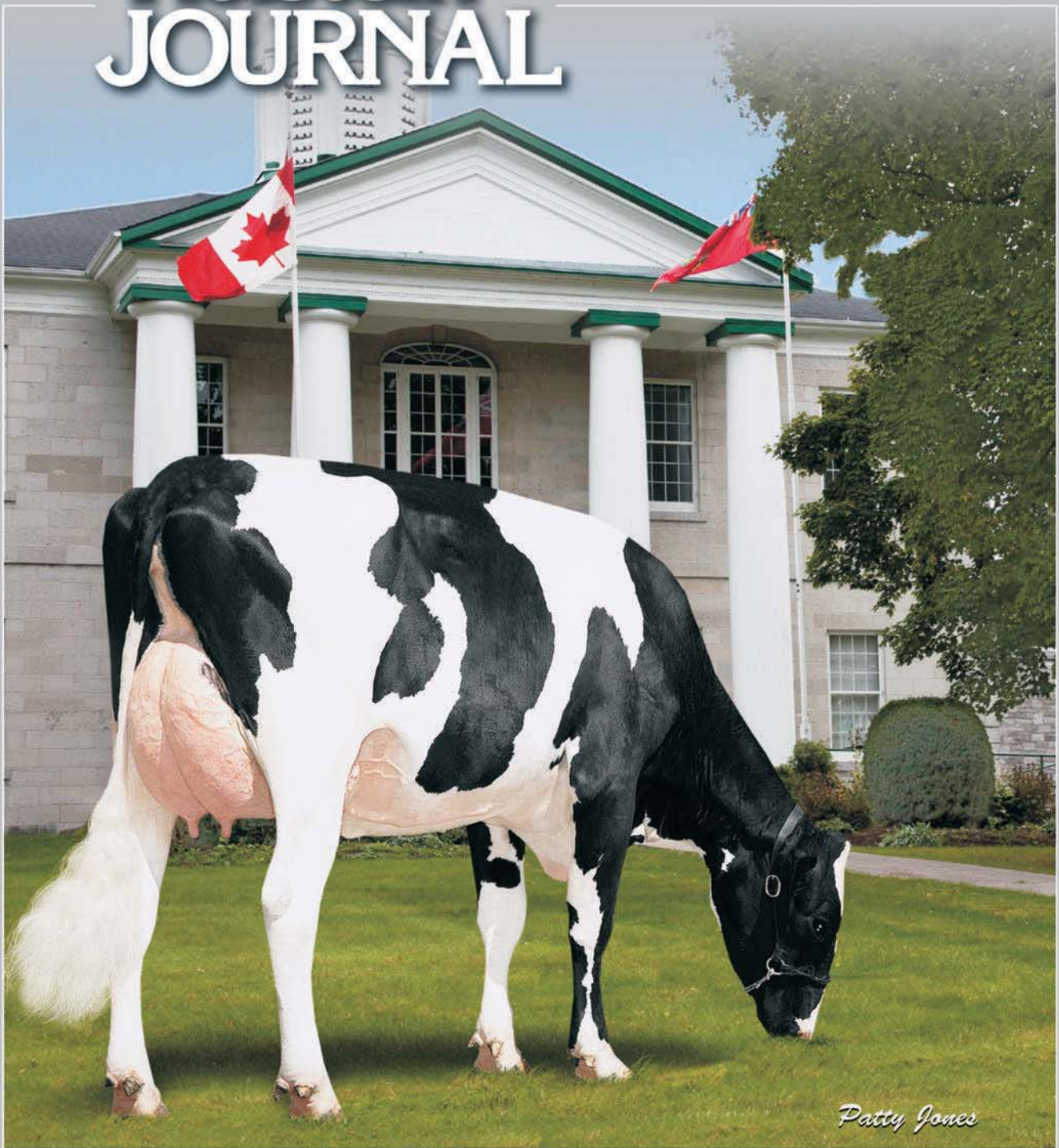


Holstein JOURNAL



Focus on Type Issue
Vogue Cattle Co.
Royal Winter Fair Preview
Ontario and Atlantic Summer Shows

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Breeding “Genetics by Design”

BY BONNIE COOPER

Vogue Cattle Co. may be a new name on the Holstein scene, but the men and partnership behind that name have been working and generating success together for almost a decade. Vogue Cattle Co. is the partnership of Dave Eastman, Len Vis and brothers Sean and Kelly O'Connor. Together they have realized a long list of achievements that includes number one ranking genomic cows, heifers and bulls, All-Canadians, and record setting sale prices. With their eye always focused on the future, this partnership is breeding and designing genetics to fit the ever changing needs of the dairy cattle marketplace.

THE PARTNERS AND HOW IT BEGAN

Dave Eastman, Len Vis and Sean and Kelly O'Connor are successful men in their own right and no strangers to the Holstein industry.

Dave Eastman of Guelph, Ont., is the former owner of the A.I. company GenerVations Inc. which marketed such breed leading bulls as “Champion”, “Windhammer”, “Willrock”, “Wildthing”, “Epic”, “Lexus”, “Liquid Gold” and others. In May 2014, he sold his A.I. business to Select Sires Inc. of Ohio. In addition to working with Select, Eastman owns a genetic testing service company called Validity, and owns and breeds a few cattle of his own under the Vector Genetics name.

Len Vis owns the two-time Master Breeder winning Mapel Wood Farms at Jerseyville, Ont. He and his family have bred and developed a number of noted cow families including Mapel Wood Mason Diamonds (Ex-2E-11*). One of their current favourites is Butz-Butler Atwood Brace-ET (Ex-90), an “Atwood” from the Barbies who is a full sister to “Brady” and maternal sister to the All-Canadian and All-American, Butz-Butler Gold Barbara-ET (Ex-92-USA). Vis currently milks 80 cows in a tie-stall barn in a herd comprised of 18 Excellent, 63 Very Good and 21 Good Plus cows. Vogue cattle account for almost 65% of the 300-head housed on his farm.

Sean and Kelly O'Connor of Ajax, Ont., own and operate O'Connor Land & Cattle Co., a 300-head Holstein herd. Their farm is located in a Greenbelt area of metropolitan Toronto. In June 2011 they lost their barn



and 50 head of cattle in a fire. They rebuilt and today milk 100 cows in a robotic milking system and have a pack barn. The Oconnors prefixed herd includes five Excellent, 70 Very Good and 40 Good Plus cows. O'Connors and Vis previously owned Gen-I-Beq Shottle Bombi (Ex-94-2E-USA-20*) together and many members of this noted family remain here including Oconnors Garrett Beautiful (VG-86), a full sister to the number one GLPI and Pro\$ bull in Canada, Mapel Wood Brewmaster (Ex-95-Extra).

Eastman, Vis and the O'Connors bought their first animal together at the November 2006 Comestar Class Extra Sale in Victoriaville, Que. While the four men knew each other casually and had done some business with one or the other, they were not close friends. They did have one thing in common. “At one point in our lives I guess we were all under Albert Cormier’s umbrella,” says Sean O'Connor of the highly regarded Ontario Holstein breeder and marketer from Corndale Genetics Inc. who had mentored and partnered with all of them at one time over the years.

Headlining the offerings in the Comestar Sale were a pair of 8-month-old “Goldwyn” heifer calves from the famous Lylehaven Lila Z (Ex-94-20*), the two-time All-Canadian by “Durham” who had sold for \$1,150,000 the year

before. “I wanted to own a Lila Z daughter, but I was sick at home the day of the sale,” recalls Vis. “I called Albert Cormier who was at the sale. He said Sean O'Connor is here and he's interested in a daughter. I called Sean and asked if he wanted a partner.” They, in turn, asked Dave Eastman, who owned part of Lila Z and was among the consignors of her calves, if he wanted to stay in on one of them. He did. Sold in the days before genomic testing, Comestar Goldwyn Lilac and Comestar Goldwyn Lava were offered on choice in the sale. O'Connors, Vis and Eastman bid the sale's top price of \$60,000 and chose Lilac, while Lava sold for \$54,000. They found out later the calves were the result of a split embryo.

“We flushed Lilac, sold a bunch of eggs, made some calves and that is how the partnership started,” says Eastman. The group continued to buy more animals together. “The partnership just evolved. There was no plan,” Vis says. They housed all of the females from the partnership at Mapel Wood and all of the bulls at O'Connors. Any bulls bred by the partnership that went into A.I. carried the Genervations prefix, while the females carried either the Mapel Wood or Oconnors prefix. All of their names appeared on the registration certificate of the animals they owned, although for brevity they were sometimes referred to as GMO Partners (Genervations, Mapel Wood, Oconnors).

“The best thing of any partnership is it spreads the risk of any investment,” says Eastman. For Vis and O'Connors the partnership broadened the calibre of cattle they could buy and helped to improve the genetic level in their herds. For Eastman, who doesn't own a farm, the partnership allowed him to invest in well-known cows and cow families with the goal of generating bulls for his A.I.

company, while also having more control over the matings that produced those bulls. While a number of A.I. companies have since adopted this same business model, Eastman was one of the first. Of the bulls born since January 1, 2000 who have been classified Excellent by Holstein Canada, 30 carry the Generations prefix, the most of any prefix, quite a feat considering the first of those Excellents was just born in July 2005.

VOGUE

Eastman, Vis and the O'Connors had kicked around the idea of having a single name/prefix for



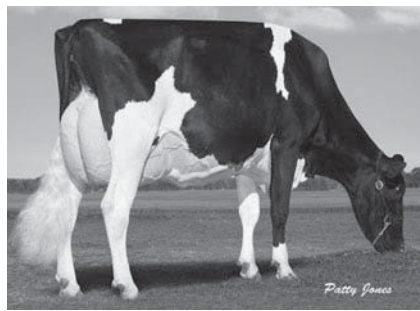
The four partners of Vogue Cattle Co., from left, Sean and Kelly O'Connor, Dave Eastman and Len Vis, are pictured right after their successful 2012 Genetics by Design sale. (Photo by Randy Blodgett.)

their partnership several times. Last fall they settled on the prefix VOGUE and the name Vogue Cattle Co. They created a logo featuring their name and three diamonds. “Kelly O’Connor came up with the name,” says Vis. “V is for Vis, O for O’Connor, G for GenerVations, U represents you – our other partners, and E is for Eastman.” “It kind of ties in with the name of our 2012 sale – Genetics by Design,” points out Sean O’Connor. “We feel the name adds value,” says Eastman. “If you look in the past at prefixes like Hanover Hill, your prefix gives you a brand or identity.” In addition to brand identity, having a singular prefix has helped to better identify which animals in the Mapel Wood and Oconnors herds are owned by Vogue and gives greater credit to all the partners for the animals they have bred together.

The first calf born with the Vogue prefix was registered in March 2015. Going forward all females and males bred by the partnership will carry the Vogue prefix. Every animal they own is genomic tested. They are also doing tests now for polled and A2A2. Jennifer Vander Meulen of Avonlea Genetics Inc., Brighton, Ont., is the company’s administrator and it is her address that Vogue uses for its business. “Jenn does all the bookwork, registrations, inventory and billing for the company and does a great job of keeping us organized,” says Eastman. “She names all the calves. The bulls all have numbers until we know if they are going into A.I. and then we give them a name.”

“Vogue is a business. It is a breeding business,” states Eastman. “It is ran as a business. We share in all the costs of the animals we own from housing, flushing and marketing. We have structures of costs for boarding and raising animals and Mapel Wood and O’Connors are both paid board for housing cattle at their farms.” As Vis adds, “The partnership has always been treated as a separate business entity, with separate books, taxes, etc. It has its own bank account.” When it comes to making decisions, Sean O’Connor says, “We communicate constantly. We talk to each other at least three or four times a week by phone, e-mails or text and have a conference call at least once a month.”

“We all get along well in terms of not sweating the small stuff,” says Eastman. “More importantly, we have similar ideas.” The Vogue members share common goals when it comes to the kind of Holsteins they want to breed and invest in: great cows and cow families with high type, production and a good flush history, combined with exceptional sire stacks, and high genomic values. “And something unique,” adds Vis. When the group first started buying cattle together they didn’t have genomic numbers to look at. “When genomics



COMESTAR GOLDWYN LILAC (VG-89-19*)
The first animal purchased by the Vogue partnership in 2006, this “Goldwyn” daughter from Lylehaven Lila Z (Ex-94-20*) truly put this partnership on the road to success. A two-time finalist for “Cow of the Year” and nominated for All-Canadian senior 2-year-old in 2008, she has seven Excellent, 43 Very Good and 16 Good Plus offspring and heads a long line of family members who have ranked high on genomic lists around the world.

came out, it just confirmed that great cow families with great sire stacks were the most important thing you could buy,” says Vis. Eastman continues, “Genomics helps you to sort your investments easier. But you still have to have the basics – great cows and great cow families. And hopefully the animals you buy can flush and make bulls and heifers. None of us are interested in just buying animals with high numbers to make higher numbers and not have anything there. Most of our animals have great pedigrees, great families and the numbers to go with them.”

THE COW THAT CHANGED IT ALL

Comestar Goldwyn Lilac (VG-89-19*) was the cow who truly changed everything for the partnership. Lilac was backed by three direct Excellent-94, Star Brood dams. She would be nominated for All-Canadian senior 2-year-old in 2008. At one time, she was the highest genomic tested cow ever nominated for All-Canadian. As a 4-year-old, she made 22,935 kg milk, 4.6% fat, 3.4% protein (404-496-429). In 2012 and



OCONNORS PLANET LUCIA (VG-86-2y-3*)
This “Planet” daughter from Comestar Goldwyn Lilac (VG-89-19*) was the number one GLPI cow in Canada three times for the Vogue partnership. Lucia has had many high indexing daughters and sons including O’Connors Last Hope (VG-87-2y), the former number one GTPI “Numero Uno” sired calf in the world who sold for what is still a Canadian record price for a heifer calf of \$475,000 in the 2012 Genetics by Design sale.

2013, she was a finalist for Holstein Canada’s “Cow of the Year” award. A prolific flush cow, Lilac would produce a long line of family members who would rank high on genomic lists around the world.

Lilac had five Excellent and 12 Very Good sons. Her “Man-O-Man” son, Generations Lexor (Ex-91-SP), was the partners’ first high genomic bull debuting at number one on Canada’s GPA LPI bull list in August 2011. “Lexor was in the barn at O’Connors when their fire broke out. The farm employees knew he was a special bull and he was the first animal they got out of the barn,” says a grateful Eastman.

On the female side, Lilac has two Excellent, 31 Very Good and 11 Good Plus daughters. Her best known daughter is Oconnors Planet Lucia (VG-86-2y-3*) by “Planet”. Vogue bought Lucia for \$35,000 as a 1-month-old calf in the 2009 Sale of Stars to dissolve the partnership they held on her with Comestar Holstein. “We later priced Lucia three times as a heifer but never sold her,” says Eastman. It turned out to be a stroke of luck. In August and December of 2012 Lucia ranked as the number one GLPI cow in Canada. In April 2013, the partners had the number 1 and 2 GLPI cows with Lucia in first and her “Man-O-Man” maternal sister, Mapel Wood M O M Lucy (VG-86-2y-1*), at number 2. Lucy had a daughter, Mapel Wood Sudan Licorice (VG-86-USA), who was the number one GPA LPI heifer in Canada in August 2012. She sold for the top heifer calf price of \$200,000 in the 2012 International Intrigue Sale.

Lucia would produce many high indexing daughters and sons of her own. In 2012, GenerVations offered semen from her young Mapel Wood Boulder (Ex-92-SP) son, Generations Liquid Gold (Ex-92), for \$750 per dose for the first 1500 doses. “It was the first time anyone had ever priced semen from a young genomic bull that high. He changed the industry as now other A.I. companies have sold semen for that much or more,” notes Eastman.

On November 6, 2012, the partners held a sale at the Brubacher Sale Arena, Guelph, Ont., called “Genetics by Design”. “The partnership had so many animals by then we didn’t have any room left. We had invested a lot and everything was at its peak,” says Eastman. The Genetics by Design sale was a great success realizing a total of nearly \$4.2 million and an average of \$24,996 on 168 head. It attracted buyers from six Canadian provinces and five foreign countries. Fifty-three percent of the day’s gross sales, or \$2,241,500, was generated by Lucia, her ten daughters and 15 first choices from she and her daughters. Selling for what is still a Canadian record price for a heifer

calf was Lucia's June 2012 daughter, Oconnors Last Hope (VG-87-2y), who topped the sale at \$475,000. She was the number one GTPI "Numero Uno" sired heifer calf in the world at the time. Her 4-month-old full sister, Mapel Wood Last Dance (VG-85-2y), who was then the number one GPA LPI "Numero Uno" in the world, sold for \$365,000.

A definite money-maker, Lucia and her "Snowman" daughter, Oconnors Snowman Lexie (VG-88-2y), are today playing key roles in the Oconnors herd.

OTHER INVESTMENTS

In 2010, Vogue acquired Wiamy Kyana Bolton (VG-88-2*), a "Bolton" tracing to the Youelldene Royal Gem (VG-5*) family, who Eastman discovered during the early days of genomics when he was seeking new cow families. Two days after their 2012 sale, the partners purchased Cookiecutter MOM Hue-ET (VG-88-2y) for \$200,000 in the Sale of Stars with Diamond Genetics of the Netherlands. This high indexing "Man-O-Man" daughter completed nine generations of Very Good or Excellent in the Dellia family. Both cows flushed well and have yielded many embryos and top offspring for the group.

Two animals Vogue is currently excited about working with are Oconnors Aikman Scarlet and Snowbiz N Uno Lena (VG-85-2y).

Scarlet, a 2-year-old "Aikman" daughter from the Splendor family, topped the 2013 World Classic Sale at \$131,000 to Patty Jones, Puslinch, Ont., and Paul Krueger, Wrightstown, Wis., with Vogue retaining an interest. She is one of the top genomic Red & White females in the world today.

Vogue bought Lena in the 2013 Snowbiz Dispersal. The new number 4 GLPI cow in Canada, this "Numero Uno" completes ten generations of Very Good or Excellent in the Laurie Sheik family. She has several high genomic daughters including a September 2014 "Pepper" calf who sold for \$76,000 in this year's RockyMountain High Sale. Vogue has leased Lena's promising October 2014 "Main Event" son, Oconnors Vogue Main Time, to Foundation Genetics.

Vogue has recently invested in a few "show" animals, animals who also come from great cow families. "We all grew up showing animals in 4-H and love that part of the business too," says Eastman in explaining the group's reasons for venturing into this part of the business. As he says, "It is more fun going to a show if you have got one in it."

Just before last year's Royal Winter Fair Holstein Show, Vogue purchased Belfast Doorman Lovestruck and her "Doorman" full sister, Lust, with Patty Jones, Paul Krueger and Corndale Genetics. Lovestruck went on to be first intermediate calf at the Royal and



One of the most successful cow families that the partners in Vogue Cattle Co. have worked with is the Lila Z family. Pictured are four generations of that family, from left: Oconnors Last Hope (VG-87-2y), Oconnors Planet Lucia (VG-86-2y-3*), Comestar Goldwyn Lilac (VG-89-19*), and Lylehaven Lila Z (Ex-94-20*), the two-time All-Canadian by "Durham" that Dave Eastman at one time was a partner in.

capture All-Canadian honours for them. Lovestruck and Lust are daughters of Belfast Goldwyn Lasenza (VG-89-2y), the "Goldwyn" who was All-Canadian and All-American junior 2-year-old in 2013 and traces to the same family as Lila Z. Vogue is also partners with Jones and Krueger in a pair of "Windhammer" full sisters who finished second and fourth in the senior 2-year-old class at this year's Ontario Summer Show. They are daughters of Lilac's full sister, Calbrett Goldwyn Layla (Ex-96-2E-1*), who was Reserve All-Canadian mature cow in 2013. Vogue has recently partnered with Joel Lepage, Amqui, Que., and Americans Rick Allyn and Pat Conroy in Du Petit Bois GD Selsy. This "Golden Dreams" daughter, backed by three Very Good or Excellent dams, was first intermediate calf at Atlantic Spring Showcase and Expo-Printemps Holstein Quebec this spring. A show winning Jersey, Avonlea Comerca Velvet (Ex-93), has also been among Vogue's investments. This 2014 All-Canadian junior 3-year-old is owned with Patty Jones, Avonlea Genetics and Cybil Fisher.

"The one animal I should have bought into when I had the chance was Bombi," says Eastman, referring to



SNOWBIZ N UNO LENA (VG-85-2y)

The new number 4 GLPI cow in Canada with a +3225 GLPI, this "Numero Uno" daughter was purchased by Vogue Cattle Co. in the 2013 Snowbiz Dispersal. A tenth generation Very Good or Excellent in the Laurie Sheik ET family and a maternal sister to Snowbiz Littleton at Semex, she has several high genomic daughters and sons including Oconnors Vogue Main Time at Foundation Genetics.

Gen-I-Beq Shottle Bombi, the respected "Shottle" from the Gypsy Grand family. Vis bought Bombi as a calf for \$22,000 in the 2006 Sale of Stars just a few days after buying Lilac. He later sold half interest in her to the O'Connors. Bombi became a "game changer" for Vis and O'Connors. With the first release of genomic indexes for females in Canada in August 2009, Bombi debuted at number 2. They would later sell her to Siemers Holsteins in Wisconsin. Despite not being part of the Vogue partnership, Eastman took a number of sons from Bombi into his A.I. program at GenerVations. Nine sons scored Excellent, five of these on the same day. Among them is "Brewmaster", the popular "Garrett" son who is Canada's number one GLPI, Pro\$ and fat bull.

MAKING INVESTMENTS PAY OFF

Marketing is a key part of the Vogue program. They are developing a web site and utilize Facebook and Twitter. They advertise regularly in breed magazines with creative advertisements. Their farms are always open for visitors. They take lots of pictures. "There are pictures, and then there are pictures. You need GREAT pictures when you market," says Vis. "Side profile shots are fine, but those angle and different shots really help in marketing. The \$200 you spend on pictures is worth it. It allows you to build a whole cow family portfolio."

"Marketability" is always foremost in the minds of the Vogue partners when buying and developing their investments.

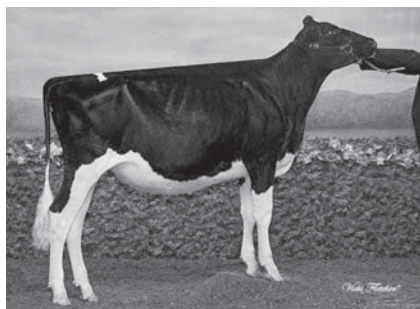
"When we started we didn't use as many young genomic bulls as we should have. Today, you can't even use proven bulls if you want to keep up genetically from a marketing standpoint," says Eastman. "While there are a few markets we use proven bulls for flushing on cows, on everything else we use genomic young bulls. After every genetic run we go through the bulls, look at the pedigrees, and decide which ones we like."

Vogue does a lot of flushing of their top animals. They do not genomic test

the embryos. "In the beginning our philosophy was not to sell a lot of embryos, so we implanted almost all the eggs," says Vis. Today that has changed. "From a cash flow point, selling embryos helps the business to fund itself," states Eastman. With the fast pace of genetics today, Eastman says they can't afford to make a few embryos from a heifer, calve her, make a record, and then start making money on her. "Our heifers have to pay for themselves now before they calve, whether it is through the sale of embryos or progeny." The youngest heifer Vogue has done IVF on was just under 6 months old. "We haven't done a lot of IVF on young calves because there are a lot of markets that won't take IVF eggs," says Eastman. "We always use multiple bulls, or 'cocktail flushes', when we flush. What we lose in not using IVF, we feel we make-up on the cocktails."

Vogue merchandises their animals and embryos through sales and privately. "One of us always tries to be at a sale so we always have a presence there," says Len Vis. "We are all very approachable." Vogue wants to see the buyers of their genetics do well with their purchases. "We like to help and work with people who have bought cattle and embryos from us so they can get a return on their investment," says Eastman. "It takes a lot of time and effort to find where animals rank and a lot of people won't do that. You have to know why your animal is unique in the marketplace and why you should buy this animal over another."

To keep expenses in check and their inventory manageable, the Vogue partners started playing "poker" about a year ago. Periodically they sit down and set a cut-off level for the genomic figure they want to work with on their females going forward. Females that fall below that level are put into a draw and split up between Vis, O'Connors and Eastman to absorb into their own herds or sell. Bulls are genomic tested at birth and



BELFAST DOORMAN LOVESTRUCK
All-Canadian intermediate calf in 2014, this "Doorman" daughter of the All-Canadian and All-American Belfast Goldwyn Lasenza (VG-89-2y) was purchased by Vogue Cattle Co., Patty Jones, Paul Krueger and Cormdale Genetics before she won her class at the Royal Winter Fair last November. Off to another strong start in 2015, she was junior champion at Maxville Holstein Show and is among the "show" animals that Vogue has invested in recently.



MAPEL WOOD BREWMASTER (Ex-95-Extra)
This popular "Garrett" son from Gen-I-Beq Shottle Bombi (Ex-94-2E-USA-20") was bred by Len Vis of Maple Wood Farms and Sean and Kelly O'Connor of O'Connor Land & Cattle Co. and taken into Dave Eastman's A.I. program at GenerVations. Today he is Canada's reigning number one GLPI and Pro\$ bull and is marketed by Select Sires GenerVations.

those deemed not high enough are culled as soon as those results are known. Despite these efforts, Vogue's total number of females, males and recipient animals continues to grow. They currently have over 300 head in their inventory. They are selling 25 head in the Cormdale Genetics Legacy Sale on September 19th and are beginning to make plans for their own Vogue sale next spring.

Would Vogue recommend others to establish a partnership like theirs? Yes. "You spread your risk and have more opportunities," says Sean O'Connor. "You share in the upside, as well as the downside." As Eastman points out, "You can do more as a group than you can individually just from sheer contacts. You are spreading your abilities and with common goals your investment can go a lot further." As Vis contends, "I think a partnership is the only way young people can get into the high genetics business unless they have a large dairy."

When making investments Vis advises, "Buy the best you can afford and forget the rest. There is no point in messing around with the mediocre ones because you will stay mediocre all your life. You need to put as many things in your favour as you can." Eastman agrees, but adds, "The one thing that genomics tells us is that we know nothing. You can't predict. You can stack the deck in your favour in terms of good cow families, sire stacks, etc., but it is no guarantee that every animal you produce is going to be the highest. That is what makes it fun and challenging."

Eastman feels it is a great time in the business for a dairyman who milks a lot of cows to improve his herd. "You can buy a great heifer today for \$5000 to \$6000, flush her, make 20 pregnancies, and end up with some amazing animals who are going to be better than the rest of your herd. And it will cost you a fraction of the cost because you can use the animals in your own herd as recipients."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Eastman, Vis and O'Connors have always been forward thinking in their breeding decisions. "As a group, we think polled homozygous is the way of the future," says Vis. "In the last year we have put a lot of focus on that and are trying to incorporate polled homozygous into our different cow families." With animal welfare policies gaining momentum among milk processors and retailers, and increasing calls for the practice of dehorning calves to be eliminated, interest in polled animals is growing. While the polled gene in Red & White Holsteins has attracted interest for a number of years, Vogue feels this gene needs to be incorporated into more of the Black & White Holstein population and at the elite genetics level. "There is a perception of polled and red. We would like to see that changed to just polled Holsteins," says Vis. As Eastman states, "Many people think there is not a huge market for polled, but as more bulls become available with the homozygous polled gene I feel it will increase quickly. Genomics will accelerate this selection/progress. I guarantee if you have a homozygous polled bull that is high enough you will sell all the semen he can ever make." Vogue already owns many of the top ranking polled homozygous females in the world and hopes to have more homozygous polled bulls and females in the coming months that are as high as those from horned bulls.

Another trait Vogue is paying close attention to is Beta Casein (A1A2). A2A2 is the most sought after combination and can be identified via testing and selected for. A2 milk is currently generating consumer interest because of the potential health benefits it is felt to have. While there are a number of Holstein bulls that possess the A2 gene, many do not.

"Our goal is to breed an animal that carries everything," says Eastman.



OCONNORS COMMAND LONESTAR
One of the highest genomic heifers today with a +3351 GPA LPI and Pro\$ of +2631, this November 2014 Larcrest Commander-ET daughter will start IVF shortly for Vogue Cattle Co. She is a daughter of Snowbiz N Uno Lucious (VG-85-2y), a "Numero Uno" who completes ten generations Very Good or Excellent in the Laurie Sheik family. Lucious is a full sister to the number 4 GLPI cow, Snowbiz N Uno Lena (VG-85-2y), who is also owned by Vogue.

"If you have a normal Black & White animal what are your marketing opportunities? One thing. Black & White. But if you can bring along homozygous polled, A2A2, and possibly Red & White or Red Carrier Holstein you have so many different marketing opportunities with the same animal for the same investment." Vogue has a young bull at Foundation Genetics, Mapel Wood Ball Of Wax-PP, who is the number one GPA LPI homozygous polled bull in the world and is a Red Carrier and A2A2. They hope to breed more like him.

Vogue has been a successful partnership with few disappointments because of the talent, business sense, cow knowledge, commitment and trust of its partners. Dave Eastman is the "optimist" in the group. "My philosophy is 'It always works out,'" he says. Eastman possesses a wealth of knowledge on Holstein pedigrees, numbers and rankings, and enjoys researching and sorting that information. He is known worldwide because of his previous A.I. company and has many contacts. Len Vis and Sean and Kelly O'Connor and their farm teams bring excellent farm management, exceptional animal care skills and "attention to detail" to the partnership. "The employees these guys have on their farms do an outstanding job. They provide a lot of TLC to ensure our investments," says Eastman. At Mapel Wood, Len credits the great team effort of his brother Harold and Chris Naves for calving in all the Vogue recipients, raising the newborn calves and ensuring the Vogue females reach their full potential in classification and production. Sean and Kelly O'Connor may be quieter men, but their meticulous attention to detail ensures the bulls in their care do well as they move from hutches to group pens and then pass through their health protocols prior to entering A.I. units.

Going forward Eastman, Vis and the O'Connors know their business will continue to evolve and change. With more A.I. companies owning females and putting their own bulls into their programs and restricting access to that semen, there will be fewer opportunities for all breeders to sell bulls to A.I. In the future, Vogue would like to partner with a few large herds who have lots of recipients and would be interested in incubating pregnancies for them. In return, these herd owners would be rewarded with joint ownership in some of the resulting high genomic animals to improve their own herd. "I think there are huge opportunities for dairymen who have large herds and want to get into better genetics, but don't have the know-how or time because they are busy managing their large operations," says Eastman.

With shared common goals, Vogue Cattle Co. has bred and developed some



From left, Dave Eastman, Sean O'Connor and Len Vis of Vogue Cattle Co. are pictured alongside one of their many successful bulls in A.I., Generations Liquid Gold (Ex-92), who is a "Boulder" son from Oconnors Planet Lucia (VG-86-2y-3*). (Photo by Patty Jones.)

of the most in-demand animals in the world today. "Because of Vogue, we have travelled around the world to Australia, the United Kingdom and many places in the United States," say Len and Sean. "The partnership has been a lot of FUN!" While Dave Eastman, Len Vis, and Sean and Kelly O'Connor enjoy the animal breeding aspect and fun of working together as partners, their ultimate goal is to "make money" on their investments. As Eastman says, "This is not a hobby. This is a business. It has to be profitable. Every animal we own is for sale." The love and passion they share for the Holstein business however is evident in everything they do. As Vis stresses, "We also want to better the breed. We are not just in this for the all mighty dollar. We want to breed good cattle who will do well for other dairymen and improve their herds. We want to have something for everyone. We want Vogue to be your one stop to shop." As Sean O'Connor says, "It all comes down to this...Genetics by Design. We are designing genetics." That is what Vogue Cattle Co. is and will continue to be in the future. ■



MAPLE WOOD BALL OF WAX-PP
This August 2014 bull truly has it all as he is the number one GPA LPI homozygous polled bull in the world, a Red Carrier and A2A2. Bred by Vogue Cattle Co. and available through Foundation Genetics, this Pine-Tree Ohio Style P-ET son is from a Very Good-86-2y "Ladd P" dam, then a Very Good-86, 1-Star "Man-O-Man", followed by Comestar Goldwyn Lilac (VG-89-19*) and then the noted Lylehaven Lila Z (Ex-94-20*).

Peter Brand Named Ontario Branch General Manager

The Ontario Holstein Branch Board of Directors announced on July 29th the addition of Peter Brand as the new General Manager of the Ontario Holstein Branch. Brand will assume the role on November 1, 2015. He will work out of the Ontario Holstein Branch office in Cambridge, Ont., as well as serving as the Field Representative for West-Central Ontario.

"Peter brings a unique combination of skills and background to this role," says Ontario Branch President Ian Fraser. "In these fast-paced times, the Board is thrilled to support someone who offers both industry experience and a vision for the future, including the increased use of data in day-to-day herd management."

The son of Holstein breeders, the new General Manager was raised on a dairy farm in Huron County and has dedicated his career to the dairy industry. A graduate of the Ontario Agriculture College at the University of Guelph in Farm Operation and Management,



Peter Brand

Brand's career has included a variety of roles including serving as a technician for the former United Breeders; coordinator of Field Systems with the former Gencor; and over 14 years with Canadian Dairy Network (CDN) in a variety of roles, the most recent being Industry Service Manager. Major projects during that time include the Canadian Test-Day Model; Data Exchange System including health trait data; and SNP genotyping for the use in genomic evaluations. Most recently, Brand has served as the Manager of Business and Technology Solutions at Holstein Canada for the past three years. Brand has been the main force behind the complete rewrite of the Herdbook software to be launched later this fall. In an effort to see this project through this major milestone, Brand will remain with Holstein Canada until November 1st.

"I'm looking forward to reconnecting with producers and working with the Ontario Holstein Branch staff and Board of Directors," says Peter Brand. "We have a great industry that is constantly changing, and working closely with grass-roots and industry makes us strong to navigate through these changes." Although Brand begins his new position full-time on November 1st, he will be spending some time with the Branch team before then. He may currently be reached by email at pbrand@holstein.ca.