



AND THE AWARD GOES TO... 2013 DCRC Reproduction Award Winners Named

In another highly competitive year, five dairies have been singled out as platinum winners of the 2013 DCRC Reproduction Awards. This is the fifth year of the program and it featured nominations of 47 top-notch dairies located throughout the United States.

In all, 16 dairies are being honored this year for their herd's exceptional reproductive performance. To be considered for the award program, herd data for all nominees is analyzed by a panel of experts and an independent analytic program.

The analyses evaluated raw data on every cow that calved on the participating dairy between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012.

After the assessments were completed, finalists were ranked based on critical reproductive parameters and selected to receive Platinum, Gold, Silver or Honorable Mention honors. The 2013 award winners will be recognized at the 2013 DCRC Annual Meeting November 7 – 8 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

HERE'S A COMPLETE LIST OF THE 2013 WINNERS. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

PLATINUM				
Curtin Dairy Cassville, N.Y.	Dunlea Dairy Coudersport, Pa.	New Dawn Dairy Huntington, Ind.	Schilling Farms Darlington, Wis.	University of Missouri Southwest Center Dairy Mount Vernon, Mo.
GOLD		SILVER		HONORABLE MENTION
Kloppe Dairy Farm New Haven, Mo.	More-To-Do Farm Durand, Wis.	Green Mountain Dairy Highgate Center, Vt.	Rock Bottom Dairy Rock Rapids, Iowa	Harrison Dairy Loudon, Tenn.
Seidl's Mountain View Dairy Luxemburg, Wis.	Shultz Hillside Dairy Danville, Pa.	Synergy LLC Wyoming, N.Y.		Pagel's Ponderosa Kewaunee, Wis.
Sunburst Dairy Belleville, Wis.				Willowbend Clifton Springs, N.Y.



CURTIN DAIRY is a family-owned corporation located in Cassville, New York. The 3,000-cow milking herd produces an average of 30,100 pounds of milk. The breeding program is overseen by the farm's two herdsmen and their dairy team. Early heat detection and proper employee training are key aspects to maintaining their winning reproduction reputation.



DUNLEA DAIRY, run by Roger and Kerry Dunn of Coudersport, Pennsylvania, is home to 620 Holsteins averaging 27,500 pounds of milk. The Dunns work closely with their herd veterinarian, breeder and nutritionist to aim for 100 percent compliance. Pen on paper record keeping and a watchful eye are must-do actions for high-breeding performance.



Henk Knevelbaard, owner of **NEW DAWN DAIRY** in Huntington, Indiana, strives for a practical but simple approach to reproduction. Emphasis is put on employee management for accurate breeding. New Haven is home to 1,500 head of crossbreeds, consisting mainly of Holstein, Montbéliarde and Swedish Red bloodlines. The herd averages 27,000 pounds of milk with a 75,000 SCC.



Back for a repeat win is Bill Schilling and sons Brian and Andy of **SCHILLING FARMS**, Darlington, Wis. A combination of herd health, comfort, nutrition and fresh cow care are keys to their reproductive program. They milk 625 Holsteins averaging 29,000 pounds of milk. Tail painting and walking pens are just two tools used to strive for higher reproduction success.



The **UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI SOUTHWEST CENTER DAIRY (UMSCD)** is most recognizable for their seasonal calving program. The dairy team from Mount Vernon, Missouri, oversees all 90 head of Holstein, Kiwi Friesian, Kiwi Cross and Jersey cattle. The dairy aims for one-third of the herd to obtain a high percent of New Zealand genetics and the remaining two-thirds with U.S. genetics.



Here's a brief look at how each of the Platinum winners approach reproduction in their herd.

WHAT DOES YOUR REPRODUCTIVE PROGRAM INCLUDE?

Curtin Dairy: Breeding of lactating cows begins after a 71-day voluntary waiting period; heifers are bred at about 12.5 months of age. The dairy uses a PreSynch protocol followed by Ovsynch® for all cows, which results in 85% of the herd pregnant by 150 days in milk. In addition, the dairy uses visual heat detection. The dairy uses sexed semen on the top 20% of the herd to capitalize on genetic potential, and pregnancy checks are conducted at 42 days postbreeding. “Problem” cows receive a dose of GnRH at breeding and cows diagnosed open at pregnancy check are treated with a CIDR®. The herd does not use bulls as part of its reproductive program.

Dunlea Dairy: Lactating cows are bred following a 72-day voluntary waiting period; heifers are bred at about 12 months of age. The dairy begins its PreSynch protocol at 34 days postcalving followed by Ovsynch. Cows are examined for pregnancy via ultrasound during weekly vet checks, usually 29 to 35 days postbreeding. The dairy also uses tail paint to detect estrus, and employees manually record target cows for insemination. The dairy uses sexed semen for the first three breedings of heifers and the first breeding of first-lactation cows. Cows are rechecked at 60 and 180 days postbreeding. The dairy has no set rules for when to give up on a “problem” cow, and tries to keep “no breed” cows to less than 10% of the herd. The herd does not use bulls as part of its reproductive program.

New Dawn Dairy: Lactating cows are bred after the dairy's 60-day voluntary waiting period elapses. Heifers are bred at about 13 months of age. The dairy follows a PreSynch/Ovsynch protocol, with open cows re-enrolled into the protocol at vet check. Heifers are bred off of natural heats. Visual heat detection with tail paint is also employed on the dairy, up to 200 days in milk. No sexed semen is used on the dairy. Ultrasound during weekly vet checks is used to diagnose reproductive status and embryo quality. Cystic cows are treated with a CIDR, and cows that are open at 200 days in milk are moved to the “do not breed” list and are removed from the herd based on milk production. The herd does not use bulls in its reproductive program.

Schilling Farms: The dairy splits its voluntary waiting period—70 days postcalving for mature cows and 89 days for first-calf heifers. Heifers are bred at 14 months of age. The dairy does not use a formal PreSynch protocol, but does give cows a dose of prostaglandin at 21 to 24 days in milk to address uterine disease like metritis or endometritis. Cows do receive an Ovsynch protocol. Tail chalk (for cows) and heat detection patches (for heifers) aid in estrous monitoring. The dairy uses sexed semen for the first two breedings of heifers; no sexed semen is used on lactating cows. Pregnancy diagnosis occurs at 33 days postbreeding via ultrasound and is checked again at 60 days postbreeding. Open cows are re-enrolled in the Ovsynch protocol. The dairy selects high semen conception rate bulls. Cows are considered “do not breed” when they are open more than 200 days in milk and have lower milk production. The dairy does not use bulls in its reproductive program.

University of Missouri Southwest Center Dairy: The dairy is a seasonal pasture-based operation that begins breeding all cows on or around May 1. In the past, the dairy used a two-step prostaglandin (PGF) program to “set up” cows for breeding on May 1. Cows that did not respond to this program received a CIDR on the third Monday (10 days before breeding). The CIDR was removed seven days later and PGF was given. However, the dairy needed to tighten the calving window, which would gain additional days in milk since all cows are dried off at once. The dairy instituted a timed-artificial insemination (TAI) program, supplemented with visual heat detection. Ultrasound is used to diagnose pregnancy status at 30 to 32 days after their second possible heat/breeding. This allows the technician to determine if they are pregnant to the first A.I. (TAI) 51 to 53 days pregnant or to the second (30 to 32 days). The dairy has also used blood/milk testing for pregnancy associated glycoproteins with good results when compared to the ultrasound. Cows are scanned again in August to confirm pregnancy, fetal sex and to find additional cows that are pregnant, as well. A third exam in mid-November, generally manual palpation, is performed to verify cows the dairy plans to retain are still pregnant before cows that will calve outside the desired calving window are sold. In general, the dairy has only 5% to 7% of the cows open at the end of the lactation. Cows now get one opportunity to become pregnant via A.I. With greater than 60 percent success rate at TAI, this provides the dairy adequate A.I.-sired replacement heifers. The dairy does use clean-up bulls to service non-pregnant cows.

WHAT RECENT CHANGES HAVE HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE?

Curtin Dairy: The main emphasis in the dairy’s breeding program is heat detection and 100 percent compliance in that program. Two summers ago, the dairy started bringing half a pen of cows to the parlor at a time. This has reduced standing time to no more than 30 minutes at one time. It also has reduced overcrowding and has worked very well.

Dunlea Dairy: The dairy installed permanent sun blocks on the east side of the north-south barn and sees greater outside stall use in that area as a result. Also, Tyler Wagner, the dairy’s Alta Genetics representative, has customized a herd index for all cows to maximize sire selection. The dairy feels the resulting replacements will better serve its needs. The dairy adds that Tyler is very familiar with DairyCOMP 305®, is responsive to trends in repro and helps with management solutions.

New Dawn Dairy: The dairy now double breeds long interval heats and synchronized cows. It has also added fans and water. Sprinklers are located in the cow pens, the holding pen and a shower bath in the return alley during the summer months. Fans are over feed alleys and freestalls. Also, it installed ample fans in the holding pen and parlor. These all have been definite improvements in heat abatement by improving water application and wind speed.

Schilling Farms: The dairy feels cow cooling is critical to maintain conception rates during the summer. The conception rate for July 2013 was 51 percent with a 33 percent pregnancy rate. The changes made to improve cow cooling include:

- Adding three rows of fans per pen over each row of freestalls
- Feed line water sprinklers
- Additional water sprinklers in the holding area



The dairy also uses dry cow cooling with fans over the freestalls. Shade cloth has been added for the outside feeding areas in dry cow housing to help keep them cool. The dairy says that the improved cooling of dry cows has produced healthier follicles, which has led to higher first-service conception rates in the ensuing lactation. To accommodate the cooling additions, a third well was added recently to help maintain water pressure demand for the sprinklers and waterers. Furthermore, the exceptional cow comfort from sand bedding with adequately sized freestalls has also been critical to minimize lameness and allow maximal heat expression. This spring, the dairy added headlocks to all milk pens which replaced the palpation rail. This has allowed for easier estrous detection and more accurate tail paint reading. It has also caused less standing for herd check cows and improved rest times.

UMSCD: The dairy feels its best adjustment has been TAI. This has allowed the dairy to have more cows calving earlier in the calving season and reduced labor for heat detection and breeding. From 2006 to 2010, the average submission rate and six-week pregnancy rate were 92 percent and 64 percent, respectively. With the transition to the TAI programs, the submission rate is 99 percent with an 83 percent six-week pregnancy rate.