

HOLSTEIN YOUTH



CALVIN BUIST

DAIRYLANE FARMS INC., CANFIELD

NUMBER OF COWS: 100 (MILKING) ON 2 LELY A5 ROBOTS
FARM SIZE: 250 ACRES OWNED & 130 ACRES RENTED
CROPS GROWN: ALFALFA, CORN GRAIN, CORN SILAGE,
SOYBEANS & WHEAT

DairyLane Farms Inc. is operated by Calvin Buist in partnership with his Dad in Canfield, Ontario, where they milk 100 cows under the prefix Cynlex on 2 Lely A5 milking robots. At Cynlex Holsteins, the cows are fed a TMR out of bunker silos. Calvin says they feed their own dry corn to eliminate the cost of purchasing it. High feed costs are something that Calvin thinks is one of the biggest challenges facing the dairy industry today.

After graduating high school in 2011, Calvin moved away to Alberta before returning home to the farm in 2014. One of the biggest changes he has initiated since returning to the farm full time is the breeding program. He strives to increase their BCA by choosing only a small number of bulls to breed with, and in turn, Calvin is very proud of the improvement he sees each year in terms of breeding and classification of their 2-year-olds. In the short term, Calvin wants to breed the highest percent of cows to sexed semen, and the lowest percent to beef semen. He plans to use this improved breeding program to build the sustainability and longevity of their herd and hopes to one day have an average score of GP or higher for all freshening 2-year-olds.

Future plans for the Buists include optimizing crop yields through manure management with the goal of reducing fertilizer costs. Calvin also says they are still looking to increase their quota holdings and would like to someday reach a comfortable capacity within their facilities. For now, they will focus on optimizing milk production so they can milk less cows but still be just as profitable. After recently installing 2 robotic milking systems and constructing a new heifer facility (bed pack), their plans are to continue managing what they have while growing a little bit more each year.

Calvin enjoys being involved in his community and in his local Holstein club, volunteering at the Caledonia Fair with Agstravagans and acting as a director on the Haldimand County Holstein Club board. He is excited for his two sons, ages 4 and 2, to experience farm life at DairyLane Farms Inc. and all the benefits that come with it.



CHRIS REESOR

ONTHEHILL HOLSTEINS, MARKHAM

NUMBER OF COWS: 50 (MILKING) IN A TIESTALL, 2X MILKING
FARM SIZE: 100 ACRES OWNED & 150 ACRES RENTED
CROPS GROWN: HAYLAGE, CORN SILAGE, CORN, SOYBEANS,
AND TRITICALE

Chris farms in partnership with his family at Onthehill Holsteins in Markham, Ontario. They milk 50 cows in a tiestall barn and more recently have built a new heifer/dry cow facility. This new barn has allowed them to improve on the care they provide for the dry cows and ensure heifers are being bred at the right time, lowering age at first calving.

At Onthehill Holsteins, the cows are fed a TMR that consists of haylage, corn silage, corn, grain and supplement. They grow all their own forages and grain, excluding wheat straw, which is purchased from neighbours. "The addition of triticale to the cropping rotation has been rewarding," Chris says, as it provides them with extra forage and allows a cash crop of soybeans to be grown afterwards. They found triticale to be of high quality and have also seen an increase in production among the cows, while the soybean crop is beneficial in terms of offsetting high feed costs.

Within the next 5 years, Chris plans to increase the level of quality genetics in the herd, with a focus on polled genetics. He believes that investing in genetics from other breeders can speed up progress but might not provide a return on investment unless they are carefully selected. He has also considered finding alternative strategies to boost revenue and assist in the development of cow families, such as embryo sales and breeder bulls.

Long term, Chris sees their operation making the switch from a tiestall barn to a freestall facility with a parlour or robotic milking system. When considering a transition like this, Chris says "Knowing your cost of production is essential," as it is important to understand the cost of initial investment and the added operating costs that are associated with it.

Chris has always played an active role in his community, acting as the past president of the York Holstein Club and past president of the Markham Fair. He is also currently the Secretary/Treasurer for the milk committee.



CRAIG TEMPLETON

TEMPLEVIEW FARMS INC., KEMPTVILLE

NUMBER OF COWS: 63 (MILKING) ON A SINGLE LELY A4 ROBOT
FARM SIZE: 350 ACRES OWNED & 50 ACRES RENTED
CROPS GROWN: GRASS HAY, ALFALFA, SILAGE & GRAIN CORN

Craig owns and operates Templeview Farms Inc. located in Kemprville, Ont. alongside his Dad John and with help from his wife Leigh and youngest sister Natalie. Together, they milk 60-65 cows on a single Lely A4 robot in a 3-row sand-bedded free stall barn that was constructed in 2017. The transition from a tie stall facility to a free stall with a robotic milking system, an average of 3.5x/day milking, and the adoption of TMR feeding versus pasture feeding has allowed them to achieve an increase in production for an overall average of 44-45L/cow/day. At Templeview Holsteins, the cropping strategy revolves around the cows – they grow grass hay, an alfalfa hay mix which is harvested as haylage or baleage, silage, and grain corn.

Upon graduation from the University of Guelph in 2010, Craig joined his parents on the farm and focused on aggressively paying down debt, with the goal of becoming a lot more efficient and progressive. Craig also began breeding everything himself after returning home, and has been exclusively using sexed, proven sires and beef semen for 10 years. Since becoming the primary herd manager, Craig's efforts have contributed to lowering age at first calving by 5 months, raising 25 fewer replacements, and filling 37 more kilos of quota with one less person. In 2023, a new heifer/dry cow facility was built, which has "further streamlined our efficiency and eliminated storing feed, choring, and trailering animals between two farms," Craig says. This facility is a 2-row free stall barn where the dry cows enjoy flex-stalls that accommodate their late stage of pregnancy and bred heifers can be caught in headlocks for quick and easy pregnancy checks.

In the short term, Craig's goal is to achieve their Master Breeder Shield. The past 10 years has seen the farm go from 440th in the Master Breeder rankings to 25th in 2023. Herd conformation has also improved: Templeview Holsteins now has 11 EX, 47 VG, and 21GP cows with an average of 86 points across the herd. Craig enjoys hosting 4-H meetings at the farm for local dairy and judging clubs, having been heavily involved in both as a 4-H member. Templeview Holsteins also played host to the Carleton-Russell Twilight Meeting in 2019, where they welcomed over 400 people to the farm. As a Level 2 judge, Craig also likes to judge 3-5 shows and/or Breeders' Cup competitions every year.



MARK TALSMAN

TALSTAR DAIRY, HARLEY

NUMBER OF COWS: 40 (MILKING) ON A SINGLE-10 PARLOUR
FARM SIZE: 325 ACRES
CROPS GROWN: CORN, BEANS, WHEAT, ALFALFA & COVER
CROP

Mark and his wife and kids own and operate Talstar Dairy in Harley, Ontario, where they milk 40 cows in a single-10 parlour facility. Mark's dad runs an operation milking 100 cows on 2 robotic milking systems just down the road, making it easy to share resources and equipment. All heifers calve at Mark's facility and are trained on the parlour before being sent over to the robot. Their family focuses on double-cropping as much as possible to gain the most out of their valuable acres of land. They like to plant triticale after corn silage and an oats/peas/barley mix after wheat. All feed is stored and prepared at the home farms facility and then is sent down the road to Mark's with the TMR mixer each day.

Since becoming involved in the farm operation, one of Mark's biggest highlights is the construction of a single-10 parlour facility. Mark says that "the robotic milking system and parlour facility go together extremely well," explaining that any cows that don't work well on the robot can be moved to the parlour and vice versa. He enjoys having the ability to train fresh heifers on the parlour first as well, before moving them to the robot barn. Talstar Dairy boasts an impressive BCA of 292-307-304 and currently has combined herd scores of 12 ME, 8 EX, 58 VG, 65 GP and 3 G between his operation and his Dad's. Other recent highlights at Talstar Dairy are the implementation of a pasteurizer for feeding calves, which has contributed to improved calf health, and the purchase of a truck and trailer to haul their own cattle.

Within the next year, Mark hopes to build a new heifer/dry cow facility to help expand their growing herds and to give dry cows more space and comfort. In the long term, the Talsma's are looking forward to the possibility of purchasing a third dairy, but until then, they will work hard to be as efficient as possible when it comes to their land and resources to help keep costs low. When he is not working off-farm, Mark enjoys participating in the Paris Fair by bringing cattle to show every year and is also an active board member for the Brant-Wentworth Holstein Club.



HOLSTEIN ON

ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH
2024 AWARD WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2024 ONTARIO DAIRY YOUTH AWARD WINNERS!

Established in 1980, the competition recognizes young people aged 25-35 who are actively involved in the operation of a dairy farm, who have demonstrated leadership and taken an active role in their communities. These talented winners will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Westerner Dairy Showcase in Red Deer, Alberta this fall. The Ontario Dairy Youth Award is funded through the Ontario Dairy Youth Trust Fund and Holstein Ontario.