

New Fat Record Holder Overcomes Challenges

Norse Star Hallmark Bootie recently completed the highest fat production record in the world for the Jersey breed. The four-year-old cow produced 2,827 pounds of fat in 365 days, making her 3-0 lactation the highest fat production recorded by the American Jersey Cattle Association.

Yet, this new world record holder's story is unlike any previous record holders; and because of that, this record means even more to owners, Norse Star Jerseys, Westby, Wis.

On March 23, 2007, the Excellent-90% daughter of Schultz Brook Hallmark, JPI +98, completed her 365-day record of 39,239 lbs. milk, 2,827 lbs. fat, and 1,500 lbs. protein on three times daily milking. She calved again on June 1, 2007, to begin her third lactation.

However, making this type of production was not a simple task for this cow. "Bootie" completed the last three months of her world record lactation during a period of stray voltage on the farm.

Throughout the past five years, the Norse Star Registered Jersey™ herd has been battling stray voltage problems at various times. During the height of the problems, herd production dropped to 37 lbs. per cow with a 50% cull rate.

Temporary fixes were put in place, but stray voltage continued to be a problem. Now with a permanent solution in place, the Norse Star herd has recovered significantly with production increasing to 62 lbs. milk with a significantly lower cull rate. The July rolling herd average on 522 records was 20,465 lbs. milk, 1,066 lbs. fat, and 749 lbs. protein, with a SCC of 150,000.

Farm Background

Founded in 1998, Norse Star Jerseys is the combination of two smaller Jersey herds in southwest Wisconsin. Michael and Merna Fremstad along with Arden and Jan Sherpe combined their herds, hoping to have a large enough herd for their children to one day become partners in the operation. Today, all of their children have taken active roles on the farm and plan to continue their future in the dairy industry.

"Bootie" is not alone when it comes to making world records at Norse Star. Normandell Khan Ariel, one of her herdmates, previously held the world milk record in 2002, producing 43,023 lbs. milk

in 365 days at 4-3. Neither cow received any special attention while making their world records, and commingled with the herd each day, competing for bunk space and free stalls.

The Cow

To the Fremstads and Sherpes, "Bootie" is the ideal cow; she is able to produce large amounts of a quality product while exhibiting functional type.

"She is a tall, long cow like many of the 'Hallmarks' and her capacity is in her length, but she's also an extremely wide cow from end to end," said Jason Fremstad who handles all herd health and sire selections. "'Ariel' and 'Bootie' were both able to consume a lot of feed. Their success is in the consistency of management and feed."

Along with a focus on production, cow comfort and a high-quality ration are musts for the owners of Norse Star Jerseys. Longevity, production and type are the main focus when choosing breeding sires.

"Our ideal cow will have good feet and legs that will hold up in confinement; a good dairy open rib; and a functional udder maintaining high production," described Jason.

A member of Liberty Jersey Sires Inc., Dairyland Jersey Sires Inc., and Dixieland Sires, Norse Star Jerseys uses 50% proven bulls while incorporating 50% young sires into the breeding selections and use of a limited amount of sexed semen.

"A healthy cow will produce milk, but some cows seem driven to produce more than their average herdmate, and that has to be due to genetics," claims Jason.

Because she does not have any daughters in the herd, the Fremstads and Sherpes plan to capitalize on her genetics by flushing her this fall. She will be bred to a sire that can deliver offspring mirroring her outstanding production and type.

Management Practices

Combining top-rated proven genetics with a solid nutrition program, the Norse Star Jersey herd is currently ranked second in the nation for fat among herds with 300

Test Day Summary for Norse Star Hallmark Bootie USA 114809878

Fresh	March 23, 2006	Days In Milk	Milk Weight	% Fat	% Protein	SCS Score			
	April 4	14	80	4.5	3.5				
	May 3	42	108	5.0	3.0	1.2			
	May 31	70	99	4.4	3.3	.1			
	July 12	112	104	4.3	3.8	1.1			
	August 8	139	116	7.8	4.0	2.1			
	September 19	181	85	7.8	4.0	1.5			
	October 18	210	139	7.1	4.2	7.2			
	December 13	266	141	9.7	3.8	5.7			
	January 10	294	144	9.7	3.8	5.8			
	February 7	322	73	9.8	4.0	7.7			
	March 8	351	82	6.3	4.2	8.3			
	April 4	378	29	8.3	5.2	7.3			
3-0	305	3	34,427	7.1%	2,428	3.8%	1,303	92DCR	4,509C
	365	3	39,239	7.2%	2,827	3.8%	1,500	DHIR	5,191C

or more cows. They relate their success to their management and breeding decisions.

The use of direct-fed microbials has increased the herd's fat percentage while limiting the use of concentrates and focusing more on high quality forages has helped with overall components. "Bootie" had an average fat test of 7.2% and 3.8% on protein during her record-setting lactation.

Management also plays a key role at Norse Star Jerseys. To reduce stress, cows complete an entire lactation in one pen. There are five different free-stall pens with 88-90 cows in each pen. Two-year-olds are housed separately with mature cows grouped together. The six-row barn is equipped with headlocks, and fans and sprinklers are available during the summer months.

Mike, along with sons, Jory and Jason, manage the cows and work with the local veterinarian on herd health issues. They also have a professional hoof trimmer at the farm every two weeks to trim hooves regularly and address foot and hoof problems.

"To us, being able to produce a high quality product every day from a healthy herd of cows, and being able to make a living doing something you really love, is really achievement enough," said Mike.

"We have a great team of management, bankers, consultants, and great employees that make it all possible. However, I think accomplishments like this made in large herds may inspire other large herds. It lets them know that cows can do great things under very ordinary circumstances."

"Bootie" replaces Parkplace Flower-ET's world record of 2,727 lbs. fat set in November 2006. The record was made in England in the herd of Duncan and Felicity Dawes.