

# FERME Jacobs **Passionate About Type and Showing**



The Jacobs family of Ferme Jacobs Inc., Cap-Santé, Que. From left, seated: Ysabel Jacobs; Laurie Jacobs holding her niece Elsie; Véronic Prémont with daughter Nellie. Standing: Marian Ghielen and husband Jean Jacobs; Tyler Doiron with daughter Alyson; and Yan, Kevin and Léo Jacobs.

(Photo by Carl Saucier.)

BY BONNIE COOPER

At Ferme Jacobs Inc. the goal of their breeding program is very clear. In a word it's TYPE, and more specifically SHOW TYPE. For the closely knit Jacobs family at Cap-Santé, Quebec, it has been their shared passion, enthusiasm and ability to breed high typed cattle that can compete well at the shows that has brought them great acclaim as Holstein breeders. Two-time Master Breeder winners, this well respected Quebec farm family has won countless show ribbons, Premier Breeder and Exhibitor banners, and All-Canadian, All-American and All-Quebec awards.

Three generations of the Jacobs family are currently involved in this well-maintained 800-acre farm located in the Portneuf region: Léo, son Jean and his wife Marian Ghielen, and three of their four children – Yan and his partner in life Véronic Prémont, Ysabel and her husband Tyler Doiron, and Laurie.

The patriarch of the family is 83-year-old Léo Jacobs. Léo and his late wife Nellie immigrated to Canada from Holland in 1951. In 1980, they formed a farm partnership with two of their sons, Jean and Pierre. This partnership existed for many years and together they earned Master Breeder shields in 1984 and again in 1998. Today Jean, 58, is the overall farm manager and does all of the field work. His wife Marian, 53, looks after the farm accounting and milks all the

fresh cows. Their oldest son Yan, 30, is responsible for the Jacobs herd and breeding program. His partner in life, Véronic, is an agriculturalist and teacher at "Centre de Formation Agricole" in St-Anselme, Que., but also helps with the herd nutrition and milking. They are the parents of two girls, Elsie, 3, and Nellie, who is almost 2. Jean and Marian's oldest daughter Ysabel, 28, is in charge of the calf raising, paperwork and promotion for the herd. Her husband, Tyler, does a bit of everything on the farm from breeding cows to field work and marketing. The couple, who also own cattle under their own Ty-D Holsteins prefix, have a daughter, Alyson, who was born last November. Ysabel's younger sister, Laurie, 19, does various chores on the farm and looks after the show heifers. She is a student at "l'Institut de technologie agroalimentaire" in St-Hyacinthe, Que., and is also the *Holstein Journal's* Quebec Representative. Jean and Marian have another son, Kevin, 25, who was very involved as well in the farm while growing up. He is currently the herdsman at Gen-Com Holstein Ltd., Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil, Que. Another long-time member of the farm team is employee Alain Bouchard, who has been here for 23 years.

The Jacobs family milk 135 cows in their 400-foot long tie-stall barn and own about 450 Holsteins in total. Cows are fed a TMR of haylage, corn silage, high moisture corn and supplement, in addition to a small amount of dry hay. Running a farm of this size takes communication. In addition to the

normal day-to-day discussions, the Jacobs family holds a formal meeting once a month to make major plans and decisions. While each family member has his or her own responsibilities on the farm, they all pitch in when it comes to fieldwork, showing or whatever needs to be done.

## TYPE THE MAIN FOCUS

At Ferme Jacobs they breed for the kind of cow they like to milk and work with everyday. And that means cows with "high type". "People come here to see good typed cows," says Yan frankly. Currently this largely homebred herd boasts 20 Excellent, 105 Very Good and 32 Good Plus cows.

Good udders, feet and legs, and stature have always been important traits in the Jacobs herd. While uphill cows with high chins and lots of rib were once the goal, now in keeping with breed trends they are seeking more of a "balanced kind" of cow. "And if you have a good typed cow, you can always make her milk with a good feeding program," says Yan. That is certainly true here with the herd currently averaging 11,000 kg milk, 3.9% fat, 3.3% protein (234-245-239).

The Jacobs have used the breed's most popular, high type, proven sires in their breeding program. Today Braedale Goldwyn is the main bull in evidence. "Goldwyn" was used relatively late in the game here, but is a definite favourite now. The Jacobs have 80 registered "Goldwyn" daughters to date, 20 of these in milk currently. "We milk 'Goldwyns', we have bred heifers and calves by 'Goldwyn', calves still coming by 'Goldwyn', and embryos in the tank by 'Goldwyn'," says Yan with a broad smile. Many of their top "Goldwyns" are from "Jasper" dams, another bull who worked well here leaving big, tall, framey cows with lots of rib and good udders. Although they have used a few high genomic young sires in embryo flushes recently because of demand, genomics does not play a factor in their breeding decisions yet.

The Jacobs flush 50-60 cows per year. They put embryos in 85% of their heifers and 25% of their cows. They also merchandise lots of embryos too. They have a solid market for fresh cows and each year sell 60-70 fresh first or second calf heifers privately or through local dairy sales to other dairymen because of

the reputation they have established for having good cattle.

### THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR SHOW SUCCESS: COW FAMILIES

Strong, deep cow families have always dominated the Jacobs herd and are the foundation upon which they have built their showing success.

Headlining the line-up today is the family of Cotopierre Lindy Bertha (Ex-2E-25\*), an amazing brood cow who has left quite a legacy. In January of 1994, Jean Jacobs was asked to speak at an event organized by the Bas St-Laurent Holstein Club. While in the area he visited the Cotopierre herd of Yvon St-Pierre, Rimouski, Que., and spotted a recently fresh 2-year-old "Lindy" that he was quite impressed with. A few months later Jean was surprised to see this young cow consigned to the Vente Nationale de Printemps du Quebec. He succeeded in buying her for \$14,000. Her name was Cotopierre Lindy Bertha. While not a show cow, this big, strong cow would eventually complete three generations of Excellent and make up to 16,707 kg milk, 4.4% fat, 3.5% protein (284-341-325) at 9 years.

Bertha was a great flush cow, producing 20-25 embryos every time. At one point she was dry for three years and was flushed every two months. They sold over 100 number one embryos from her. Weavercroft International exported all the embryos from this cow that they sold. Bertha had 46 classified daughters here in Canada of which four were Excellent, 10 Very Good and 16 Good Plus. Her 43 milking daughters averaged a high 4.2% fat and 3.4%



**JACOBS GOLDWYN BLACKA (VG-86)**

This "Goldwyn" daughter from the Cotopierre Lindy Bertha (Ex-2E-25\*) family was first junior 2-year-old at Expo Quebec in 2009. Backed by four generations of Excellent dams, she made 13,540 kg milk, 3.8% fat, 509 kg fat, 3.1%, 418 kg protein (304-303-291) at 2 years.

protein, a trait which continues to be a trademark of the family.

While all of Bertha's daughters were strong and powerful, none really had what it took to truly excel in the showing. That all changed when the Jacobs started crossing family members to "Goldwyn". The cross to "Goldwyn" has made the succeeding generations of Berthas sharper, more dairy and given them the style they need to become prize winning show animals. "And they are just getting better with every generation," says Tyler. For example, Jacobs Goldwyn Britany (VG-89) and Jacobs Goldwyn Brilliance (VG-87) are just two of five Very Good "Goldwyn" daughters from Jacobs Jasper Best (VG-88-2\*), a "Jasper" from an Excellent-91-2E, 2-Star "Storm" daughter of Bertha. Britany was first junior 2-year-old at Expo Portneuf in 2009, while Brilliance was first junior 2-year-old at Expo Chicoutimi and Expo Trois-Rivieres the same year. Another "Goldwyn", Jacobs Goldwyn Blacka (VG-86), was first junior 2-year-old at Expo Quebec last year. Blacka is a daughter of Jacobs Champion Bianca (Ex-91) who was nominated for All-Quebec senior 3-year-old and was a member of Ferme Jacobs' nominated All-Canadian Breeder's Herd in 2007. Bianca is currently on a flushing program and has many embryo contracts.

While the Berthas are probably the largest family in the herd today, not far behind is the family of Jacobs Tab Emma ET (Ex-4E-13\*). Sired by "Tab", Emma was "My Favourite Cow" in Quebec in 2004, made 134,381 kg milk, 4.5% fat, 3.5% protein (231-281-251) lifetime, and had one Excellent and 12 Very Good daughters. Her



**JACOBS JASPER BEST (VG-88-2\*)**

This "Jasper" daughter from the Bertha family is backed by four generations of Excellent dams. Projected currently as a 4-year-old to make 16,022 kg milk, 4.2% fat, 3.2% protein, she is the mother of five Very Good "Goldwyn" daughters.

great-granddaughter by "Stormatic", Jacobs Stormatic Emmo (Ex-93-2E), was first 5-year-old and reserve grand champion at Expo-Printemps Holstein Quebec in 2008. Emmo has three Very Good "Goldwyn" maternal sisters and together they represent the seventh generation Very Good or Excellent in this family. Among those "Goldwyn" sisters is Jacobs Goldwyn Emory (VG-88) who was Reserve All-Canadian senior calf in 2007 and Honourable Mention All-Canadian senior yearling in 2008. A solid competitor, Emory was recently first senior 3-year-old and reserve grand champion at Expo Trois-Rivieres in 2010.

Another cow family that has generated several memorable show moments for Ferme Jacobs is the one tracing to Jacobs Jubilee Valse (Ex-2E-6\*), a Brigeen Jubilee ET daughter. While she was the mother of two Excellent and seven Very Good daughters, it was her Good Plus-84 "Rudolph" daughter, Jacobs Rudolph Valso, who would prove to have the most impact. A 4-Star Brood cow, she had two Excellent and five Very Good daughters. A definite favourite was her "Spirit" daughter, Jacobs Spirit Valsie (Ex-92-2E-2\*), who was first 4-year-old at the Royal Winter Fair in 2004 and All-Canadian that year. Valsie's picture proudly hangs over the entryway into the Jacobs' barn along with their two Master Breeder shields. Valsie went on to be grand champion at Expo Quebec and Honourable Mention All-Canadian 5-year-old in 2005 and then in 2007 took reserve grand champion honours at Expo-Printemps Holstein Quebec as a mature cow. In 2008 Valsie's "Dundee" daughter, Jacobs Dundee Voltage (VG-87), kept the victories coming when she won the milking yearling class at the Royal and then was declared All-Canadian, making her a second generation All-Canadian and Royal winner.

A well-known show cow that the farm is starting to build a family from is Valleyville Lheros Jenn (VG-89-1\*), the "Lheros" who was All-Canadian and



2008 was an outstanding year for Ferme Jacobs at the shows. At the Royal Winter Fair their line-up included two class winners and the reserve intermediate champion and they also came away with the Premier Breeder banner. Pictured, from left, with the banner are: Kevin and Yan Jacobs, Tyler Doiron, Jonathan Lemay, 2008 Holstein Canada President Brian Leach, Gabriel Richard, and Ysabel and Laurie Jacobs. (Photos by Vicki Fletcher and Ella Wright.)

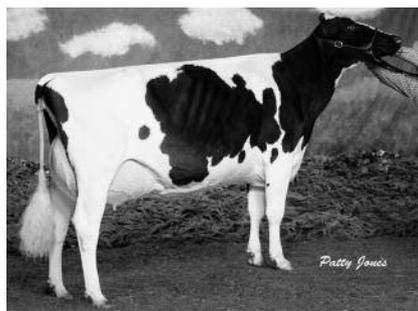
All-American senior 3-year-old in 2008 for Ty-D Holsteins and Ferme Jacobs. Tyler originally bought into Jenn, who is backed by an Excellent-90-2E, 11-Star "Integrity" dam and Very Good-88, 17-Star "Astro Jet" grandam, when she was a senior calf. On a flushing program throughout 2009, Jenn is now fresh again as a 5-year-old. She has more than a dozen daughters to date, several of whom have sold through major consignment sales. One of her oldest daughters by "Goldwyn", Jacobs Goldwyn Joyce (VG-87), was nominated for All-American milking yearling last year.

The Jacobs have invested in a couple other deep-pedigreed cow families in recent years. Crasdale Dundee Liza (VG-86), a "Dundee" from the Lustre family, was acquired as an embryo. An eleventh generation Very Good or Excellent, Liza was nominated for All-Canadian junior 2-year-old in 2009 after taking Honourable Mention honours in the All-Canadian and All-American contests the year before as a summer yearling. Another promising young cow who the Jacobs have high expectations for is Ms Elmvue Durham Kara-ET (VG-86). Purchased as a calf, this "Durham" was Honourable Mention All-Canadian 4-H intermediate calf for Laurie in 2008. Kara is a full sister to last year's All-American fall yearling, MS Elmvue Durham Kenya-ET, and a daughter of Country-Wood Encore Kaley (Ex-94-USA), an "Encore" who was All-American senior 3-year-old in 2004.

### THE LOVE OF SHOWING

The Jacobs family is passionate about showing. Why do they show? "We all like it so much it's a question we never really ask ourselves," say both Ysabel and Yan. "You need a reason to strive for what you do," explains Léon, and for the Jacobs family "showing" is what gives them the drive to keep shooting for high type.

The Jacobs family started showing cattle in 1967 and they continue to exhibit at many shows each year. They exhibited cattle at the first Expo Portneuf in 1980 and have been there every year since. They have shown 30 consecutive years at Expo Quebec, and at every Expo-Printemps Holstein Quebec and Expo Internationale Holstein Quebec (EIHQ) since their inceptions (1978 and 1995, respectively). Since 1998, Ferme Jacobs has been Premier Breeder four times at Expo-Printemps Holstein Quebec, Premier Breeder five times and Premier Exhibitor three times at Expo Quebec, and Premier Breeder three times and Premier Exhibitor once at EIHQ. In 2008, they achieved one of their most cherished awards, the Premier Breeder banner at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, in addition to being Junior Premier Exhibitor there.



**JACOBS SPIRIT VALSIE (Ex-92-2E-2\*)**

First 4-year-old at the Royal Winter Fair in 2004, this "Spirit" daughter was Ferme Jacobs' first milking class winner at the Royal. All-Canadian that year as well, she made records up to 15,595 kg milk, 4.5%, 696 kg fat, 3.1%, 478 kg protein (248-295-240). Her "Dundee" daughter, Jacobs Dundee Voltage (VG-87), would follow in her footsteps as a Royal and All-Canadian winner as a milking yearling in 2008.

Show banners and awards fill the walls and trophy case in the entryway to the Ferme Jacobs' barn and in their farm office. It is a testament to the great success they have achieved as a "family" farm. To date, the Jacobs family has earned a total of 36 nominations in the open classes of the All-Canadian contest resulting in nine All-Canadians, two Reserves and five Honourable Mentions. Included in this tally are seven nominations in the Breeder's Herd class (1972, 1991, 2003-04-05-07-08) and a highly coveted All-Canadian win here in 2005. In 2007, they were the leading breeder and exhibitor of All-Canadian nominees. They have also claimed eight All-American nominations, resulting in three All-American and two Honourable Mention awards.

The Jacobs children seem to have been born with a show halter in their hand. Yan, Ysabel, Kevin and Laurie have all been in 4-H and shown at the Scotiabank Hays Classic or its successor, the Canadian 4-H Classic Junior Dairy Show, at the Royal. Yan showed the champion heifer at the Classic in 1995 and 1998. Kevin exhibited a class winner there in 1997. Laurie was top



**JACOBS STORMATIC EMMO (Ex-93-2E)**

A seventh generation Excellent or Very Good in the Jacobs Tab Emma ET (Ex-4E-13\*) family, she was first 5-year-old and reserve grand champion at Expo-Printemps Holstein Quebec in 2008 for Ferme Jacobs. As a 6-year-old, she made 15,514 kg milk, 4.3%, 662 kg fat, 3.4%, 526 kg protein (266-304-283).

junior showman at the Classic in 2006 and has shown two class winners there, the most recent being Jacobs Jasper Abella, a "Jasper" who went on to be All-Canadian 4-H summer yearling in 2009 for her. In total, the four children have earned ten All-Canadian 4-H nominations among them and claimed three All-Canadian, two Reserve and four Honourable Mention prizes.

The first time the Jacobs family showed in the open classes at the Royal Winter Fair was in 1995. They took three heifers. Yan was 14 years old. The first heifer he showed for them stood dead last in the intermediate calves. The very next class his father gave him the halter again. This time Yan finished in first with Jacobs Starbuck Renne, the same "Starbuck" senior calf that he had also led to champion at the Scotiabank Hays Classic earlier in the week. The next year Renne was first senior yearling and reserve junior champion at the Royal. Renne was an amazing heifer being defeated only twice in 20 open shows over two show seasons. All-Canadian and All-American as a senior calf and senior yearling, and also All-Canadian as a 4-H calf, she was backed by an Excellent, 16-Star "Tempo" dam and Excellent-2E, 3-Star "Matinee" grandam. Renne would prove to be quite a brood cow too producing 11 Very Good daughters, among them a pair of Very Good-88 "Igniters" who were both nominated for All-Canadian.

The Jacobs never took any cows to the Royal until 2003. In 2004, they won their first milking class at the Royal with Jacobs Spirit Valsie. "Valsie wasn't supposed to go to the Royal because she was too fresh," recalls Yan. She did though, and then just kept getting better every day. "When Valsie was first at the Royal I think everyone cried," says Ysabel. "We were even crying when she went into the ring. We knew she was good, but we didn't know if she was good enough to be first." The next year, Valsie anchored Jacobs' winning Breeder's Herd at the Royal.

Of all their years of showing, 2008 stands out as definitely their best. The Jacobs family won 14 banners that year, including Premier Breeder at the Royal and all three major Quebec Holstein shows. They took their first full showing to World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis., where Valleyville Lheros Jenn won the senior 3-year-olds and they had three heifers finish in the top four. At the Royal, Jenn was first and reserve intermediate champion and Jacobs Dundee Voltage was first milking yearling. At each of the three major Quebec shows that year they came away with two or more of the champion rosettes. They ended 2008 with five All-Canadian, five All-American and 14 All-Quebec nominations.



**JACOBS GOLDWYN JOYCE (VG-87)**

Nominated for All-American milking yearling in 2009, she is a "Goldwyn" daughter from Valleyville Lheros Jenn (VG-89-1\*), the "Lheros" who was All-Canadian and All-American senior 3-year-old in 2008. Joyce has records to 11,323 kg milk, 3.9%, 446 kg fat, 3.5%, 400 kg protein (288-303-317).

What does it take to produce show winners like this from a management standpoint? "The biggest thing to getting them ready is 'Keep It Simple,'" says Tyler. Making sure animals get lots of "fresh air" throughout their life is key maintains both Yan and Ysabel. Newborn calves here are raised in individual outdoor hutches on sand until 2 months of age. They then move to "family hutches" that hold three to four calves each. "We rarely needle a calf anymore. Calves stay very healthy being outside," says Ysabel. The Jacobs start selecting the calves they feel have show potential at 5 months of age and then monitor them closely. "We raise 120 heifers a year, so it's easy to sort the good ones," says Ysabel. While the majority of the bred heifers are housed in various free-stall barns, the show heifers go outside as often as possible. All of the show cows go outside every morning for 3-4 hours and then again all night, weather permitting. Show cows are housed with the regular herd, but kept in one area of the barn. During the show season these cows get a straight hay diet with complete feed. "Then it's try to work with these show cows and make them profitable at the same time; working your flushes in between shows; and making sure that you have cows calving at the right time," says Tyler.

Once the homework is done on the management side and the ribbons have been won, then "promotion and advertising" is a must. The Jacobs complement their showing endeavours with regular advertising in breed magazines, as well as maintaining a farm web site, [www.fermejacobs.com](http://www.fermejacobs.com), which is updated regularly.

The "learning" never stops when it comes to showing. "We try to learn at every show we go to," says Ysabel. "And you need to follow the trends," emphasizes Tyler. "Especially when it comes to clipping. Over the last 15 years the way we clip cattle has changed a lot. You can lose a lot if you

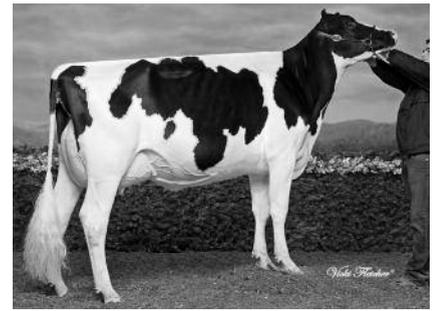
don't keep up with the trends in fitting." It's also important to have a "good team" at the shows says Ysabel. While the Jacobs family does a lot of their own fitting and showing, they also rely on the talents of people like Jonathan "Joe" Lemay and others to do the final clipping.

At this year's World Dairy Expo in October, Tyler Doiron will get to look at the show from a different angle. He will be the Associate Judge for the International Holstein Show, working alongside one of his best friends and mentors, Official Judge Brian Craswell of Crasdale Farms, Hunter River, P.E.I. Tyler will be the youngest man to have ever served as Holstein Associate Judge at World Dairy Expo. Tyler grew up in Prince Edward Island. His grandfather had a farm that his uncle later ran, but it was sold in 1983. Tyler always liked farming. When he graduated from high school he became herdsman at Crasdale Farms. Along the way he met Ysabel and together they returned to Cap-Santé to become part of Ferme Jacobs in December 2006. Tyler, who is on the Aspiring Judges list, also enjoys buying and selling cattle and has started to manage some sales. He managed the Vente Classique in 2009 and 2010 and on November 4th will manage the "Simply The Best" sale being held at Gen-Com Holsteins.

#### WORKING TOGETHER

The Jacobs family credits hard work, dedication and "team spirit" for their success as Holstein breeders and showmen. "And you have to like it too," says Jean. "You have to have patience and you can't watch the clock." Breeding and developing a high type herd that consistently does well at the shows didn't happen overnight, it took years of work. Jean, who quit school when he was 14 years old, remembers as a young man drawing inspiration from herds such as Deslacs and Clairbois in Quebec, herds he admired for their outstanding type. While it has been hard to achieve such type success, it is even harder work to stay there. "But when you have lots of family support, good cow families and some good bulls it gives you the motivation," states Yan.

At Ferme Jacobs "family support", and the support they receive from others in the industry, is never taken for granted. Jean and Marian's



**CRASDALE DUNDEE LIZA (VG-86)**

Nominated for All-Canadian junior 2-year-old in 2009 for Ferme Jacobs, this "Dundee" from the Lustre family was Honourable Mention All-Canadian and All-American summer yearling in 2008. Projected currently to 232-226-245% BCA, she completes 11 generations of Very Good or Excellent.

children are particularly grateful for the support and opportunities they have been given by their parents to become involved in the farm and to pursue their passion for Holsteins and showing. While growing up, each of the children was given the chance to go away and learn to speak English and broaden their practical farm experience by working on other farms, taking babysitting jobs, or attending school. "The first time I went to the Scotiabank Hays I was 14," says Ysabel. "When I came back I was pretty mad because I couldn't talk to anyone except my teammates." Today, all of the children are bilingual, an opportunity that Jean and Marian never had. "When we go to the big shows, Mom and Dad often stay home or come back at night to do the chores so we can be there," says Ysabel. Jean and Marian have always believed it's important to encourage their children's dreams and interests. "Both Jean and I were supported when we were growing up," says Marian, who also grew up on a Holstein farm (Ghielen). "When you like something you should be encouraged." Today that deep, abiding love for Holsteins and showing is starting to blossom in yet another generation of the family.

Family, showing and high typed Holsteins. At Ferme Jacobs, it's definitely a winning combination! ■



**JACOBS BREEDER'S HERD**

Ferme Jacobs has had seven Breeder's Herds nominated for All-Canadian. In 2005, this threesome won the coveted All-Canadian title for them after placing first at the Royal Winter Fair. From left: Jacobs Gibson Crystal (VG-87), Jacobs Integrity Arletta (Ex-94-4E-2\*) and Jacobs Spirit Valsie (Ex-92-2E-2\*). (Photos by Patty Jones and PAB.)