

Bestyet A.I. Sires

2016 Newsletter



**Celebrating
80 Years
of Cattle Breeding**

Still Grazing After All These Years

- *Since 1936, our family has bred grass-based dairy cattle on this prairie farm.
- *Our line bred herd is selected for sturdy, productive cows with staying power.
- *We offer both Milking Shorthorn and Dutch Belted breeding stock and semen.

**Bestyet A.I. Sires
Winifred Hoffman and Family
4279 E. 12th Rd
Earlville, IL 60518-6079
Phone: (815)246-9523
e-mail: bestyetaisires@juno.com**

On the web: www.bestyetaisires.com Also on Facebook.

80 Years of Breeding

We are family breeders of dual purpose cattle dating back 80 years to 1936 when the parents of my late husband Kenneth married and started out with a small herd of Milking Shorthorns and a local butter and cream route that the children helped with as they became old enough. Here is a picture my mother-in-law took of their herd in those early days:



As Kenneth grew, his father perceived his son's aptitude for cattle breeding, and gave him more and more responsibility in selecting breeding stock. In their late teens, Kenneth and his brother expanded the herd and facilities, bringing in cows from a number of notable herds.

Kenneth became known as source of some of the best genetics of the Milking Shorthorn breed for great udders and sound production. Our linebred Meriville Peerless and his sons were in the top of the bull lists for several years, and still this influence can be seen throughout the country and the world.

When I joined the family in 1983, after completing my degree from UW Madison in Agricultural Engineering, Kenneth was beginning to apply his skills and determination to work with the dwindling but valuable Dutch Belted breed. His efforts in locating good breeding stock, collecting a wide array of sires when no other breeders or studs were collecting Dutch Belted bulls, and encouraging cooperation among breeders caused him to be credited with

practically saving the breed from extinction.

Here he is pictured with springing heifer Bestyet Golden Dream #9538 (daughter of Grayview Gold Dust), assisted by our daughter Martha:



After Kenneth's passing in 2005, the children and I continued on with the herd, pursuing a breeding program emphasizing true dual purpose cattle in a 100% grass system.

We have saved the best bulls from our own herd for collection, as well as obtaining sires from other breeders we think will be helpful in our herd and yours.

We feel we have a good variety of sires with a spectrum of useful traits.



Here is a 1988 pasture photo of Meriville Satin Roansy Cissy #406482, dam of Meriville New Millenium and Meriville Peerless who is in the background of most of our Milking Shorthorns.

What We're Hearing From You

From New York:

We're having our Shorthorns from your semen and very happy with how the babies look—Big and hearty but not too big!

From Wisconsin:

My Dutch Belts are average or below in production as 2-year-olds, but as older cows they are the best. I have a Sammy daughter giving 70#/day. The Sammy's are a little smaller. For profit, the Dutch Belts are doing as well as the Holsteins, some of which fall apart on pasture with just a little grain.

From Minnesota:

I sure wish more people would pay attention to what I got from your genetics. Gentle cows with nice udders, good legs, little if any calving trouble, and low to non-existent vet bills.

From Ohio:

We got 5 cows bred to New Millennium last fall; looking forward to see what we get this summer. We have had some real nice Duke, Rock County, Lapp's Joe and Picasso heifers born this spring. A Picasso heifer born last September that we sold last fall was Reserve Junior Champion at the Ohio Spring Dairy Show! We do not show but it is nice to see our calves do well for others.

Breeding Stock Available

We can usually spare a few heifers each year if you're looking for quality foundation stock. Bull calves we now sell by pre-order, so let us know and we'd be happy to save one that would suit your breeding plans.

New A2/A2 Bulls Identified

For those interested in the A2/A2 trait, we've continued submitting samples for Beta-Casein testing, and have now identified two more bulls that are homozygous for the more popular A2 gene.

In the Dutch Belted line, **Bestyet Stardust** has tested A2/A2. We have been using this sire a fair amount in our own herd and like the overall capacity and vigor of his offspring.

It is interesting to note that all the Dutch Belted bulls we've tested so far have at least one gene for A2, so this must be fairly prevalent in the breed population.

Our Milking Shorthorn sire **Rojahns Bass Player** has proven A2/A2. In terms of conformation, he is a more modern type bull, siring larger and taller offspring than the traditional dual purpose type.

There are five other Milking Shorthorn sires on our list that have been shown to carry one A2 gene.

About the Shipping

We have used the excellent custom collection services of Interglobe Genetics for over 30 years. They also handle our storage and shipping.

Especially during the busy spring breeding season, be sure to allow ample time for your shipment, as sometimes there is a waiting period for a shipping tank to be available.

After your order is dropped off by the carrier, please transfer the canes into your nitrogen tank promptly and leave the shipping tank in the same location it was dropped off, as they will return within a few days to pick it up.

My teenaged daughters are both columnists for the local paper, where they enjoy sharing farm life with their readers. Here is a sampling of their work we thought you might like.

Summer nights

By Miriam Hoffman

What do you think of when you hear those words? Maybe you picture bonfires out in the country, or hanging out on downtown streets of a big city. Maybe you love the peaceful, warm evenings out in the wide open spaces, or the bustling sidewalks of a city lit up at night.

Living on a livestock farm in the Midwest has always been a source of pride and enjoyment for me. I love how rewarding it is to work all day and see the fruits of your labor stacked in the haymow, or grazing in a pasture. Well, usually. I must confess that some days I get tired and frustrated. Because the reality is, the work is never, ever done. There's always the same cows to milk again the next morning, and again in the evening, and over and over again the cycle goes. Wake up. Milk cows. Feed cows. Eat lunch. Work on other farm projects. Eat dinner. Milk cows. Feed cows. Sleep.

One of the most tiring summer jobs, I think, is unloading hay and straw into the barn loft and stacking it. So, there are two different options: take the bales from the wagon and put them on the elevator (while standing on a wagon in the hot sun), or stack the bales in the haymow (which is hot, stuffy, and dusty). Since I prefer hot sun to stuffy haymow, I'm usually the one down on the wagon. Depending on the wagon, there may be 100-200 bales to unload. Sometimes it feels like it will never end, but eventually the pile decreases and the feeling of putting the last few bales on the elevator is priceless. And then, when finished, the blessed coolness of water. There are few times that I appreciate water more.

Some days I have to drive the tractor to help with fieldwork. Being one of the less experienced drivers in the family, I usually end up doing something simple, such as tillage. I always enjoy the sight of rich black soil being overturned in my wake. Tractor driving is one of the more relaxing tasks, but it's not a walk in the park, either. From watching the implement behind you to watching the front of the tractor to keep it straight, it can get pretty tiresome. So, even though I have a little bit of fun operating such a large piece of equipment, I'm happy when a more experienced driver comes to take over.

Now back to those summer nights. You know what summer nights mean to me? Fireflies. Happy cows grazing in a lush green pasture with a beautiful sunset painted on the horizon. Rest after a long day of hard work in the sun. It always comes back to those nights when I'm on the farm. No matter how hard I've worked or how tired I am, it's at night when I hear the crickets chirping that I remember how blessed I am. It's my favorite time of day.

These Boots are made for Farming

By Martha Hoffman

Clomp, clomp, clomp. I walk along in these enormous boots, which are brown and well worn.

These are my daddy's boots. For a girl trying to wear her father's boots, I have it pretty well, since my feet are large. But in a metaphorical sense, his life's work was so broad, it will be hard to equal. Talk about having big shoes to fill!

My father was born on September 5th, 1940 as Kenneth Eldon Hoffman, to John E. and Rosa Hoffman. He had an older brother and younger brother and sister, who were twins. He grew up on this farm with his family and their livestock. His father soon realized that this boy was a natural livestock breeder and let him pick out the breeding stock. When Kenneth and his brothers wanted to get milking machines instead of hand-milking the cows, their father said, "Okay, if you boys will do the milking." That wise father never did the milking afterwards.

When Kenneth was in high school, he was in FFA. He won the Star State Farmer award his senior year, which was 1958. After high school, he settled into full time dairy farming.

Finally in 1981, through God-organized circumstances, an agricultural engineering student, later to become my mother, came down from Wisconsin to work on his farm for a summer. Two years later they were married, and that summer job became a very prolonged "job!" My father had graduated from high school the year my mother was born.

He had many revolutionary ideas; most notably his philosophy of farming that goes against conventional trends, but it makes a lot of sense. As he was growing up, he noticed that farmers were changing from diversified farming (multiple crops and livestock) to growing only a couple of cash crops. He saw that diversified farming provided better soil stewardship and economic sustainability.

Farmers in the 1970s were told to "get big, or get out," and he refused to do either. He stuck to small-scale livestock farming, even when others were following "progress" and farming thousands of acres. He believed that this way he could better care for his land and animals personally.

Today his practices are beginning to catch on nationally. Sustainability and community-based agriculture have started to matter again because more people are caring about where their food comes from.

When my daddy passed away in 2005 he left us with memories, his cattle and farm, a room full of his beloved farming books, and a philosophy of farming.

This is my father's story. But mine has much to write before completion. Where do I fit in? I have grown up on the same farm as my father did, having a great time as a farm kid. I have been learning about life and values, and I have been finding my place in life behind my father, in his footsteps and shadow. What more can I ask?