

**SUMMER  
2024**

# **CRV** **Forward**

**Magazine for a healthy and efficient herd**

**A uniform  
herd with  
crossbreeding**

**Control over  
fertility and  
feed efficiency**



**BETTER COWS > BETTER LIFE**



## Dear reader,

In 2024 CRV is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Co-Operative. Many UK farmers will be able to remember the first importation of Dutch Holstein semen some 30 years ago. Back then, CRV was trading as Holland Genetics and distributing semen through numerous AI companies and distributors in the UK.

The first bulls to arrive still stay in the memory of many as influential sires who became keystones of the herd. Bulls like Amos, Felix, Tops, F16, these were followed shortly after by bulls like Cash, Celsius and Sunny Boy, most of these bulls went on to become globally acknowledged sires.

In the early 2000s CR Delta, the evolution of Holland Genetics, acquired Avoncroft Cattle Breeders to establish a daughter company in the UK, over time evolving into the company you know today – CRV UK.

Today, CRV is without question leading the way on giving farmers proven feed efficiency breeding values, based on

years of actual feed intake research on commercial dairy farms. With regards to 'on-farm tools' CRV is continually developing genomic testing and in our Herd Optimizer data application it is 24/7 accessible. This genomic female animal information then transports seamlessly to the SireMatch mating programme. SireMatch not only eliminates the risk of inbreeding, it also shows the genetic gains that can be made and provide a solid overview of the direction of the herd. Linked with the CRV Ovalert heat detection system, developed with Nedap, things move to another level. With all these genetic management tools, you can breed only those animals that maximise your farm breeding goals and ensure that you only breed the replacements you need, so maximising the best use of sexed dairy and beef semen.

Why not come with us on one of our trips to the Netherlands to see how CRV can help your herd to make more profit?

**Ian Stavert** | breeding advisor CRV UK

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**CRV, leading**  
in health and efficiency



**Cover photo** Three Eloy daughters from the Pels family from the Netherlands (photo: Eric Elbers)

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# Principal plays leading part

Once again, the Esmonique family delivers a new bull. After Empire, Esperanto, Endless and Eloy, Delta Principal is now in the spotlight.

He is certainly no fluke. Delta Principal PP, one of the newcomers to CRV's bull offer, comes from one of the most influential black-and-white cow families of recent years. The Weelder Esmonique family has been supplying bulls to AI organizations continuously over the past ten years. Weelder Empire and Weelder Esperanto were the first bulls to put the Esmoniques in the spotlight. The qualities of the full brothers Delta Endless and Delta Eloy were also embraced early on by dairy producers. The daughters of the two Jacuzzi sons are now proving their users right.

## Linchpin Esmonique 22

All of the bulls descend from the Esmonique family. The lynchpin of that family is Weelder Esmonique 22, one of the favourite bull dams of father Peter van de Kamp and his daughter

Sanne van Raalte. Through daughter Weelder Esmonique 38 (by G-Force), who produced a total of more than 350 embryos, she is the grandmother of the bulls Empire and Esperanto. "Esmonique was a stunner of a cow that stood out in the meadow when you drove past. She showed a lot of dairyness and a fantastic udder. I could look at her for an hour," says Peter van de Kamp. Daughter Sanne adds: "She was trouble-free and easily produced a lot of milk. And she was very pleasant to work with. You would like a barn full of cows like that." The Planet daughter ultimately produced more than 113,000 kg of milk with 4.31% fat and 3.30% protein in nine lactations. As such, she is not the only hundred-tonne cow from the family. Her full sister Esmonique 20 and her half-sister Esmonique 29 (by Fiction) also passed the 100,000 kg

- **Homozygous B&W bull**
- **Balanced production**
- **Healthy udders**
- **A2A2 & BB**

milk mark, as did Esmonique 35 (by Kylian).

## High for hoof health

At the farm of father and daughter Van de Kamp, the Esmoniques now represent eighty percent of the herd. The many Esmoniques are described by their breeders as late-maturing cows, that improve every year and usually have strong udders. That description also seems to apply to the daughters of Delta Principal PP. The Fair Play son inherits strong udders (106), which are shallow (110) and have excellent front udder attachment (108). In addition to being attractive, the udders are also healthy: Principal scores well above average for udder health at 107. Principal is also the highest scoring bull for hoof health (113) in CRV's range. Principal is A2A2, transmits +443 kg of milk and 38 kg of fat and protein. His offspring will also score above average for longevity (373 days) and persistence (106). All Principal calves are born polled. Both conventional and sexed semen are available.

*Delta Principal PP (Fair Play P x Nippon P)*



For more information  
about CRV bulls  
check our website



# “Crossbreeding has always appealed to me”

**More than 400 red-and-white cows can be found in Edward Towers’ barn. In search of strong, problem-free cows, Edward Towers opted for a two-way cross with Fleckvieh and Holstein. “Everybody comments on how uniform our herd is.”**

A pure Holstein herd? It’s been a while since Edward Towers had one. More than twenty years ago, just after the turn of the century, the dairy farmer from Hornby, Lancashire, imported a number of Swedish Reds. “I thought Holstein cattle were just not strong enough. They regularly got illnesses and as a result cows didn’t get up. They simply weren’t lasting long enough.”

## **Two-way cross**

Crossbreeding was not very popular at that time. That’s why he kept the two breeds separate. That changed when the U.S. professor Les Hansen came to the UK. “He

promoted the three-way cross, so we decided to work with Scandinavian Red, Fleckvieh or Montbeliarde, and red-and-white Holstein, so all our cattle would look red and white.” Edward soon said goodbye to Montbeliarde. “I like the temperament of the Fleckvieh cows better and also their feet and legs are better.” In the meantime he has switched to a two-way cross of Fleckvieh and Holstein. Crossbreeding does not mean that there is much variation in the herd according to Edward. “Everybody comments on how uniform our herd is.”

Edward keeps his cows inside all year round on a forage-based diet with mainly grass silage, some fresh moist sugar

*Edward Towers switched to a two-way cross of Fleckvieh and Holstein*





## Company information

Farm name	<b>Holme Head Farm</b>
Owner	<b>Edward Towers</b>
Location	<b>Hornby, Lancashire</b>
Herd size	<b>450 cows</b>
Young stock	<b>640</b>
Average yield	<b>9,000 kg, 4.13% fat and 3.38% protein</b>
Calving interval	<b>367 days</b>
Land managed	<b>265 hectares</b>



beet, chopped hay and calcium carbonate, supplemented by a blend. He aims at a production of between 9,000 and 9,500 kg of milk.

The cows are divided into three groups: the high yielders, the newly calved heifers and the cows that are in calf.

"We don't graze our milking herd. Grazing such a big herd is quite a challenge, especially since we're in a very wet part of the UK. The cows would make a mess of it and spoil a lot of grass," says Edward. The young stock is grazed, though.

### Hardly any health problems

The herd is on a daily AI programme. Every morning at half past nine the inseminator comes to serve cows that are in heat. "We use the breeding management programme SireMatch, which gives us a mating advice per animal," says Edward, who is happy with his crossbred cows. "Our goal is to do things as simply as possible. The crossbreds are cows that do not cause any problems. They are strong cows that almost always calve themselves and hardly have any health problems. The vet comes every fortnight for scanning. It's very rare that he comes in between those visits."

Fertility is also a strong point of the crossbred herd. The herd at Holme Head Farm, which calves all year round, has a calving interval of 367 days.

Edward mainly uses bulls from CRV, like Borax, Orange PP, Vision PP, Han Solo and Mumbai PP. "CRV is very focused, and I like their bulls. CRV has good working bulls that are

not too extreme. I also like the fact that they are looking at feed efficiency. The more milk we can produce per unit of feed, the better it is."

For the Holstein bulls, Edward chooses sexed semen, but for the Fleckvieh bulls only sometimes. "That's partly because of the price of the semen, but also because a Fleckvieh calf is valuable, whether it is a bull or a heifer calf."

A growing proportion of his dairy cows is served with semen from British Blue and Charolais bulls. "We probably serve 50 percent of the herd with beef semen," says Edward. His herd has 450 milking cows, including dry cows, but the total number of animals on farm is almost 1100.

"We keep a lot of young stock for beef," Edward says.

"Beef helps generate an extra income, especially when milk prices are low, as at the moment."

Last year he also sold some young heifers through auctions, following successful use of sexed semen. "By using sexed semen we had a surplus of young heifers. We got a good price for them."

### Trouble-free cows

Edward thinks that Fleckvieh could be of added value to more UK dairy farmers. "In general, Fleckvieh cows cause a lot less trouble. In fact, crossbreeding has always appealed to me, but if I'd pick just one breed, it would be Fleckvieh. eckvieh cows are trouble free, although Holsteins have improved in health as well in the last twenty years."



**SERIES: 150 YEARS LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT**

2024 marks the 150th anniversary of CRV in the Netherlands and Flanders. The world changed in that time and so has CRV. In a three-part series we will dive into 150 years of innovation.

Part 1: History

**Part 2: CRV's bull stars**

Part 3: CRV goes international

# Bull stars shine brightly

## Getting acquainted to Dutch bulls (1975-1985)

- **Tops Monitor Legend (1977)**
- **F&G Acres Felix (1980)**
- **Freebrook Sexation Amos (1982)**

The first Dutch bulls to arrive in the UK still stay in the memory of many UK dairy farmers as influential sires, which became keystones of the herd. Take for example F&G Acres Felix who had thousands UK daughters. "Black and strong," is how CRV's Richard Williams remembers Felix's descendants. Williams has been selling Dutch genetics over 30 years and has always been interested in what genetics can do to improve efficiency, health, longevity and ultimately the farms profit. "The reason dairy farmers loved this bull was they were black, had great strength, good fertility and produced large amounts of milk for many years. Those were cows that wanted to live."

*F&G Acres Felix*



## Bulls that are still asked for (1985-1995)

- **Skalsumer Sunny Boy (1985)**
- **Etazon Celsius (1989)**
- **Eastland Cash (1991)**

"People are still asking about Celsius," says Richard Williams. The Bellman son out of CRV's Etazon breeding programme became popular in the 1990s. Today his UK daughter proof is based on more than 18,000 daughters. This makes the UK the country with the most Celsius daughters after his home country the Netherlands. More or less around the same time, Skalsumer Sunny Boy also made waves. With over two million doses sold worldwide, Sunny Boy became the most used Holstein bull ever. In the Netherlands alone, several hundred thousand calves were born and more than 1,800 of his daughters achieved a lifetime production of 100,000 kg of milk.

*Skalsumer Sunny Boy*



**CRV has sold thousands of bulls in the AI organization's 150-year history. CRV Forward went looking for the bulls that left an indelible impression on UK dairy farmers, all bulls with reliability, longevity and high components.**

It was early 2000 when CR Delta, the successor of Holland Genetics and the predecessor of CRV, acquired Avoncroft Cattle Breeders to establish a daughter company in the UK. But that was certainly not the first introduction to Dutch bulls for UK farmers, recalls CRV's Richard Williams. "Dutch genetics were popular because they were very reliable and trustworthy, with a widespread proof. Not many of them

dropped away and they always seemed to stick around." Dutch sires are also known for their longevity and good components. "Of the top six current highest genomic bulls in the UK for longevity, four are from CRV," says Williams. "Cows that are efficient and healthy have always been profitable. I just hope our bulls give our customers what we have always promised: better cows, better life."

## **The red-and-white era (1995-2010)**

- **Himster Grandprix (1997)**
- **Kian (1997)**
- **Poos Stadel Classic (1999)**

In the early years of the 21st century, red-and-white bulls gained ground. Kian was the first red-and-white bull that also got plenty of opportunities from dairy producers with black-and-white cows. Poos Stadel Classic also became immensely popular. "I won many friends with the offspring of Poos Stadel Classic," says Richard Williams. "He was the first red-and-white bull I sold many times to dairy farmers." Himster Grandprix was a black and white contemporary of Kian and Classic. "He left stamped daughters. You could always tell a Grandprix. They were strong, had great legs and feet and well attached udders, but the main reason farmers loved them were the great components."

*Poos Stadel Classic*



## **The genome generation (2010-2024)**

- **Delta Abundant (2018)**
- **Delta Jacuzzi (2017)**
- **Bouw Rocky (2012)**

Bouw Rocky was one of the first Dutch genomic bulls Richard Williams sold. "I sold him to farmers who wanted a strong and robust cow for their herd, which had the capacity to graze and the willingness to put milk in the tank." His semen has now been sold out, but with Delta Jacuzzi and Delta Abundant, CRV has two other genomic bulls on offer that have graduated. "Farmers are very happy with the first milking daughters of Delta Abundant. He is the highest proven bull in the UK for feet and legs, and locomotion. And there are many Abundant daughters which have got very high classification scores." Both Jacuzzi and Abundant have contributed significantly to the CRV breeding programmes.

*Delta Abundant*





## Celebrating 150 years of CRV: a week to remember!

What a fantastic week we've experienced! Our international CRV anniversary event in the Netherlands was a success. International colleagues, farmers, and distributors from more than 25 countries came over. The week was filled with a lot of highlights, including farm visits, visits to feed efficiency test farms, workshops about fertility, feed efficiency, SireMatch and Herd Optimizer. The week concluded with a breeding day on two stunning farms.

## New breeding advisor

"Hello, my name is Leah and I am 33 years old. My husband, Tom, is a dairy farmer and together we have two daughters called Ava and Francesca. When I'm not busy on the farm, I like to spend my spare time training my Border Collie pup, Blodyn. I am very excited to join CRV and am looking forward to the opportunities it will bring!"

Leah Davies will cover the regions of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Glamorgan in Wales.



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## Carnival daughter red-and-white Grand Champion

Trillie 171 was the Grand Champion at the first Dutch National R&W Show, organized the end of June.

The Carnival daughter from the Vosman family is in her 5th lactation and improved, shortly after her victory, her conformation score to EX93.

*Carnival daughter Trillie 171*



## Sign up for CRV Forward!

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<https://crv4all.co.uk/en/contact-us>  
or use the QR-code



# Efficient production of new bulls

## Delta Producer • CRV Health 0% • CRV Efficiency +15%

With +15% Delta Producer (Marpon x Jeronimo x Bravo) is one of the trait leaders for CRV Efficiency. Producer will live up to his name: he offers plenty of milk (+702 kg) with 0.10% fat and 0.06% protein, resulting in more than 65 kg fat and protein. He combines that with 110 feed efficiency, which means his daughters will produce 5 percent extra milk from the same amount of feed. His

daughters are expected to produce very persistently (108). Producer comes from the well-known Sneeker cow family, and traces back to the dam of the cow family Newhouse Sneeker 247 VG89. This OMan daughter ultimately produced more than 117,000 kg of milk with 3.53% protein. Producer daughters will be born easily (104 calving ease).



- Huge production
- Great feed efficiency
- Calving ease

## Siemers Orono • CRV Health +3% • CRV Efficiency +8%

One of the most interesting bulls in CRV's TPI portfolio is Siemers Orono. "Dairy producers who are looking for bulls that offer something extra in terms of frame characteristics, legs and feet, and udder, without sacrificing production and health characteristics, should take a closer look at Orono," says Joe Stanek of CRV USA. Orono combines his excellent conformation with a production

inheritance of more than 750 kg of milk with +0.07% fat and 0.02% protein. On health traits too, he does not drop any stitches. Siemers Orono boasts a deep cow family. His dam, Siemers Lambda Paris, is one of the most successful American brood cows today. She has almost 200 registered offspring, including Siemers Renegade Parfect, who ranks in the top ten TPI.



- Great production
- Excellent conformation
- Positive teath lenght

## Vienetta • CRV Health +8% • CRV Efficiency +8%

Fleckfieh bull Vienetta is currently the most interesting Virginia son. He comes from the same cow family as the bull Manaus. In Vienetta's profile there is a very good milk yield (milk index 122) paired with positive protein, a very good beef value (115) and outstanding fitness traits. These include longevity and udder health and fertility of the

daughters as well as a positive calving ease. In terms of conformation, the medium-sized Vienetta daughters will produce good muscle, very good legs and feet (113) and excellent udders (117). Particularly noteworthy is the outstanding teat placement at the front (121) with normal teat placement at the rear (104).



- Milk and protein
- Beef index
- Udder health

# Control over fertility is control over feed efficiency



**It is sometimes overlooked, but improving fertility also improves feed efficiency. “Fattening due to low daily production at the end of lactation is disastrous for milk production, resistance, fertility and feed efficiency in the next lactation,” says fertility specialist Patrick Maassen of CRV.**

The efficiency of the conversion of feed into milk strongly determines the profitability of dairy farming. To improve feed efficiency, dairy producers and their advisors are quick to look at adjustments to the ration. And by using breeding values for feed efficiency and CRV's FeedExcel breeding strategy, the efficiency of the conversion of feed into milk can be structurally improved through breeding. “Dairy producers do not often think about fertility when it comes to feed efficiency. But the feed efficiency of a herd is highly dependent on fertility,” says Patrick Maassen. He is a former dairy producer, ET specialist and feed and transition management advisor. He now uses this experience as a fertility specialist at CRV.

### **Fresh cows most efficient**

“Every dairy producer can make money with good feed efficiency,” notes Maassen. According to him, optimal milk production is different for every herd and depends on farm conditions, such as soil type, stocking rate, breed and genetic predisposition of the cows and prices for milk and feed. “But the higher the average daily production per cow within the farm conditions, the better the feed efficiency,” he says.

The fertility specialist points out that fresh cows achieve the highest daily production in kg of fat and protein and convert feed into milk most efficiently. According to Maassen, the average number of lactation days has a major influence on the feed efficiency of a herd of cows. “And this figure is directly dependent on the average calving interval and therefore on the fertility of the herd,” he explains.

### **Increased risk of fattening**

Patrick Maassen sees that dairy producers are increasingly delaying the first insemination. “Dairy producers who have a good grasp of it can certainly achieve excellent results with an extended lactation length. But extending the lactation must be a conscious choice and not the result of problems with the transition and fertility,” he believes. According to the fertility specialist, a persistent milk production is primarily important for a herd with a longer calving interval. Maassen notes that not every cow is persistent enough to continue milking for a long time while maintaining good production. He mentions the dairy

producer's management as the second important success factor. This should prevent cows from entering the dry period with excessively good body condition. “The risk of delaying the first insemination, especially with a high-quality basic ration and less persistent production, is that cows will convert feed into body fat at the end of lactation,” he explains. “This is directly at the expense of feed efficiency in this phase of lactation, but even more so at the start of the new lactation.”

Maassen points out that fattened cows are much more at risk of problems with calving and during the transition period. Extensive condition inhibits feed intake, causing fat cows to fall deeper into a negative energy balance, lose condition and have an increased risk of ketosis. Cows with ketosis produce less milk with a lower protein content and this is also at the expense of feed efficiency.

### **Grip on body condition is grip on fertility**

In addition, according to the specialist, there is a direct link between loss of condition and fertility. He points to American research from the University of Wisconsin. In this study, almost 2000 cows were divided into four groups based on the development of their body condition score between the day of drying off and 30 days into lactation. All cows were examined for pregnancy 32 days after insemination. In the group of cows that lost between 1.5 and 0.75 points of condition (on a scale of 5), only 33 percent were pregnant at 32 days. In the group that lost condition by around 0.5 points, this was 44 percent and in the group that managed to limit the loss to 0.25 points, 51 percent were pregnant. With a pregnancy rate of 56, the cows that kept their condition constant and increased in condition to 0.75 were the most fertile.

“Fattening at the end of lactation is disastrous for milk production, resistance, and fertility in the next lactation. And this means that feed efficiency is directly and indirectly under pressure due to fattening,” Maassen concludes. “The dairy producer who has control over the condition of his cows has control over fertility and control over feed efficiency.”



# User experiences

## Easy to manage Lunar daughter

*Third lactation Lunar daughter shows the qualities of her sire. Lunar is well known for its medium sized daughters with a very balanced production and excellent udders. Her owner, Mr Cowgill, is very pleased with this easy-to-manage cow*



## First VG Doc Hardy landed in the UK

*This is Boxbush Hardy Jessica VG86 with a milk production of 8,888 kg milk in just 288 days. The picture is taken at the farm of the Gregory family. Congratulations with this beauty!*



## Woody daughter excels

*This Willem's Hoeve Woody daughter was Champion at the South Wales show. She also topped the Sale at Carmarthen making GBP 2,350.00. She is by the Tyfri Farm from Arnoud Ramaker*



## First UK daughters of Everton



*Everton received his first daughter-proven breeding value in August. These three Everton daughters, from the Sowerby family, show what you might expect from him*

## Surprise!



*This cow surprised her owner with a Lixor twin. A little bit early, but both are doing well!*