

BREEDER OF THE YEAR- Green Acres Holstein Club- VAN DEN POL DAIRY

“We came here in 1999 from Holland to begin our new adventure together with our 3 daughters Corien, Djoeke and Tilly. From day 1, we have been a family farm, making everything a team effort.

Currently we milk 75 Holstein cows and we strive for cow comfort and health. The cows comfort is very important to us because a happy cow is a happy farmer.”

The Van Den Pol’s enthusiasm and talent for breeding and developing top quality, highly sought after Holsteins is quickly putting their Pol Butte Holsteins on the map. Located just east of Coaldale, the Van Den Pols are proving that when you commit yourself fully to something, good things do happen.

The Van Den Pols remained at the Picture Butte farm for six years. In October 2005 they moved to their present 160-acre farm outside of Coaldale. They started milking two months later in a newly constructed 80-head tie-stall barn. They built everything new here, except for the two houses and a machine shed. Free-stall barns dominant the landscape in this part of the province and the Van Den Pols’ tie-stall barn was the only one you’ll find south of Calgary. Cows are fed a TMR once a day comprised of hay, corn silage, and a complete dairy ration built on farm in their grind mix mill. The “Home of Contented Cows” is their slogan and speaks to the emphasis they place on cow comfort throughout the operation.

The milking herd, which is 100% Good Plus and better, consisting of 7 Excellent, 43 Very Good and 26 Good Plus cows. When the Van Den Pols started out their only plan was just to “go dairying”. Then they started buying a few better cows locally and then began investing in deeper-pedigreed cattle at major sales like the RockyMountain High and Morsan Mountain High sales.

Gys strives for a balance of type and production in their herd. He doesn’t use mating services and relies on his “heart and guts” when making breeding decisions.

While Gys is keeping a closer eye on “numbers”, he is balancing that with his continued desire for bulls who can sire long living, good framed, open ribbed cows with good udders and feet and legs.

Their efforts seem to be paying off they placed well at the Green Acres Holstein Club Show winning both Grand Champion with Pol Butte Beau Elaine and Reserve Grand Champion with Pol Butte Doorman Jazzmin as well as Junior Grand Champion with Pol Butte Formost Freya. Van Den Pol Dairy was also #66 for LPI and #77 for Pro\$ in December 2016 and #63 in both LPI and Pro\$ in April 2017. They received 30 Superior Production Awards , 7 60,000 kg awards and 1 80,000 kg award in 2017. The current RHA is 903.

Van Den Pol’s enjoy giving back to the community and this year decided to participate in Breakfast on the Dairy hosting over 700 visitors to their newly renovated barn with a step-up parlour and large straw pack.

In the future, the Van Den Pols’ goal is to win a Master Breeder shield.

Gys has always believed that in life one should “Do what you do good. Otherwise don’t do it. Don’t do it half-way.” It is that kind of attitude and commitment to Holstein breeding that will ensure further success for the Van Den Pol family in the years ahead.

Adapted and updated from Bonnie Cooper’s article

