

The Blonde Banner

The Official Publication of the Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine
Association



December 2005



President's Message

Well, here we are once again, at the end of another year - a time to look back and reflect on what has happened in the beef industry and in particular the

Blonde d'Aquitaine breed.

Although the stocker market has shown some softness in the past month due to high volumes in the fall run, prices remained throughout the year at much improved levels. And once again, Blonde and Blonde-cross cattle continue to be in the top price range.

Unfortunately the latest news we have received indicates that the full market with the USA will take at least another year to reopen to animals of all ages. This continues to negatively influence the price of cull cows.

On the positive side, I was thoroughly impressed to see the turnout of Blonde members at the National Show and Sale in Lindsay organized by the Ontario Association. It was certainly one of the largest shows of Blonde cattle in recent times. And even more important, the sale showed much-improved prices over the past two years. I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped make this a tremendous event.

In Ontario, even more encouraging for the Blonde breed is the increase in registrations of purebred and fullblood Blondes in 2005 as compared to 2004. This trend is also evident across the country - a sign that Blonde members are still very active and confident in the success of the breed. Transfers or sales have still not reached the volumes of previous years, but I sense this will turn around in 2006.

As we head into another year, your Ontario Board is in the process of reviewing its program for 2006 which should include additional sales of Blonde cattle over and above the "Cream of the Crop" Sale. We will keep you posted.

Both my wife and I would like to wish you and your families the best of Christmases and a prosperous New Year.

Marcel Lachance

PS - Forget the turkey..... eat BEEF.

RAFFLE RESULTS!!

We held our raffle on November 26, 2005.

The winners are:

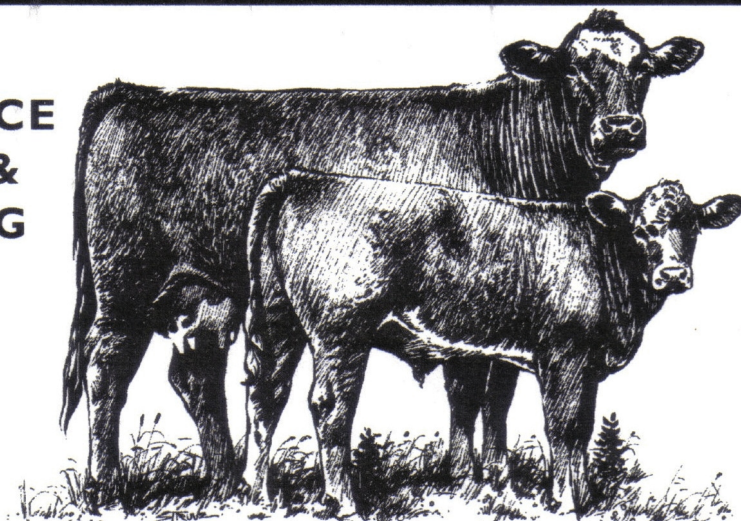
- 1st Prize: **Al Spicer** of Tweed, Ont.
- 2nd Prize: **Bryan DeVries** of Charlton, Ont.
- 3rd Prize: **Sandy Pearce** of Fenelon Falls, Ont.
- 4th Prize: **Carl & Lorraine King** of Port Colborne, Ont.

Thanks to the many members from across the province who took the time and energy to sell tickets and make this event a success. Not only does this raffle provide funds to the Association but it is also another way of promoting Blondes and the Beef industry.

The OBdAA Board

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JACKSON BLONDES, High Prairie, Alberta
Murray Gordner, Mitchell, Ontario
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& the guy who bought VBB6P at
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Four Issues:

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1/4 page.....\$45
Business cards.....\$15

Upcoming Events:

February 7-9

Canadian International Farm
Equipment Show
International Centre, Toronto
www.torontofarmshow.com

March 8-10

Western Fair Farm Show
Fairgrounds, London, Ontario
www.westernfair.com

March 14-16, 2006

Ottawa Valley Farm Show
Lansdowne Park, Ottawa
www.ottawafarmshow.com

April 1, 2006

Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine
Association
Annual General Meeting
Location: TBA

NOTE: The OBdAA reserves the right to edit any newsletter submissions for length and content suitability. The goals of this newsletter are:

To **inform** the membership of all the pertinent activities and initiatives being taken by the Association, the Association Board, or its members.

To **provide** educational information in order to assist Blonde breeders in all aspects of the seed stock industry.

To **promote** the Blonde d'Aquitaine breed and the members of the Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine Association.

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Our breeding program has been featured in the July Aug '99 and Fall '00 issues of the Ontario Beef Farmer magazine. In addition, Holland's National Blonde magazine "de Blonde" did a feature article on our program in their December 1997 issue.

Our dedication to the Blonde Breed is evident by our involvement!

Our dedication to Blonde Breeders is evident by our cattle!

**Rheo & Sharon Machina, Clifford, ON, (519) 327-8646
e-mail: rheo@mbrheocattle.com website: www.mbrheocattle.com**

Bull and Heifer Evaluation Centres

As fall winds down with winter snow on the door step, the processing and weaning of 2005 calves is also winding down. Some of those calves will find themselves in a bull or heifer BIO evaluation centre where they will be assessed, along with other calves their own age, on a variety of growth traits. This assessment is viewed as an opportunity to see how a particular animal ranks in relation to others within the group as well as within a breed and across breeds. It also adds a predictable quantity to that animal and its offspring and provides a tool that can be used for culling and herd replacement selections. The animals themselves are also competing for recognition within breeds and in the Prime Plus and Beef Builder categories.

The BIO report is calculated monthly and becomes a "report card" for those animals on test. Terms such as Average Daily Gain (ADG), Yearling Gain (YG), Ribeye Area (REA), adjusted Scrotal Circumference (adj. SC), and ABC's (Across Breed Comparisons) are standardized to measure standings and/or progress. The percentile rankings (%) also give an indication of where an animal stands in relation to other animals in the industry and within breeds.

Breeders who value this type of evaluation are often dedicated to keeping records on their whole herd and utilize the BIO evaluation as a marketing tool. Although they will agree that it takes time and manageable handling facilities to record the weaning weights of calves, they will also argue that the "gains" far outweigh the negatives. A number of testimonials have been given by satisfied BIO clientele and bull purchasers and all state that they rely on the predictability that those performance numbers provide.

Once again, there will be a number of Blonde bulls and heifers that will be entered at various evaluation centres across the province (and indeed across the country). In addition to the BIO recognized awards, they will be eligible for two additional awards as recognized by the Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine Association, (see p.7). The OBdAA commends these breeders for their efforts and for promoting the performance

traits of their herd as well as the Blonde Breed.

Features of BIO's Genetic Evaluations (ABCs) and Economic Indexes

- Genetic Evaluations -the most accurate method to express genetic ability of an animal. They are adjusted for environment and can be used to compare animals across herds and evaluation centres.
- ABC - Across Breed EPD or Comparison -Estimate of how future progeny of an animal are expected to perform in each of the traits. Comparisons can be made within breeds and across breeds. For example, a bull or heifer with a Yearling Gain ABC of +85 will produce progeny that are on average 50 pounds heavier than progeny from a bull with a Yearling Gain ABC of +35.
- Accuracy - Measure of the amount of information used to calculate the ABC. Ranges from 1 (least) to 99 (most). Evaluations based on pedigree information only are noted as 'PE' (pedigree estimate).
- Prime Plus Economic Index -Prime Plus is the bull's predicted dollar difference (PDD) for his ability to sire market calves that produce a 700 pound carcass with AAA marbling, and productive heifer replacements. Prime Plus is based on using the bull for 2 years on 30 average cows, with 85% of heifers kept as replacements. Prime Plus is only for Bulls not Heifers.
- Beef Builder Economic Index -Beef Builder is the bull's predicted dollar difference (PDD) for his ability to sire market calves that produce up to an 800 pound carcass and sire productive heifer replacements. Beef Builder is based on using the bull for 2 years on 30 average cows, with 40% of heifers kept as replacements. BeefBuilder is only for Bulls not Heifers.
- ABCs (Across Breed EPDs) for all animals evaluated by BIO are on a fixed base. The base is a multi-breed average of animals born 1995-1998:

Trait:	Base:	Trait:	Base:
CE	0	%IMF	0
BW	0	SC	0
WG	+30	Prime Plus	+2000
MILK	+15	Beef Builder	+2000
PWG	+20		
YG	+50		
FAT	0		
REA	0		

HOLBURN FARMS

AND

***BLACK MARBLE
BLONDES***

*Would like to take this time to thank all their 2005
customers for their support this year.*

*Wishing everyone the best in 2006 with their
purchases.*



Floyd, Sheryl and Bill Blackburn

Two Awards Recognizing Performance Achievements!!

By Sharon Machina and Steve Acres

The Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine Association is pleased to announce that there will be two Performance Awards presented at its 2006 Annual General Meeting. The first award, *The President's Cup*, will continue in the same role as before and will be presented to an Ontario member for the highest ranking Blonde bull finishing a BIO-evaluated test in the year previous. This award will still promote the use of whole herd recording and is based on the current Beef Builder index in the BIO system. The board will be phasing out the small "keeper cup" award and replacing it with a lined jacket. The large President's Cup will continue to be presented and the winner will have it in their possession for the year until it is presented the following year.

The second award will recognize *"The Top Blonde Bull"*. It will recognize the individual achievements of an animal and will not be linked to the herd recording requirement. The bull that ranks the most consistently in the following categories will be chosen as the winner, with the bull's owner taking home a lined jacket as an award. The categories used to judge the bulls are as follows, ranked in order of priority:

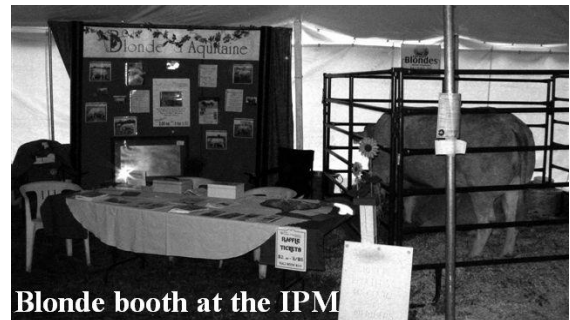
- * highest Average Daily Gain (minimum of 3.0 lbs. per day)
- * an adjusted Rib Eye with a minimum of 14.5 sq. in.
- * an adjusted Scrotal Circumference with a minimum of 32 cm.
- * a positive EPD for Calving Ease

Both *The President's Cup* and the *Top Blonde Bull* award for 2005 will be presented at the 2006 AGM.

International Plowing Match 2005

The IPM was held on the outskirts of Listowel on the farm of David Carson the week of September 20th. The weather was ideal, with some rain arriving on the Thursday. The OBdAA had a display set-up in the Beef Tent and saw a number of visitors throughout the duration of the match.

A cow/calf pair was on display courtesy of Bill VanBakel, Dublin, ON. Visitors commented very favourably on the quality and disposition of the pair. The animals certainly conveyed the positive attributes that the Blonde Breed has to offer, with many commercial cattlemen also making inquiries. Many of the school children were happy to feed alfalfa cubes to the cow while others were keen to pet the calf as it lay at the side of the pen.



Many thanks to the volunteers who manned the display and sold raffle tickets. They were: Donna Vanderham and Dylan, Rheo and Sharon Machina, Bryan Durst, Debbie and Dennis Elliott, Bill Van Bakel, Clare and Cathy Kuepfer, and John and Ilse Vink and family. A special thank-you to Clare who assisted for 3 days and for packing up and dropping off the display. Thanks again to a great team that worked well together. You all did an excellent job of promoting the Blonde Breed!



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Roseneath Fair Blonde Show Results Oct. 2, 2005

1. Male- Bull Calf born on or after Jan. 1/05

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Laverne McGee
- 3rd Darren Dunham
- 4th Dave McNeven
- 5th Ron McArthur

2. Male- Yearling Bull

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Darren Dunham
- 3rd Don Dunham

2A. Male- Champion Bull

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Laverne McGee

3. Female- Calf born on or after Jan. 1/05

- 1st Darren Dunham
- 2nd Dave McNeven
- 3rd Don Dunham
- 4th Laverne McGee
- 5th Marcel Lachance
- 6th Don Dunham
- 7th Darren Dunham
- 8th Marcel Lachance
- 9th Ron McArthur
- 10th Dave McNeven

4. Female-Heifer born April 1/04 - Dec. 31/04

- 1st Don Dunham
- 2nd Don Dunham
- 3rd Ron McArthur

5. Female-Heifer born Jan. 1/04 - Mar. 31/04

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Laverne McGee

6. Female Two-Year-Old with calf at side Jan.1/03-Dec. 31/04

- 1st Laverne McGee

7. Female - mature cow with this year's calf at side, born prior to Jan. 03

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Dave McNeven

7A. Champion Female

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Laverne McGee

8. Breeder's Herd

- 1st Laverne McGee
- 2nd Darren Dunham
- 3rd Don Dunham
- 4th Dave McNeven

Correction: Lavelaine Farms was 1st in the Breeders' Herd Category at the National Show held in Lindsay, September 25, 2005.



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