

# The Blonde Banner

The Official Publication of the Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine Association

Fall/Winter 2011

## Blondes Are Number ONE!

Another highlight for the Blonde Breed in Ontario took place in September at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in Woodstock, Ontario. This National event holds an annual carcass competition where 20 entries of various breeds are entered. This year a purebred blonde steer from Beavermeadow Blondes took first place. The steer was entered by Dan Langstaff who farms with his parents Bruce and Cathy, and together have a herd of purebred and fullblood blondes. The competition is judged on point score system with points given for factors such as grade AAA, AA, etc, ideal carcass weight, marbling, cutability, rib eye measurement, color, texture, and optimum fat value. The neat thing about this particular steer that won was that he was not specifically separated or fed a special ration for the competition. The steer was in the same pen, eating the same feed as all the rest and they all finished very nicely and looked great. Makes you kind of wonder how many other possible winners were in that pen doing what Blondes do well, making high quality, high yielding, delicious, healthy beef. Bruce and Dan are not able to exactly say if it is the breeding, or their feeding program, or hay quality that is to credit for this outcome. However, they are going to keep striving to continually improve their genetics and breeding not only for beef production, but for breeding stock as well. They also keep a close eye on feed quality and have been learning a lot over the past few years on how to get the best feed conversion out of their animals. Many at the competition awards dinner were surprised that a purebred Blonde could have done so well because they traditionally are so lean. Some breeders even mentioned that they had better look into the Blonde breed more seriously and would consider introducing Blondes to their herds. This is great news for breeders that have some bulls to sell in the spring!

The Ontario Blonde d'Aquitaine Association would like to congratulate Beavermeadow Blondes and the Langstaff Family for this prestigious prize. You are truly dedicated breeders and we are grateful that you are part of our Blonde family!

## Heifer Draw Winners!!

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, a lot of OBdAA members gathered at Chubby's Restaurant in Hoards Station, to enjoy a great meal and even better company. Afterward, one of the waitresses was asked to do the honours and draw the winning heifer draw tickets from the barrel.

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Louis Bennett from Quebec

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Bob Childs of Seabright, ON

Thanks to everyone who supported the draw, by either selling or buying tickets!



OBdAA Board member Murphy Baker (l.) with the Childs and their new print.



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**2011-12 Upcoming Events:**

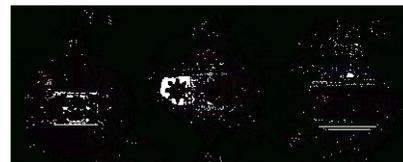
March 31, 2012

**OBdAA AGM**

at Bobby C's Dockside/Port  
Darlington Marina Motel,  
70 Port Darlington Rd.  
Bowmanville, ON

**Note:** If anyone knows of upcoming events that would be of interest to Blonde breeders, please forward the info to be included here to the newsletter editor.

The OBdAA board would like to take this opportunity to wish fellow Blonde breeders a very Merry Christmas, and a Prosperous New Year!!



**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.



### A Message from the President

It's hard to believe that Christmas is just around the corner -- how time flies! My youngest daughter just turned 2, is already speaking full sentences in both English and French and is doing everything she can to keep up with her big sister Isabella. It just felt like yesterday when they were born. The hustle and bustle of hosting the National Annual General Meeting, Show and Sale is behind us and already feels like it was a long time ago. At a recent Ontario Board meeting we have set the date for the upcoming Ontario AGM and are discussing plans for the 2012 Cream of the Crop Sale for next fall. I guess this is just the way life goes!

We were fortunate to enjoy great weather for the National AGM, Show and Sale in Lindsay. It was an outstanding event attracting breeders from East to West! I would like to take this opportunity to thank the over one hundred breeders and family members that were in attendance for the Saturday evening sale. With only 32 lots this year, the sale average was a respectable \$2,146. There were lots of comments from the crowds about the impressive quality of animals that were on offer. Many people also commented on the location and admired the lighting, cleanliness and professionalism of the sale operation. Kudos to all the Ontario Board Members and their spouses for making the sale such a great success! It was an excellent opportunity to have an attractive sale along with a super showing of 54 outstanding Blonde animals at the Lindsay Exhibition on the following day. The hospitality room (or should I say parking lot) at the Lindsay Inn was also a highlight for many! Congratulations to all the consignors, buyers, and show people for taking an active part in this event.

At our last Ontario Board meeting we finalized the date for our Annual General Meeting. We decided that last year's location – just south of Bowmanville, off the 401 was the most central location for most of our breeders. We look forward to seeing you all there on Saturday, March 31, 2012. (specific details are included in this newsletter). The AGM is an excellent venue where your voice can be heard and discussions and ideas can be shared. Please mark the date on your calendar.

Lastly, I would like to wish you all a safe and Happy Holiday Season. Take some time to have family time and watch your maybe not-so-young child or grand-child in motion. I always look forward to doing chores on Christmas morning. The traffic is generally calm and there is a smell of stillness in the air –enjoy the moment because it just goes too fast!

Regards, *Ian Kruis*, OBdAA President

### Bull Testing

**Wow!** Contacted Scott Bothwell from BIO today to check out how many bulls have entered in the test stations. Kenilworth has one more group of bulls to start testing which is Delivery Date Dec.10<sup>th</sup>. But to date we have **22** bulls entered. That's impressive for a small breed. This will definitely help out on the performance predictability on your sire selection. Getting involved with BIO Track will give you one more tool to figure out which is your superior females in your herd.

#### List of Blonde bull consignors:

<u>Douglas Test #1</u>		<u>Douglas Test #2</u>		<u>Kenilworth #1</u>	
Steve Acres	2	Steve Acres	1	John Plas	1
Don Dunham	1	Linda Cyr	1		
Paul Ferguson	4	Ian Kruis	1	<u>Bar 5</u>	
Gary Picken	1	Dave McNeven	2	Dennis Elliott	1
R. Rigney & D. Kamelchuk	1	Brian Peters	3	Bill Van Bakel	1
Bill Van Bakel	1				

Update their progress by going to <http://biobeef.com/>. There is money allotment for the consignors and 2 of the top bulls.

- submitted by Paul Ferguson



### **A Journey to the Douglas Bull Test Station**

On November 26<sup>th</sup> I woke up at 5:15 am by the sound of my 2 year old daughter Grace yelling for more covers, so she could get snuggled back to bed. With that I proceeded to go downstairs and get a pot of coffee brewing. Between my father-in-law Ken and I we actually rush to get the coffee going. If he gets there first, I find the coffee too strong and if I make it, he claims that it is too weak. I think that is the Dutch in me trying to save an extra table spoon for the next time? Nevertheless I got the coffee going, and went down to the barn to load up Knox 9Y You are the Man – this is our bullcalf that we chose to go to the BIO Test station up in Douglas, Ontario! Yes, Marcel Lachance, after 7 years of your lecturing on how important performance testing is, I finally did it, and what an adventure it was!



Last week the original plan was for me to pick up 2 additional purebred calves from Hilltop Orchards in Keene and to drive up from there. However, last night Dave McNevean called and informed me that a couple of other breeders from the area had found out that we were going, and wondered if we could truck their calves up as well. This was a great way to cover some gas money, which I just figured was \$175.00 for the 678km trip from Hampton to Douglas and back. The price of diesel is going crazy! Anyways, Dave



being Dave, arranged for one Angus breeder named Barry Ferguson from just outside the Grafton area to meet us up at his place. It ended up that Barry was interested in going to the Test Station as well. This gave me some company and kept me awake for the ride. (I have been known to fall asleep while driving on occasion.) After we loaded up Dave's calves and transferred Barry's calf, we drove up to the Young's Farm in Ennismore to pick up a big Charolais calf. Once we got him loaded we set sail for Douglas.

North of Peterborough, Lakefield, and Bancroft, is an area that I am not really familiar with. I am originally from Paris, Ontario and never really ventured east of

Toronto until I met Jenny. Wow, that highway 28 is a beautiful drive. The weather was on our side, at a balmy 11 degrees and no rain! The rock, swamps, lakes and birch trees are of abundance. Once north of Bancroft I noticed something awesome; any person driving a truck waves at every other person driving a truck. I just don't think we do that kind of thing down south unless of course you are on a motorbike. I quickly adapted and initiated the friendly wave as we drove by. I also noted that from the time I left this morning until we got to our final destination I saw 5 dumpsters at the ends of people's driveways with spray stating "Free metal drop off." This must be the new rage to try to rake in some extra Christmas money?

We finally arrived in Eganville and turned on highway 60 towards Douglas and the farm of Robert and Pat Dick. Once out of Eganville the landscape was looking like countryside again, with nice agriculture Land of Renfrew County. As we were coming into Douglas we saw a mailbox with Dick on it, so immediately slowed down and turned in. Of course, I never pre-planned to find the exact address of the farm. I just knew it was close to Douglas and on highway 60. We drove into the farm only to find out that it was the wrong Dick. They proceeded to direct us the big Dick sign on the other side of the town of Douglas. Of course once we got out of town we saw the sign and knew that we arrived. We were greeted by Bob and Pat's son-in-law Jason Tinney and later Pat herself. They escorted us to another farm where the calves would be weighed and checked in. Jason did the weighing, sorting, deworming, and tagging while Pat took care of all the paperwork. I thought I was the only one to get along so well with my mother-in-law, but these two are an obvious great team.

## **Forty Acres Blondes**



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**But we would like you to have fun as well!**

**Thank you to all who have purchased our animals over the years.**

**Don Mehler and Pat Filz**

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After checking in, Pat brought us back to the home farm to see the first lot of animals on test. Pat toured us around and explained the feeding, housing and general care of the bulls. It is clear that herd health is of the utmost importance to the Dicks. I am certain this must be one of the most stressful parts of running a Test Station with so many different breeders' animals. The first group that just started their official test, after a 28 day adjusting period are weighed and have been divided into 3 large lots beside each other.

There is a large pen of Charolais bulls, a pen of black and red Angus and the third pen had more or the exotics, including 10 blonde bulls. Altogether there are 91 animals on Test in this first group. These bulls were born from Dec. 22, 2010 until March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The second group carries over until May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We were the first animals to arrive for the second group. Pat mentioned that the second group is generally smaller and that she is expecting 58 head this week-end.

I must say that it was an absolute pleasure to go up and meet Pat and Jason. They have been running the Test station for 32 years - Pat really knows her stuff. On top of that she said that they have 300 cows themselves and are constantly on the field doing crops. Unfortunately we did not get to meet Bob because, in Pat's words, "He has gone tile crazy!" I was truly impressed with the organization and cleanliness of the operation. This must be the reason that some breeders send their calves to Douglas from over 600km away. The total cost for the entire evaluation is \$700.00 per bull. The goal is that these bulls will fare well in comparison to the breed average and breeders will obviously expect a premium when selling the bulls as future herd sires. I look forward to going back to pick up the load in April, which, if all goes well, will be twice as heavy!

The Dicks invite all breeders to their **Open House in March** to tour the facility and see the bulls up close. If you would like more information on Beef Improvement Opportunities check out their website at [www.biobeef.com](http://www.biobeef.com). BIO up-dates the site weekly, so you can follow along and see which bull is making the most gains.

-submitted by Ian Kruis

## *Internatinal Plowing Match 2011*

*With fewer farmers in the country, we need to promote our breed more than ever!*

At the I.P.M. there were only 3 breeds present. Surprisingly 2 of the 3 were of the smaller recognized breeds, being Blondes, Piedmontese and traditional Simmentals. We put on display a cow of Ian Kruis' breeding, Knox Understatement 5U with an Eldyn bull calf. The calf was a very muscular bull, to show off what Blondes are made of. There was a lot of eye contact with this pair of animals, which in turn sold tickets. In the future if you have a superior Blonde to put on display at a local farm show, you should contact one of the board members to make it work for you, it will be well worth it! Just ask Allan Plumton, he had an awesome cow/calf pair on display at the Hastings Plowing Match. If there is something on display, people will stop to talk or ask questions, and be generally interested.

I would like to thank the Conroy family for working at the booth. Special thanks to Murphy & Judy Baker for driving 6 hours one way and spending 2 days at the I.P.M, and still get to Lindsay to organize the Nationals. WELL DONE! With the Nationals and Plowing Match on at the same time we were short on Blonde breeders help. Lucky enough Mary Ellen's father volunteered his help to occupy the booth until the end. Thanks George! Also want to thank Rose Stewart (Piedmontese display) for trucking our cattle, and looking after the cattle too.

- submitted by Paul Ferguson



**Preferred Genetics**

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and  
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**Little Creek Pld Xander**

Sold for \$3,650 to  
Fee Haven Farms  
Paul Fee, Ontario



**Crystal Winnie 4W**

Sold for \$3,600 to  
Ashley McNeven, Ontario



**DeeBran Pld Jeremiah**

Sold for \$3,800 to  
Gary & Lois Picken, Ontario

## The National & 11th Cream of the Crop

Thank you to all who

Purchased cattle, Volunteered their time,  
or simply Joined us at the

2011 National Sale & the 11th Cream of the Crop Sale

We look forward to next year...



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