CRV’s HerdOptimizer Wins Dairy Herd Management’s 2016 Innovation Award

CRV is honored to have won the prestigious 2016 Dairy Herd Management Innovation Award at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisconsin. CRV was recognized for the company’s recent development of HerdOptimizer, a revolutionary genetic management program, at Dairy Herd Management’s customer appreciation reception on October 4.

Finalists were chosen by a panel of dairy farmers, agribusiness representatives and university experts who cast their votes on whether the product is game changing for dairy producers in the areas of efficiency, functionality and technology. “We are thrilled to be recognized by our customers and partners across the industry for bringing a new tool to market they feel will be truly helpful to dairy farmers. This contest is always very competitive, and CRV is extremely proud to have been a finalist amongst other innovative and successful products,” says Amy VanderMark, CRV USA managing director. “HerdOptimizer is a full-solutions approach to breeding and equips producers with the tools and information needed to make informed decisions in building their ideal herd.” CRV, using Neogen as their genomic testing partner, developed HerdOptimizer to combine genomic testing, customized breeding goals, careful trait selection, easy-to-use test results and breeding recommendations to deliver faster and more reliable herd improvement. HerdOptimizer captures traditional U.S. dairy genomic traits and delivers results on more than 20 proprietary CRV HerdBuilder Traits such as breeding values related to hoof health, udder health, premium milk components, fertility and efficiency.

HerdOptimizer was introduced to a select group earlier this year. An industry-wide launch took place at the World Dairy Expo. The CRV team hosted a number of events throughout the week related to HerdOptimizer. “Using real data from real customers to develop programs and tools that help farmers work smarter and more efficiently is the foundation of CRV and what our customers around the globe expect from us,” says Dr. Sophie Eaglen, CRV’s global business development manager. “It is a tremendous honor to be part of the team that built HerdOptimizer and to be recognized at a globally recognized event as being the best and biggest in the industry.”

First Ovalert System in the UK

In November 2016 the first Ovalert system was installed in the UK! CRV Avoncroft representative Alan Mason and CRV IBD area manager Miranda van Zessen helped with the installation of the whole system until it was up and running. Below a few pictures of the installation.
In cooperation with his advisors, Johan Stael is working towards boosting the fertility of his herd. As the intended progress was slow, and illness kept Johan away from the barn, he decided to buy Ovalert.

“About a year ago the average calving interval in my herd started to drift towards 500 days. Extreme peaks in calving interval are not a problem if they are occasional, but it mustn’t turn into a structural issue with too many animals,” says Johan Stael from Hank in the province of Noord-Brabant in the Netherlands. “I really want to be milking 30 kg per cow per day, but it mustn’t turn into a structural issue with too many animals”, says Johan.

Johan doesn’t rely blindly on Ovalert. “I always use my own observations in combination with the data generated by Ovalert. Ovalert gives me a much better insight into the ideal moment for insemination. And I can make more informed decisions about which cow to select for which insemination round.”

In the Ovalert system, Johan went for the neckbands with tags offering eating behaviour monitoring. This means he can also keep a close eye on the health of his cows via his display. “I have much more useful data at my disposal. But it’s still up to me how to interpret and apply that knowledge”, he believes. “Now if I get an alert that a certain cow is not eating as much, I go and take a look at once. Without the system you would probably only notice a day later that something was wrong with a cow and her eating behaviour. This gives me a chance to intervene at an earlier stage.” The processor that processes the data from the tags hangs in the office in the barn. Johan can produce various overviews on his display using data generated by the processor. “I can also view the data on my PC at home, if you are already in the barn it’s handy to access the information there. Reading the display there was also really useful for the staff sent by AB Brabant while I was ill.” Johan made a conscious decision to fit all the cows with a neck tag with the responder that measures activity and eating behaviour. “You can strap a neck tag to just thirty cows and switch from animal to animal once heat has been detected. But I’d rather not have all the extra work involved.” And, with that approach, the general health status of the herd is not monitored as closely. Fifteen of Johan’s maiden heifers also wear a neckband with responder. This has already resulted in the expected age at first calving of the current maiden heifers reaching 27.6 months. In illustration, in January 2016, just before Ovalert was used, this figure was still 29.5 months. The average age at which the maiden heifers are inseminated for the first time is now also lower: currently 16.6 months compared with 17.1 months in January.

On the right track
The fertility results are not yet clearly reflected in the index figures for the dairy cattle. “Except that I have a lot of dry cows”, concludes Johan. “It takes a while before the better results filter into a figure such as calving interval. But, we are certainly making progress.” Johan has now finished his treatment and is allowed back into the barn. The check-ups are encouraging, but he still has to recover his old immunity and energy levels. “I do the milking and feeding on my own again, but two old interns still help me at weekends. I am not yet back to my former self, the road to recovery will still take some time. Just like improving the index figures. But we are on the right track.”

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BOUW ROCKY

(Shamrock x Gola)

The very popular Rocky has got its full daughter proof in December. Rocky has now over 170 daughters in production and 30 daughters are classified. Rocky himself is a very impressive appearance and also his daughters show the same strength. Medium sized with a good capacity. Bouw Rocky is from an established cow family. The popular Snowfever and Bouw's #1 for NVI (Bouw Finder) are also from this family. Initially Rocky was used more outside the Netherlands and Flanders, but 30 daughters are classified. Rocky himself is a very impressive bull and he is easy calving.

DELTA ROSEBUD

(Flius Rik x Atlantis)

The R&W Rosebud is a son of Flius (Fanatic x Elburn) and Atlantic daughter Rika 806. The maternal line behind Rosebud contains bulls like Cash, Caliber, Stilet and Kian. All these bulls represent long lasting cows. Rosebud is one of the highest bulls for Better Life Health. His daughters will have less calving issues, they will be more fertile, have less lameness and less mastitis. Rosebud has got an outstanding pedigree for Red and White herds. In combination with his sold breeding values it is not a surprise he will fit many breeding goals.

BARKSDALE

(Marvel x Forest Glen Avery Action)

Exceptional productive live and milk quality, Faria Brothers Barksdale is a bull that is in the top of the Jersey bulls in the United States. This Marvel son of the famous Faria Brothers Dean Smith combines a good production with high durability (PL 6.2). Daughters of Barksdale produce a lot of kilos fat and protein, as well as high content levels. Barksdale daughter also have an average size and a well attached udder that can produce very long. The mother of Barksdale has already 10 sons at the AI and is therefore one of the most influential Jersey cows. This cow family gives offspring that is very durable and can easily realize a high production. This makes Barksdale an easy to use bull for every Jersey breeding program.

RALDI

(Rau x Bfg Poldi)

German farmers are quite happy with Raldi daughters. The Raldi daughters show good body depth, strong pastern a bit more steep. The very best point of Raldi daughters are their brilliant udders, best front udder attachment and ideal teat placement. With 12% for health and 8% for efficiency, Raldi is also a very good bull to improve the health and efficiency characteristics of your herd.
EASTERN EUROPE: TRAININGS AND SEMINARS

In December CRV organized together with a former specialist of the Agricultural Education Center Danmark in the Netherlands a whole week of trainings and seminars in three countries; Croatia, Serbia and Romania. The topics ranged from practical hooftrimming courses to seminars for veterinarians about breeding and fertility. All trainings and seminars were well received. Despite the somewhat cold weather, everybody kept paying attention when visiting the cows. A lot was learned about recognizing various signals in your cows, manure, barns and milk. Now they have to apply all the new knowledge to their own farms and their own cows. More trainings in Eastern Europe will follow soon.

SEMINAR WITH DUTCH EMBASSY IN CHILE

The Sonesta Hotel in Osorno was the podium for the seminar on ‘Better efficiency and productivity in the Chilean dairy sector’ end of 2016. About one hundred visitors joined the meeting that was organized by the Dutch Embassy for the second year in a row. The presentations during the event emphasized on the productivity and efficiency development in the Dutch dairy sector and how this could benefit producers in Chile. Many Dutch companies were represented including Rabobank, DSM, Lely and CRV together with its distributor Cooprinsem. With current milk prices under pressure in Chile expected changes in payment formulas from the dairy factories, breeding proved to be as relevant as ever. With new breeding values and hard data supporting CRV’s breeding values for Better Life Health and Better Life Efficiency, Cooprinsem showed its added value to the Chilean dairymen. Next to selecting bulls with medium stature, long hard life and high components there are now more specific indicators to find the most profitable bulls for the future. Heavily used bulls in the last few seasons included mainly high BLE bulls such as Stellando, Liberator, Passa, Levator, Solero and Skyfall and more bulls that seamlessly fit the Chilean system are introduced in the upcoming seasons.

WORLD DAIRY EXPO: FARM VISITS

With a group of farmers from the CRV breeding council, farmers from the CRV supervisory board, CRV marketing and area managers from international export we did a farm tour in California and Wisconsin after the 50th World Dairy Expo. A total of seven farms were visited. The farm visits started at the PEAK farm close to Madison, Wisconsin. This farm is one of two farms which houses the bull mothers to the PEAK program in which CRV also participates. Calves and cows kept in perfect shape, almost reflecting sunlight with their extremely white coat where shown to us. Let’s see how many of these calves will turn into great bulls for CRV.

The complete Dutch group that joined the farm visits

One of the interesting farms of the tour was the visit to the Zonneveld farm in California. He is milking 7000 cows. He explained a lot about the challenges farmers are facing in California. California is a challenging market in many different ways. There is strong competition from other genetics companies who compete mainly on price and not on what is best for the cows and the farmer. Luckily for us there is a good salessteam in the US making sure that we can grow our market share there. Strong competition is a challenge for CRV, but for the farmers there are even more challenges: Many farmers in California are running low on water. It is expected to become worse in the coming years due to increased water consumption in Los Angeles and San Francisco. On the other side, environmental and animal welfare issues become an increasing point of attention. One farmer is already having many polled animals to make sure he is “ready for the moment the consumer finds out that dehorning is painful for the animals”.

Maybe the most valuable of this whole trip was CRV colleagues traveling together with the breeding council and supervisory board. During the hours on the road a better understanding of each other’s role within the company was created. Experiences were exchanged, discussions were hold, and challenges CRV faces were talked about. We had a great brainstorm session about how to create a uniform CRV message and how to make sure that all the sales teams around the world will believe in and stand for this message.

NEW YEAR FARMERS’ MEETINGS DENMARK

BREEDCARE, CRV’s distributor in Denmark, organised three New Year farmers’ meetings. Topic of the meeting was “Dairy farming in changing market circumstances”. Siemen van Biezen, dairy farmer in Elahuizen, explained how he realized an increase in average milk production per cow from 28 liter three years ago to 42 liter right now. Eric Elbers, Product Specialist of CRV, indicated which tools CRV has available to help dairy farmers worldwide to breed an efficient and easy to manage cow. Looking to the enjoyable discussions afterwards the meeting and during the lunch, it seemed an interesting topic for the 70 Danish farmers who were present.

One of the meetings in Denmark
5 PROGENY GROUPS AT CRV EVENT BELGIUM

During a successful CRV Event in Gent, CRV showed for the first time 5 progeny groups in Flanders. It was the premiere for Delta Bookem Danno, because it was the first progeny group of Danno CRV showed to the public. Last year, Danno and Colorado were the most used bulls in Flanders. Also progeny groups of Stellando, G Force and Deputy were shown in the ring. It was a successful show where cows were shown with a high genetic level and a good production.

Below some pictures of the progeny groups.

For a small impression of the show, click on this link to watch a video about the CRV Event.

![Progeny group G Force](image1.jpg)

![Progeny group Colorado](image2.jpg)