

# Woodstonian Holsteins and ABS Canada

## Partners in Progress!

Kees & Wilma Overzet are a real Canadian dairy success story and credit ABS Canada programs, GMS® and RMS® for much of their present success! In 1988, Kees and his parents immigrated to Canada from the province of Groningen in Holland with plans to establish a new life in a new land. They settled in Ingersoll, Ontario, placing them in Oxford County, squarely in the heart of the "Dairy Capital of Canada". This is where Woodstonian Holsteins was established and where Kees, his wife, Wilma, and their three young children Korey (4), Derek (2) and Christi (1 month), farm today. Kees' mother, Tina, is also a co-owner in the operation. Established with 40 cows in a tie stall barn, today the 115-cow milking herd is housed in free stalls and the current herd average (3X milking) is 10,500 kg (23,149 pounds) milk with 4% fat and 3.4% protein.

The relationship between Woodstonian Holsteins and ABS Canada began in 1991, when Representative Helen Melles first began calling on the herd. In 1992, Kees took the ABS A.I. management school. Although his initial plans were to use the training to become better at observing cows in heat, over time he purchased a semen tank and began breeding his own cows. However, Kees also states that "Helen's encouragement helped me to become more successful at breeding my own cows."

The Woodstonian herd started using Genetic Management System® (GMS®) in 1999 in an effort to get a more uniform herd. Kees states "I was happy with the results from ABS sires like CUBBY, ELUSIVE, JUROR and DARKSTAR, but I wanted to make sure I was using these bulls properly for the best result." A secondary benefit of using GMS has been inventory and expense management. Kees notes that he now keeps less than two to three months inventory on hand and his semen costs are reduced, since GMS selects the best bull for the mating, not necessarily the most expensive bull.

Today, the Woodstonian herd boasts a uniform group of cattle sired by CONVINCER, PIPPEN, BRETT, TOLDO, SHINY, NEWTON and ELLIPSIS. Kees is adamant that GMS is meeting his breeding goals. "My father was always critical about chasing "hot" bulls for short-term gains. GMS has brought consistency to our herd through the proper mating of superior, high reliable sires."

In October 2003 Kees made the decision to introduce the Reproductive Management Systems® (RMS®) into his operation. Unfortunately his father had just recently passed away and the additional workload was challenging the reproductive efficiency of the herd. Melles had started offering the RMS program through her business and Kees viewed this as an opportunity to hand the reproductive side of his business over to a professional. From his research, he knew that once-a-day breeding would provide results consistent with AM/PM breeding, so the decision to move to a once-a-day program was not difficult. The early results have been exceptional!

The greatest benefits of incorporating the RMS program in the herd have been consistency and reproductive results. Consistency is defined by the daily visits from Helen and the bi-weekly herd health checks. The results are clear: in the first three months forty cows have been checked pregnant and the program is consistently

achieving the goal of five new pregnant cows per week. When asked to summarize the benefits of RMS Kees states, "The job gets done! Helen is on top of things and the cows are getting bred on time. There are only so many hours in the day for me to manage the operation. With RMS, the semen is getting in the cows and the cows are getting pregnant." In fact Kees exclaims "soon I

won't have any more cows to get pregnant!"

An additional benefit of RMS for Kees is the personal convenience of contracting his reproductive management, freeing up time for other areas of his life. "RMS has easily saved me half to one hour of work per day, so over the past five months I have earned at least four days of vacation time. This is especially important to me with a young family."

Dr. Norm Harnack of Ingersoll Veterinary Services is the Overzet's vet and a strong supporter of RMS. "RMS makes my job of bi-weekly herd health checks much easier due to the accurate record keeping and better identification of problem breeders." Harnack goes on to say that the chalking allows him to move through the herd much faster. "With a glance I can quickly recognize the short-bred and pregnant cows and focus on the cows that need my attention."

In summary, Kees feels that ABS has provided him with reliable sires, service and systems that have helped make Woodstonian Holsteins more profitable. Their relationship with ABS is built on trust and confidence that has been developed and supported over the years by Helen and the entire company. RMS is simply the latest step in the Woodstonian/ABS Canada "partnership in progress!" 🐄



Korey, Kees, Wilma, Christi & Derek Overzet