

FEBRUARY  
2022

# Update



home farm and a second location called Braemar. Eight Lely A4 robots milk the bulk of the current 480-cow herd at the home farm, while two more robots milk the remaining cows at Braemar. Overall, the operation draws feed from 800 acres, with 80% of the property family owned and 20% rented.

Wensink's commitment to best practices, protocols and benchmarks begins before birth. And, they are fully evident throughout the dairy operation.

*Cont. on pg. 2 & 3*

Continuously improve, and grow. That's a simple description of the business objectives of Hoenhorst Farms Ltd., a family-owned dairy near Innerkip, Ont.

But this management approach, driven by owner and manager Cox Wensink, is anything but simple. She's a fourth generation dairy farmer who draws on her engineering and management consultant experience to build protocols and performance benchmarks. From herd health, genetics and calf raising strategies to labour efficiency and land use management, she taps all these key indicators to consistently and predictably increase milk production.

"We want to continuously improve and grow," she says. "Ultimately, managing a farm is managing a business – you need to be profitable and efficient. We try to focus on what matters most, and embrace the data and expertise available to us."

Wensink's parents, Gerrit and Margriet Wensink (Gerrit is EastGen's current president), left the Netherlands 27 years ago to set up their new farm near Innerkip. Starting with 65 cows in 1994, the farm has grown significantly and now includes two milking facilities, the Hoenhorst



## Notice of Annual General Meeting of Members of EastGen Incorporated

Notice is hereby given the Annual Meeting of the Members of EastGen will be held virtually and hybrid if possible on the 31st day of March, 2022 at the hour of 10:00 a.m. in the forenoon to:

- Receive the financial statements of EastGen for the period ending December 31, 2021;
- Appoint auditors and authorize the directors to fix the remuneration of the auditors;
- Transact such further and other business as may properly be brought before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

By order of the Board of Directors, Brian O'Connor,  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Thursday, March 31, 2022**  
**10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

## GENETICS KEY IN HERD HEALTH & EFFICIENCY

Wensink emphasizes that raising healthy animals and reducing disease is key to optimizing overall farm efficiency. She notes their commitment to herd health has a significant genetic component, beginning with using Semex's Immunity+® sires that are genetically resistant to disease.

EastGen, who provide daily AI tech service to the operation, customizes their genetic package to support these goals of breeding cattle that are healthy, low labour, robot-friendly and high producers. The farm has used SemexWorks™ since 2013 to incorporate Immunity+ sires and to help achieve higher butterfat and protein, as well as greater mastitis resistance, daughter fertility and calving ease. Enhancing milking speed with optimum teat length and teat placement is another key focus.

"We want box udders with teats that are not too short or close together," says Wensink. SemexWorks is a tool for selecting the traits, strategies and economic parameters that are important to the dairy operation.

Typically, four conventional sires and three sexed sires are used annually with sires being evaluated three times per year. Sexed semen is used in heifers and first lactation cattle, conventional semen is used in older higher genetic merit cattle, and beef semen is used in lower genetic merit cattle.

Wensink notes how their genetic strategy plays a key role in labour efficiency on the farm. Hoenhorst employs seven staff, one lead herds person for each milking location, leads for calf raising and feeding, a building and yards maintenance person and two float positions.



Cox Wensink regularly consults with EastGen Dairy Solutions Specialist Drew Tyler to customize her herd's genetic package and monitor key herd indicators.

The breeding strategy is focused on enhancing calving ease, thus reducing labour and staff workload. Wensink works together with her EastGen representative to regularly monitor and project heifer inventories, monitor herd trends for mortality, culling rates, still births and other herd key indicators that highlight opportunities to improve genetics.

## IDENTIFYING TOP MILK PRODUCERS

In 2020, Hoenhorst began using Elevate®, Semex's genetic herd strategy tool, to help identify calves that are genetically more disease resistant via genomic testing at birth. This information is used to adjust sire groups, and helps the farm identify and raise healthier heifers.

Wensink has been using Immunity+ sires exclusively since 2017. Prior to this they were using 30% Immunity+ sires, and switched to 100% Immunity+ sires after seeing a drastic difference in calf health. Wensink says most of the herd already rates average to high as high immune responders, and the addition of Elevate will make an even greater impact. Her goal is that by eight weeks she can determine which calves will stay in the herd.



To improve "uptime" and performance of our EastGen call-in centre, a new phone system was installed recently. We are presently working to get the kinks out. Please listen to the whole greeting before touching any keys. If you try to shortcut the message you will not get through to the dispatchers.

We thank you for your patience and apologize for any inconvenience.

“Elevate helps us identify and keep only heifers with top genetics. This increases efficiency and reduces calf raising costs,” she says. “We want to get to the point where we can identify early on those genetically optimal heifers that will become successful producers and perform well in the herd.”

The strategy supports Hoenhorst’s strategy to optimize herd health and its impact on all elements of animal management and milk production. “This reduces unpredictable vet visits and allows for more predictability in team scheduling.”

To achieve her goal, Wensink uses Immunity+ sires and works preventatively, focusing on fresh cow performance and closely monitoring sub-optimal cows. For instance, fresh cows are tested for ketosis, are fitted with rumination collars and they also use Lely T4C data to monitor sub-optimal cows. “This way, we find that we are able to diagnose disease in the early stages and can preventatively treat them to avoid costly treatments and production decreases.

Overall, close to 100 performance indicators are monitored almost bi-weekly across various areas of the operation. The farm’s herd health protocols include monitoring for milk fever, ketosis, mastitis and lameness (see sidebar for key indicators and current performance).

What does the future hold for Hoenhorst Farms and Cox Wensink? Growth remains a key focus, with plans to milk 600 cows in the short-term, and aspirations to milk 1000 over the longer term.



## What Gets Focus Gets Results

Hoenhorst Farms owner and manager Cox Wensink tracks about 100 performance indicators biweekly. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) she tracks to help increase milk production include:

- Cow pregnancy rate: 27% (Target 30%)
- Cow conception rate: 40% (Target 40%)
- Heifer pregnancy rate: 40% (Target 40%)
- Milk fever: 1% (Target below 2%)
- Ketosis: 9% (Target below 15%)
- Displaced Abomasum: 1% (Target below 2%)
- Mastitis: 10% (Target below 15%)
- Lameness: 3% (Target below 5%)

### Milk Production

- 38L/cow at 4% Fat at home farm (mature cows)
- 35L/cow at 4% Fat at Braemar facility (1st lact. cows)

*The preceding consists of excerpts from an article written by Bernard Tobin.*

**For more on the Hoenhorst story, view the live Semex Global Webinar Series episode recorded January 13, 2022 on Semex Alliance’s YouTube channel.**

**For more information about EastGen Solutions please contact your sales representative or [info@eastgen.ca](mailto:info@eastgen.ca).**

## Introducing New Members of Our Finance Team

The EastGen-Semex Shared Services Finance Team has gained some new members in recent months due to staff changes and retirements.

We welcome Monique Gervais, Finance Manager, and new team members Kelly Pelling, Accounts Payable Administrator, and Alissa Kennedy-Stetson, Accounts Receivable Administrator, to this department which includes veteran member Laurie Eaton, Accounting Support Specialist.



**Monique Gervais**  
Finance Manager



**Kelly Pelling**  
Accounts Payable



**Alissa Kennedy-Stetson**  
Accounts Receivable

IMMUNITY+<sup>®</sup>

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*Holly McFarlane*

Boldi V

# Aptitude

DAVINCI x EPIC x MAN-O-MAN

**Boldi V APTITUDE**, who carries the **Robot Ready™** designation, is the #2 proven **Immunity+<sup>®</sup>** sire in the world! In fact, **APTITUDE** is higher for Milk, Pro\$, GLPI and Mammary System today than he was close to three years ago when he was first introduced! As his daughters mature, his numbers continue to reflect their improvement and potential for living profitable and productive lives.

Spencroft Aptitude Lucibomb VG-87-3YR-CAN,  
Owner: Roger Spence, Elmvale, ON



+3392 GLPI  
\$2672 PRO\$  
+898 MILK  
+62 FAT +.24%  
+51 PROTEIN +.16%  
+12 CONFORMATION  
+14 MAMMARY SYSTEM  
107 HERD LIFE  
108 MASTITIS RESISTANCE  
GEBV 21\* DEC

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