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By the Numbers: How John Schenkels Is Building a Healthier Herd

John Schenkels is a firm believer in the science of numbers—and those numbers are paying off.

At Schenkels Farms near Miramichi, NB, John milks 200 Holsteins in a parlour/freestall system and farms 1000 acres, including a large blueberry operation. In this region of the province where only a handful of dairy farms operate, careful cost control and data-driven decision-making are essential.

An early adopter of the Immunity+® program when it was launched by Semex, John committed fully from the start, using 100% Immunity+ sires across the herd. Today, as the benefits become increasingly clear, more than 80% of matings still use Immunity+® sires—now with an added emphasis on high PRO\$ sires to further strengthen profitability.

Genetic progress is closely monitored through the Elevate® program, with all females born on the farm genomically tested. OptiMate™ is used to design matings, and all heifers are bred with sexed semen. Years of disciplined selection and consistent improvement have delivered results John is proud of.



John Schenkels with granddaughter Aaliyah.

Photo courtesy of Dairy Farmers of New Brunswick
Photographer: Julianna Jones

Here's a snapshot of recent Schenkels herd data:

(Based on 254 animals sampled)

- Herd Average: 104 IMM | 105 Calf IMM
- 113 animals above 105 IMM & 100 Calf IMM
- 206 animals above 100 IMM & 100 Calf IMM
- Herd average is just one point shy of what Semex calls "High IMM" bulls
- Top female: 114 IMM | 117 Calf IMM (sired by 0200H007956 Ranger-Red)

EastGen Dairy Solutions Specialist Mike Wannamaker recently reviewed DairyComp data from the Schenkels herd and found strong performance differences tied directly to immunity levels.

The data shows a 3-4% reduction in health issues such as pneumonia, lameness, milk fever, retained placenta, and ketosis. Fertility results were even more striking. Higher IMM females (>106) outperformed lower IMM animals (<102) by 12-16% in conception rate, with an 11% higher pregnancy rate overall.

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Register Now: EastGen Virtual Zone Meetings 2026

Tues., January 20, 2026

7:00 p.m. EST

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Wed., January 21, 2026

11:00 a.m. EST

Todd Holm
Holmdale Holsteins
Elmwood, ON

Virtual zone meetings will be held (English-only) for EastGen's entire service area.

Join us via Teams for EastGen and Semex Updates and a sire presentation with news from the December proofs. Register via www.eastgen.ca links or QR codes.



Register for Jan. 20



Register for Jan. 21

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In second and later lactations, high IMM cows were ready to breed nine days earlier, had 30 fewer days open, and averaged a 12-month calving interval.

“These results make perfect sense,” says Wannamaker. “When you start with a healthier animal, the fertility pieces of the puzzle fall into place. Cows stay in peak milk longer, spend less time stale, and can be bred to the bull you actually want to use—one that’s focused on getting her pregnant.” As Wannamaker concludes, “All of these things just add up to put money into your pocket with no additional cost to you.”

John agrees. “The immunity numbers on our herd tell us we’re on the right track with our breeding program. We believe in the numbers. It’s all about the numbers in our game. The science is good, and we use the science.”

Genetics are only part of the equation. “We focus not only on genetics—where immunity plays a big role—but also on feet, feed rations, and how we manage transition cows. When everything comes together, it makes a really good herd of cows,” John adds.

The results speak for themselves. Last year, the Schenkels herd ranked first in New Brunswick for LPI at +3209 and second in the province for PRO\$ at 1513—with John firmly focused on pushing that PRO\$ ranking even higher in the years ahead.

Customer Notice: Credit Card Fee

To our valued customers,

Please accept this notice that as of March 1, 2026, there will be a 2.4% charge added to all payments made by credit card.

Please note that we do offer alternative payment methods, free of charge. A member of our EastGen team would be happy to assist you if you wish to change your payment method.

Your EastGen Customer Service Team
519-821-2150 ext. 204

Texting Option for Breeding Requests

EastGen customers can **text** their breeding requests and orders directly to our Dispatch Team — quick, easy, and right at your fingertips.

How it works:

- Send the same details you would leave in a voicemail: **your name, district number, address, and sire of choice.**
- You’ll receive a confirmation reply **between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**
- Please note: The text inbox is **not monitored from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.** the following day.
- Our Dispatch Team will reach out if any clarification is needed.

REGIONS EAST:

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Districts: 12, 20, 25, 32, 36, 42, 51, 52, 60, 62, 64, 71, 72, 81, 82, 88, 93

REGIONS WEST:

Text: **1-226-887-1980**

Districts: 1, 6, 16, 18, 19, 30, 33, 84, 89, 91, 95

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Beef Producers

**Watch for the 2026 Semex Beef Catalogue
and EastGen Day-to-Day Beef Sire Listing
online and in your mailbox in early February.**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Dufferin/Wellington South/ Waterloo Zone Meeting

10:30 a.m., Friday, January 30th
at Cedar Park Holsteins of Marvin Lichty
7792 14th Line, Alma, ON

Grey/Bruce/Wellington North Zone Meeting

10:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 11th
at Cedarpatch Holsteins & Golden Jerseys
of Glenn & Greg Burgess
1005 Bruce County Rd. 12, Mildmay, ON

Join us! Semex sire presentation • EastGen update
a.m. coffee & herd viewing • lunch at noon
• presentations at 1:00 p.m.

Special

January 1st - February 28th, 2026



Nitrile Gloves

Offers practical strength and hygiene benefits farmers need. The Biodegradable Nitrile Gloves also support environmental responsibility and sustainable farming.

Code	Product	Sale Price	Size
FP800 - FP804	Black Nitrile Gloves	12. ⁰⁰	100/pkg
FP968 - FP972	Bio-Degradable Nitrile Gloves	13. ⁰⁰	100/pkg



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Photo: Andrew Hetke

Daughters: L - Oakfield Dropbox Sweetie VG-88-2YR-USA
R - Genosource Hide Out VG-89-2YR-USA

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Conformation	+9	+12

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