Immunity+®

MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT

Healthy cows grow profit margins in South Africa

GOEDENHOOP FARMS
MALMESBURY, SOUTH AFRICA
JOHAN SLABBER & NINA SLABBER, OWNERS
400 HOLSTEINS & 160 JERSEYS
4,700 ACRES

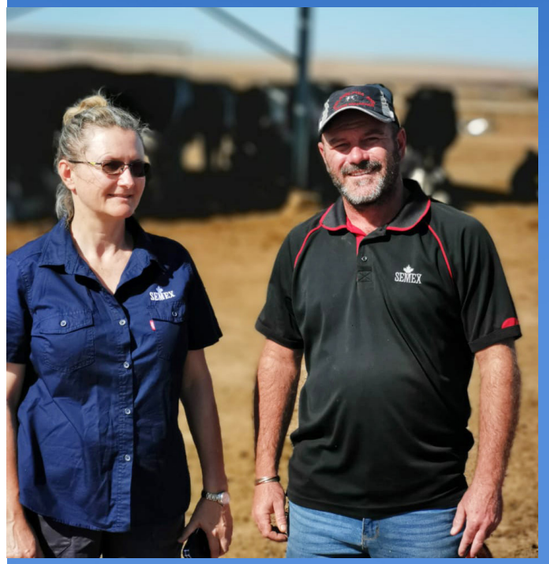
It doesn't matter where in the world you farm, if dairy producers select genetics based on the capacity of an animal's immune system, they'll have healthier, more productive herds.

This management philosophy was a key driver in Semex's decision 20+ years ago to begin working on a research project that ultimately led to the development of Immunity+® disease-resistant genetics.

"Our success really shows that the market and the environment doesn't really matter," says Dr. Steven Larmer, Semex Genomics Program Manager. "When it comes to Immunity+ we see the same kind of results on dairies all around the world."

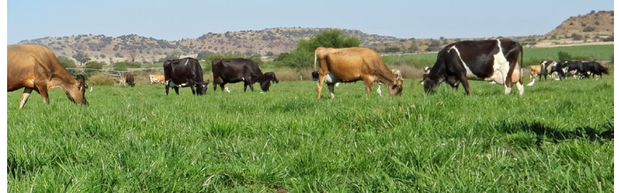
Today, Immunity+ is making a global impact. In South Africa, Goedehoop Farm Owner Nina Slabber and Herd Manager, Cobus Lamprecht, are seeing the evidence on their 570-cow operation located at Malmesbury, near Cape Town.

In this area, hot summers are stressful on cows, but the winter months bring cooler, wetter conditions says Slabber. Cows are in open pastures and walk to the parlour twice daily for milking. They are fed at outdoor feedbunks and receive a supplementary ration when in the rotary parlour.



"The reduction in mastitis makes an immense difference in profit margins as well as longevity, that ensures that more of those Immunity+ traits are carried over to the next generation."

Goedehoop Farm Owner Nina Slabber with Herd Manager Cobus Lamprecht



MASTITIS REDUCED BY 68%

Goedehoop Farm has been using Immunity+ sires in the herd for five years, and a recent research trial illustrates the significant impact these sires are having, says Larmer. The study compares the performance of their Immunity+ sired animals to other animals in the herd.

"We're looking at animals that have the same life experience, the same set of exposures. The only real difference is their genetic ability to resist disease and the strength of their immune system based solely on their genetics," explains Larmer. See table below.

1st-3rd Lactation Cows	Mastitis	Persistent Mastitis	Abortion	Inactive Ovaries	Incomplete Uterus Involution	Total Disease Incidence (Cows)	Diarrhea (Heifers)
Immunity+ Sired Animals	231	231	231	231	231	231	389
Other Animals	269	269	269	269	269	269	117
All Animals	500	500	500	500	500	500	506
Immunity+ Sired Affected	29%	2%	4%	21%	20%	76%	12%
Other Affected	90%	6%	9%	37%	30%	172%	11%
All Affected	62%	4%	6%	29%	25%	126%	12%
Immunity+ Sired vs Non-Immunty+ Sired	-68%	-64%	-54%	-44%	-33%	-55%	6%
Immunity+ Sired vs All	-54%	-48%	-39%	-29%	-21%	-40%	1%

(SEMEX RESEARCH TRIAL DATA)

Typically, Immunity+ genetics reduce disease by 30%, but at Goedehoop Farm, Immunity+ animals experienced 68% less mastitis than non-Immunity+ sired animals.

"The huge reduction in mastitis cases for the Immunity+ animals was a big surprise for me," says Slabber.

FEWER ANTIBIOTICS AND INCREASED PROFITS

Slabber also believes that healthier Immunity+ animals help farmers address consumer pressure to use less antibiotics and will also make dairy farms more profitable. "This is a tool that can be used in an age where we have to move away from using antibiotics," she says. "Less sick animals means less individual cow management. Your time can therefore be spent on other things that will make or save money."

Larmer also notes how the Immunity+ animals in the Goedehoop Farm herd have experienced far less reproductive disorders, including 54% fewer abortions than non-Immunity+ sired animals. "A healthier animal is going to do all of those normal biological processes better, and that's why we expect to see fewer cases of infertility or fertility disorders in those Immunity+ animals compared the rest of the herd," he says.

Based on what she's observed, Slabber believes Immunity+ will have a big impact on how she and Lamprecht manage Goedehoop Farm. "A lot of modern technology focuses on early detection of sick animals. Maybe we should also focus on breeding more resilient animals," she says.

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