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EastGen

The Story Behind CTIONMAN



Reinier and Audi teamed up to compete at several shows that year, including the TD Canadian 4-H Dairy Classic show at the Royal. However, his 4-H Achievement Day at Norfolk County Fair was the most memorable. "She was in heat that day, so she was prancing with her tail up and nose in the air and troublesome at times. I ended up last in showmanship and was middle of the pack for conformation." Discouraged, but looking to the future, Reinier decided to ask the judge that day, EastGen Regional Sales Manager Jamie Howard, for advice on a service sire to complement Audi. "She was a calf with plenty of slope to her rump, deep rib and a wide chest, so I suggested Stantons Alligator and he seemed happy with that," recalls Jamie. This turned out to be a future defining conversation. The next year Audi delivered a bull calf.

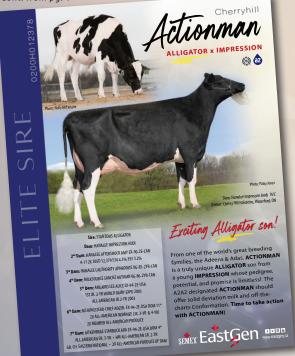
Imagine being 18 years old and selling a bull carrying your own prefix to a global A.I. company. Few in their teens can say they've accomplished what is often a lifelong goal for many cattle breeders. However, Reinier Van Der Steege, a college student from Norfolk County, recently managed this feat. For Reinier it happened somewhat by accident, and certainly under interesting circumstances.

As a young 4-Her Reinier started showing calves from the commercial dairy operation of his parents located near Waterford, Ont. As his interest and appetite for competition increased, he established his own Cherryhill prefix through Holstein Canada's junior membership program and began purchasing purebred Holsteins for 4-H projects. In 2019 his interest was drawn to Hanalee Impression Audi, a Monument Impression daughter from Hanalee Holsteins, Embro, Ont., offered at the Oxford County Calf Sale. Backed by six generations of Very Good or Excellent dams and tracing to the well-respected Chief Adeen-Starbuck Ada family, this calf caught his eye. "She was a powerful black calf with lots of depth and width," says Reinier, noting that prices were soft that year. With a bid of \$1800 he managed to secure Audi.



Above: Reinier Van Der Steege leading Hanalee Impression Audi to champion calf honours at a 4-H show in 2019.

Cont. from pg. 1



Although not the heifer he had hoped for, Reinier recalls standing the newborn up for his first feeding of colostrum. "I thought this is a nice calf for a bull. He was a sharp looking thing," says Reinier, who decided to register him, chose the name Cherryhill Actionman, and then found out that Holstein Canada required parentage verification of all males to be registered. The sample was submitted and Reinier thought nothing more of the process until an A.I. representative called him about the calf's high genotype results. By this time Actionman had already been sold, shortly after weaning, to a young Holstein enthusiast in Eastern Ontario.

Upon learning that this son of the exciting Genomax® bull Alligator had tested high enough for genomics to attract a potential career in A.I., Reinier decided to contact Semex. He reasoned that an Alligator x Impression son belonged at the A.I. stud where his sire and maternal grandsire stood. Jamie Howard then accompanied the EastGen regional sales representative who serviced the farm, Jake Jansema, for a visit to see the calf's dam. "When we got to the farm, I thought the young man looked familiar, but it wasn't until he said 'remember judging a big black heifer in heat at the Norfolk show' that it hit me in the chest! This big, wide bodied and good uddered young cow standing before us and looking like she'd easily make a Very Good cow was THAT calf." A short while later Semex's Mike West saw the cow and was also suitably impressed by the looks of Audi and her well-made son. The process then began to secure Actionman.

For this part of the story, Reinier gives credit to Cailyn Barton for her full cooperation. The two had previously met through 4-H and it was to Cailyn that he had sold the calf shortly after being genetic sampled. Cailyn, who breeds Holsteins under the Gingerlane prefix at Napanee, Ont., is a fan of both Alligator and Impression and had planned to raise Actionman for use on heifers in her own herd. "Cailyn did an awesome job of feeding him and went out of her way to make sure the testing was taken care of," says Reinier. Once Actionman passed the health requirements necessary to enter Semex's collection facility, Reinier made sure she was compensated. He gave her a bit of cash, a red bull calf as a replacement, and the promise that she'd receive some free Actionman semen.

Although the winding path Actionman took to enter A.I. collection was far from ordinary, it certainly leaves hope that he will write more chapters in this story of promise. There is also a message here that reinforces the value in genomic testing. Actionman's dam, Audi, lives in a herd where the primary focus is on milk production. The Van Der Steege family, who moved to Canada from Holland in 2001, own a 300-acre farm where 130 head are milked by three robotic units, and this is also home to Reinier's nucleus of 15 head. Although Reinier says his father had encouraged him to sell Audi as a fresh heifer, reasoning that she was too big to fit in with her herd mates, the excitement seems to have caught up with Rever Van Der Steege. He recently placed an order with his EastGen representative to deliver Actionman semen for use in the herd. Meanwhile Reinier, who just completed his first year of agriculture studies at Lakeland College in Alberta, is interested in continuing genomic testing his heifers to make his breeding selections more accurate based on that knowledge. With the goal of developing a high LPI herd, he enjoys talking about bulls with his friends. "On proof days I'll wake up extra early and see what's up on CDN."

Reinier realizes that the fairy tale-like story of Actionman doesn't happen every day. "I hope he does well, and that people like him," he humbly concludes.

CHERRYHILL ACTIONMAN

Built to make winners, Actionman is currently at +16 Conformation (tied for Canada's Type supremacy) and the only available sire with ratings that exceed +10 for Conformation, Mammary, Feet & Legs and Dairy Strength. His maternal line traces to Chief Adeen, a family known for making great ones. Actionman will deliver sufficient fat and they will be strong-bodied cows that last. With no Delta, Mogul, or Duke in his pedigree, Actionman is an outcross opportunity for many breeding programs.

This high-profile Alligator son was recently released as conventional semen only, with limited doses available. Contact your EastGen representative for further information.





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