

Coyne-Farms: persistently on its v



Brothers Shaun (left) and Greg Coyne, together with their sons and a nephew, manage the successful Coyne Farms.

The nice breeding operation of the Coyne family in New York is easy to find. Off the Interstate 90, the highway that crosses through the state of New York from east to west, close to the city of Rochester, we head south on Interstate 390, and turn left by exit 10. The beautiful residence, built in 1812, soon comes into view, with the extensive barn facilities known as Coyne Farms in the background. 'Our great-grandfather came here from Ireland in 1922,' explain brothers Shaun and Greg, who manage the farm together with Shaun's son Steven, Greg's son Brian and nephew Malachy. In admirable fashion, it must be said: the farm with 1800 animals (900 milking cows) and 2000 acres (800 ha) is notably spotless. Also remarkable is the manure handling project at Coyne; about 40% of the manure goes to the neighbouring farm "Worm Power", where millions of worms process the manure into compost. This compost is 10x more expensive than conventional compost!

EARLY FITNESS FOCUS

From compost quickly to breeding, because in

The August release 2012 can certainly be regarded as the big break through of Coyne genetics in top breeding: with Co-Op Bosside Massey (out of Coyne-Farms Yelena) as the splendid TPI leader, followed by the Nr.3 bull Coyne-Farms Dorcy, Nr.13 Yancey, Nr.16 Dom and, somewhat further down the list, Nr.81, Co-Op Don Juan (out of Coyne-Farms Yasmine). In the top list of DNA-tested bulls, we come across the bull Ben from the cooperative arrangement between Coyne and McGarr. More than enough reasons for a visit to this successful breeding operation in the American state of New York.

JAN BIERMA HAN HOPMAN

Holsteinland, Coyne has become a hit: Understandably. Three powerful cow families – those of Yadda, Daffers and Jelly – are working hard to pave the way with their strong genetics, resulting in the top bulls that were mentioned in the introduction of this article. Our question to Greg Coyne: how is it possible that three families can break through to the Holstein top on such a wide scale, all at the same time? 'We probably started paying attention to longevity (PL) earlier than other breeders,' says Greg. 'We immediately placed a heavier weighting and reliability on this trait. When longevity received the same weighting in the TPI formula, we had been working with it for years already.' Why was there such an early interest in longevity at Coyne? 'I realized that it was a definite and realistic trait in dairy farming. The same is also true of daughter fertility, the DPR. I started using that trait as soon as it became available. For that reason we used O-Man extensively. The trait DPR really helps to improve fertility at the herd level.'

Nevertheless, despite the additional attention to fitness, Coyne has always used TPI as their leading total index, and not the Net Merit, which

many commercial farms with a fitness focus like to use. 'We have always thought type was important in the total package. Then you have to choose the TPI,' says Greg, who indicates that genomic bulls have now received a significant position in their sire selection process. 'Genomic sires are here to stay. Of course, some of the bulls will change in terms of index, but that happened in the past too. Genomic bulls account for 60% of total sire use here.'

'WHY THIS CALF?'

Then Greg continues with his response to the question of how Coyne could break through with three families at the same time? 'In the case of the Yadda family, it was pure luck. When John Wadsworth sold his herd, we decided to support the sale. We could always use a good milk cow. I could not attend so John Barrett, a good friend of ours, went to the sale.' Here Barrett breaks into a big smile and takes over the story. 'The cows became too expensive. So I decided to just buy a calf, a nice broad and round heifer calf that reminded me of Tradition. It cost just \$700. But when I unloaded the calf back at

A new Coyne favourite: this is Coyne-Farms Freddie Jill VG-85, one of the six Freddie daughters of Jelly. Jill already has two Facebook sons with more than 2500 gTPI.



Way to top position as gene source

the Coyne farmstead, they were shaking their heads. 'How could you choose this calf for us?' That calf was Milkworth Manfred Yadda, now a magnificent brood cow and the granddam of TPI leader Massey. One of the Shottle daughters of Yadda, Coyne-Farms Shottle Yup VG-87, is described by Greg as the 'absolute perfect free-stall cow.'

Continuing with the answer, because while it might have been a stroke of luck with Yadda, the cow family of Daffers has been at Coyne for generations already. But... it originally came from Canada. 'Over time, our farm has really grown. For a long time we milked 130 head. In the late 80s we expanded to 200, in 1993 to 500, in 1995 to 700 and now slowly to 900 head. Especially in the 90's we bought a lot of cows and Daffers' family was among them.' Daffers, influential as a brood cow at Coyne, is known today as the dam of the top bulls Dorcy and Dom. Daffers' granddam is Coyne-Farms Daisy, a Merrill from the purchased Glanstai Darby, a daughter of the Inspiration son Darby out of a Canadian Counselor daughter. Why did the Coyne's always purchase purebred cows when expanding? 'Because we wanted good cows! I do not want to get up in the morning just to milk a herd of cows. You need to enjoy your work and good cows offer that.'

STRONG-WILLED

Then we arrive at the third top family, that of the popular donor cow Coyne-Farms Ramos Jelly, whose descendants display extremely high DNA figures. 'Her family has the most generations with the Coyne prefix,' says Greg: Duly recorded - Jelly leads via Shottle, Bestow, Wade, Skybuck, Promise, Valiant Gold and Jewelmaker back to the cow Coyne-Farms Burkgov Jessica, born

in 1979. Nine generations with the Coyne-Farms prefix!

What distinguishes the Yaddas, Daffers and Jelly's from each another? 'The Yaddas have lots of strength and give a lot of milk. As two-year-olds almost all of them produce 30,000 lb. with 3x milking. The Daffers family has taller cows and are characterized by outstanding udders. And the Jelly's are noted for their strong-willed character. They are nice to milk, but they do not like photography. If you look at the picture of Jelly's dam, Shottle Jam, then you will notice that she has a ring in her nose. Our sons Brian and Steven were holding her with two ropes and she was still able to break free,' laughs Greg.

Now that we have the three families in view: how do the Coyne's approach sire selection? 'Brian and I try to do it as carefully as possible. We are not as thorough as in the past, due to the increasing number of cows. For that reason, it is important to have the right bulls in the tank,' clarifies Greg, who provides further explanation: 'The right bulls in the tank is more important than making individual matings.' In sire selection, the Coyne's opt for high TPI bulls with good components. 'We have always selected for components, even though scientists told us that pounds of fat and protein were more important. This theory did not satisfy us. And now we are paid for components in the milk, so we are happy with this decision.'

MORE AMBITIONS

Although they are present in high number, individual top animals at Coyne, we hardly get to them in this story. But we did see them! Like the phenomenally powerful VG-87 Diedra, the full sister of Dorcy: Plus nine beautiful daughters of Dorcy's dam, Daffers: And the full sister of Daf-

COYNE FARMS IN THE US

- Located in Avon in the northwestern part of New York state
- Owned by Dick, Jerry, Shaun, Greg, Malachy, Brian and Steven Coyne
- 1800 animals, with 900 milking cows
- 2000 acres: 1200 corn, 600 alfalfa, 200 wheat
- Ration: TMR year around with alfalfa silage, corn silage, concentrate, minerals and hay for fibre
- Average production: 3x 11,820kg 3.9% 3.0%
- Sire selection: Massey, Dorcy, Dom, Yance & 80% genomic

fers, Delight VG-86, the dam of the high DNA-tested bull Coyne-Farms AltaDom (2226 gTPI): And many others. Greg also drove us to Dan McGarr's place, with whom Coyne jointly owns a number of high DNA-tested animals, including the very promising Dorcy daughter Coyne-McGarr Bewildered. Yes, Greg is very clear about it: 'I do not golf, I do not bowl ... Holsteins are my hobby!' That is evident from everything at Coyne, and the harvest is superb. Nevertheless Greg still contemplates further goals: 'The Nr.1 name in genomics right now is De-Su ... we will try to surpass them,' he says with a level of determination. Who can stop a "Coyne Farms at full speed"?

(Coyne's Yadda family appeared in HI 7/2012; Coyne's bulls Dorcy and Dom appeared in HI 10/2012.) ●

