



Find the Hidden Gem in Your Herd

Genomics. One word which has revolutionized how the dairy genetic industry operates. We have watched the rate of genetic gain more than double since genomics was introduced in 2009. Today 833,320 Jerseys have been genomically tested and with each animal tested, the reliability of the data accumulated increases. This gives dairy producers a broader genetic base to find elite individuals within the breed.

As you turn the page, you will find the annual sales summary for 2022. It was a record year for average price, but a much lower volume of animals. How does this correlate with genomics?

When you study the list of high selling individuals, you will find Cal-Mart Juggernaut Winnie 2666-P-ET who topped the National Heifer Sale and JX Legacy Archie 31600 {6}-ET that sold at the Amplify Sale. And, a new All American record for females was set when JX FB Sugar Daddy All American {6} sold for \$75,000 in November. All three of these heifers—genotyped and selected on their genetic merit.

These heifers were the elite of the breed, but they would not have been located within their herds without being genomic tested. And genomic testing does pay.

For the cost of a genomic test, you can escalate the performance potential of your herd through whole-herd genotyping. This in turn provides more accuracy in genetic predictions. Because of that known information breeders can make more effective selections, better mating decisions and control inbreeding management to allow for faster breed improvement. Reliability of genomic predictions increases as more animals are genotyped.

Why Test Your Herd?

The results of genomic testing can benefit every dairy, regardless of the size of the operation or their individual goals. The information you learn from testing will help you develop a long-term herd-management strategy.

The economics are simple. Take a 225 cow REAP herd and expect they will have 100 heifers born annually. It will cost \$28 per test to genotype all heifers, which equals a \$2,800 investment. The herd can then begin to recoup the investment by identifying elite females to market

or which heifers to cull or perhaps breed to beef.

The \$28 per animal investment for a REAP herd will provide them with the information needed to build accurate pedigrees; develop management lists of elite heifers; lists of individuals to keep in the herd, and others to market for dairy purposes. From polled genes and A2 status to unknown haplotypes, there is much information to be gained from that genomic test.

Genotyping also provides more accurate inbreeding evaluations as genomic inbreeding estimates are based off of actual SNPs. You also gain more accurate PTAs. And, the information obtained from these tests helps the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding gain more information to develop new Jersey-specific genomic predictions such as health traits.

What the AJCA offers

Bottom line. Other companies may offer lower prices but remember the saying “You get what you pay for.”

Early every Tuesday, the AJCA provides an email with weekly results for your herd. These reports are extensive and provide the genomic information needed to begin building a management strategy.

If there is a parentage conflict, you are informed immediately. The AJCA offers more solutions with options for the sire and maternal grandsire (MGS) than other companies. Those companies may tell you there is a conflict, and then have you mark the MGS field blank, leaving a hole in the pedigree and making calculations for many traits, including inbreeding inaccurate without the information.

Perhaps one of the most valuable tools the AJCA offers is HerdView. Available through infoJersey.com, REAP herds can customize any number of reports to measure the genetic gains of their herd. It has been described among the best sorting tools in the business. You can customize any report according to your needs, from a herd genomic list to a genomic prospect list. You set your criteria and make management decisions based on herd goals.

Genotyping delivers information that will make your herd genetically stronger and more profitable. Start looking for the hidden gem in your herd by contacting the Herd Services department at 614.861.3636 or herdservices@usjersey.com.

Genetic change is permanent. Continue to build the genetic base, so that management can make the most of it.



THE JERSEY by Bonnie L. Mohr, commissioned by the American Jersey Cattle Association.
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