

JANUARY  
2025

Update

EastGen

## Embryo Purchases Fuel Genetic Progress at Holmdale

At Holmdale Holsteins, located near Elmwood, ON, embryo purchases are central to accelerating genetic improvement. The farm's strategic focus is on enhancing its herd through careful genetic investments, aimed at long-term progress and profitability.

By incorporating Semex embryos, Holmdale has built a comprehensive genetics program. The farm purchased thirty 0200HO07956 3Star OH Ranger-Red embryos from Semex, specifically targeting improvements in Lifetime Production Index (LPI) and Robot Ready™ traits, while also emphasizing conformation. At approximately one year of age, the best-performing calves were flushed with sexed semen, yielding promising results. *Photo: Sam Buschbeck*

Although not a goal, an achievement of this initiative was the sale of a 0200HO12546 Progenesis Perky daughter to Semex. Proceeds from this sale are being reinvested into acquiring additional Semex embryos, with the goal of flushing the best daughters from the Ranger-Red females once they mature. The farm's approach is not focused on commercialization, but rather on continually enhancing the herd's genetic potential.



Most of the Ranger-Red donors are now milking, and the Progenesis Perky and 0200HO12574 Progenesis Poplock heifers are still in the calf stage. Holmdale also acquired six heifers from the Progenesis program, which have become valuable assets to the herd.

### Commitment to Genetic Progress with EastGen and Semex

Holmdale Holsteins is deeply committed to Semex and its service partner, EastGen, fully utilizing their suite of programs and services, including embryos, Elevate® genomic testing, OptiMate™ breeding tools, consultative services, and E&P benchmarking. EastGen Dairy Solutions Specialist Drew Tyler

works closely with farm owner Todd, his sons, Keaton and Chapman, and daughter Grace (currently away at university), to ensure their genetic objectives are met. SemexWorks™ is used to select the appropriate bulls and OptiMate to determine which cattle get which sire assigned to them.

The farm spans 1,500 acres and milks 180 Holsteins in a modern

*Cont. on pg. 2*

*Above: Keaton, Todd & Chapman Holm with a Poplock heifer out of a Ranger-Red dam purchased as an embryo for the herd's genetic gain.*

REGISTER NOW!

## EastGen Virtual Zone Meetings

Tues., January 21, 2025

7:00 p.m. EST

Wed., January 22, 2025

11:00 a.m. EST

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

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Cox Wensink  
Hoenhorst Farms Ltd.,  
Innerkip, ON



Register for Jan. 21



Register for Jan. 22

Join us via Teams for EastGen and Semex Updates and a sire presentation.

Register via website links at [www.eastgen.ca](http://www.eastgen.ca) or QR codes at right.

compost-bedded pack barn equipped with milking robots. The herd currently averages 38 litres of milk per day, with a fat content of 4.2% and protein content of 3.48%. Official milk recording and type classification are also employed to monitor ongoing progress. According to Drew Tyler, "This operation is one of the fastest genetically improving herds in Ontario. Semex embryos play a pivotal role in the farm's genetics strategy. They're not only investing in genetics to increase profits, but they're also building a long-term relationship with EastGen. Their ultimate goal is to boost milk sales through healthier, higher-performing cows." Todd adds, "We purchase embryos to accelerate our LPI and leap ahead by a generation or two in genetic progress."

**Genomics and Tailored Breeding Strategy**

Holmdale Holsteins employs advanced genomic testing through Semex's Elevate program to assess the genetic potential of their herd. "We genomically test everything with Elevate," Todd explains. "Then, we use OptiMate to identify the best bulls for our herd, ensuring that our genetic decisions are well-informed. We also collaborate closely with EastGen consultants to select the optimal bulls for each animal."

The results speak for themselves. "We no longer have sick cows, nothing like we used to," Todd says. "The herd's immunity has dramatically improved thanks to genetics. Over the last five years, this progress has been remarkable, and the health of our cows is just incredible." Todd continues, "The Progenesis calves have been a real success for us. We've added some outstanding animals to our herd, leading us to purchase more embryos to introduce fresh genetics and further accelerate genetic progress. The outcomes have been overwhelmingly positive. Now, we have the capability to create our own embryos and perform flushes. It's been an extremely successful strategy."


**Long-Term Vision: Fewer Cows, Greater Efficiency**

Looking ahead, Holmdale's long-term goal is to achieve quota with fewer cows, focusing on high-performing animals that require minimal maintenance. "We're aiming for cows that produce milk efficiently, with high fat content, and require less care," Todd concludes.

*For assistance with your herd's genetic progress, contact the EastGen Dairy Solutions Specialist in your area or email [rsm@eastgen.ca](mailto:rsm@eastgen.ca) for more information.*

**PRODUCT SPECIAL**

Jan. 1st - Feb. 28th

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View EastGen's Online Store



**Sale \$**

Canarm LED 75 Watt Cool white 5000K	15,000 hrs	\$10/ea
LED 9.5 Watt Warm Soft white 3000K	25,000 hrs	\$10/ea





James Miller



Tracy Huizinga



Veronika Podolyak

## Welcome to James, Tracy & Veronika!

**James Miller** accepted the role of part-time casual **AI Technician**, reporting to Craig LeRoy, Regional Sales Manager. James joined EastGen on October 28th.

A resident of Vankleek Hill, ON, where he lives on his grandparents' farm, James has always had a deep passion for agriculture. Growing up involved in 4-H and working on farms, he developed a strong interest in dairy breeds and genetics.

**Tracy Huizinga** is now in the position of **Accounting Manager** (12-month contract), covering Victoria Garvey's family leave. She joined EastGen on November 18th.

Tracy grew up in Lachute, QC, and now lives in Creemore, ON. Tracy holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University, a Graduate Diploma in Accounting from McGill University, and is a CPA. With over 20 years of experience in the accounting and finance profession, Tracy has worked in various industries, including construction, stevedoring, and marketing. She spent the last 16 years at Chartwell Retirement Residences at their corporate office in Mississauga, where she worked in finance and accounting. Tracy is fluently bilingual in French and English.

Outside of work, Tracy is a self-proclaimed foodie who enjoys cooking, gardening, and playing tennis. She is married with two daughters, aged 13 and 10, and is excited to be part of the EastGen team.

**Veronika Podolyak** accepted the position of **Accountant** at EastGen. She joined the team on November 11th.

Veronika graduated with an accounting diploma in 2020 and is currently pursuing her CPA designation. She has gained experience working as an Accountant across a variety of industries, including electronics manufacturing, licensed cannabis production, and bookkeeping for a finance consulting firm based in London, ON, where she currently resides.

Outside of work, Veronika enjoys staying active through jogging and walking. She also loves painting and reading a good novel. Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Veronika moved to Canada at the age of two. Although Canada is her home, she had the opportunity to live in Uzbekistan when she was nine, an experience that gave her a deeper understanding of different cultures and a fresh perspective on life. Veronika is also passionate about animals, and one of her dreams is to own a farm.

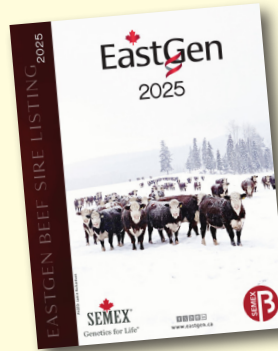
## Wellington South/ Waterloo Zone Meeting      Grey/Bruce/Wellington North Zone Meeting

10:30 a.m., Fri., January 31st at Lilaclawn Farms of Ornan & Elaine Shantz, 318 Hawkesville Rd., St. Jacobs, ON

10:30 a.m., Fri., February 7th at Webhaven Holsteins of Ron Weber, 8323 2nd Line, Arthur, ON

*Join us* Semex sire presentation • EastGen update  
• Jersey Ontario presentation (@ Lilaclawn)  
• lunch at noon • presentations at 11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

## 2025 Beef Catalogue and Day-to-Day Availability Sheet



Beef Producers  
Watch your mailbox in early January for your copy of EastGen's 2025 sire catalogue featuring Semex's line-up across all breeds, and our sheet highlighting beef sires available on a day-to-day basis from your technician.

## 2025 Youth Show Dates



**EastGen Showcase - July 2-3, Spencerville, ON**

**EastGen Atlantic Showcase - July 2-4, Truro, NS**

**EastGen Challenge West - July 7-8, Woodstock, ON**

**EastGen Challenge East - July 10-11, Markham, ON**

These events are open to 4-H dairy club members aged 14-21 (13-21 for the Atlantic event, which includes beef members) as of January 1st. Like and follow EastGen on Facebook and Instagram, and watch our website for more details. Links and details will be available when entries officially open on AssistExpo in early May. Ontario entries close June 1st. EastGen is proud to carry on this tradition of organizing and funding these educational events to foster youth interested in agriculture.

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