

TOTAL TIMES

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TLG produces a million units of top ranking semen for conception rate!



TLG's Matthew Barber (Animal Welfare/Semen Collection) with Ladino Park Talent

Ladino Park Talent, who is housed at Total Livestock Genetics, has become the first Australian bull to produce more than one million units of semen.

Only 35 bulls in the world have reached such a milestone, or less than 0.02% of all bulls sampled.

Talent passed the milestone early in the new year, according to TLG Semen Production Manager Tony Urek.

There are few who know Ladino Park Talent, marketed in Australia as HOLADINO, better than Tony.

He has overseen the production of almost every

unit since Talent came onto collection as a promising young bull.

Now 11, Talent has sired thousands of daughters around the globe.

"Due to his high fertility and popularity worldwide he's become a household name in dairy farms around Australia," Tony said.

This high fertility is why many farmers prize Talent semen and rate it highly.

The Animal Improvement Programs Laboratory (AIPL) in the US began a new and more accurate evaluation of the fertility of AI sire fertility known as the Sire Conception Rate (SCR) in August, 2008.

On this scale, a bull with a SCR of 2.0% is expected to produce a conception rate of 32% in a herd that normally averages 30% and historically has used average conception rate bulls.

Talent's rank on the US SCR scale has been around the 10.0 mark since the evaluations began.

Jere Mitchell, Technical Director of the US National Association of Animal Breeders, and Service Director of its subsidiary, Certified Semen Services, says this high ranking reflects well on TLG and its staff.

"It is unique that a bull has one million units of semen produced at a custom

collection business," he said.

"This reflects the popularity of the bull and certainly the quality and care of the producing organisation."

Because of his age, Talent is housed separately and gets only the best of care at TLG.

"He's very friendly and laidback and has a really good nature," Tony said.

"He's a good old fella and really easy to deal with. I've heard his daughters are also laidback and that's why people like to milk them."

Tony says if Talent keeps going the way he is, his semen is likely to be collected until the bull is well into his teens.

TLG-housed bulls flown to China

Total Livestock Genetics played a pivotal role in the groundbreaking export of 22 ABS Australia dairy bulls to China in November.

The TLG-housed bulls were identified and prepared on site months before being transported to Melbourne for the flight.

They are now settling in to their new home at a state-of-the-art facility in China.

The export was a joint venture by ABS and MRB, a subsidiary of Mengniu Dairies, China's largest liquid milk producer.

In the lead-up to the flight, TLG hosted and trained two Chinese stockmen sent to Camperdown to prepare the bulls for their long journey.

And behind the scenes, TLG staff worked tirelessly to ensure all the correct testing had taken place and export paperwork completed.

ABS Australia Product Development Manager Russell Manton said it was the largest air export of proven dairy sires ever undertaken in Australia.

Last year ABS Australia sent 14 proven sires to China as the first stage of the project.

"It was a complex process and it was great to have the TLG staff handling it as their expertise in the export area ensured everything ran



The two Chinese stockmen sent to Australia to prepare the ABS bulls, Xiaozhong Li and Xin Zhao (left) shown cleaning bull DEJAVU prior to the export

smoothly," Russell Manton said.

"Nothing was too much trouble for the TLG staff, especially Ruth Coman, who worked tirelessly on the project. We were working to a very tight deadline so it

was essential all quarantine, testing and export paperwork was completed well before the flight, and TLG staff ensured it was done."

The two Chinese stockmen, Xiaozhong Li and Xin Zhao, arrived three weeks before the special Qantas flight facilitated by air export specialist Austrex.

Mr Li and Mr Zhao then worked with TLG staff to familiarise themselves with the bulls and learn how to care for them.

TLG staff showed the stockmen everything from animal husbandry and health testing to semen collection, handling and packaging.

The proven bulls, which included Starsky, Donlotto

and Duntroon, also needed to be washed, clipped and professionally photographed prior to the trip.

One of the stockmen left Australia early to ensure their destination barns were suitably prepared.

The other, Mr Li, accompanied the bulls on the flight to ensure their maximum comfort.

As befitting sires of their size and value, the bulls were placed in custom crates with specially padded floors.

ABS has in stock semen supplies of many of the bulls that were sent to China, so their export to boost China's fledgling dairy industry will not affect Australian customers, Russell Manton said.



All crated up and ready to go: Xiaozhong Li and Austrex's Gary Legg

Sheep exports continue

TLG has continued its sheep exports by air to Japan and also facilitated a shipment to Israel which is a first for breeding sheep.

TLG Livestock Co-ordinator Ruth Coman said the Japanese export involved 70 poll dorset and east friesian milking sheep sent in two groups from TLG to Sydney.

The client involved had previously used TLG's services to obtain sheep, but this time TLG solely controlled the export.

"The sheep were all sourced from Victoria and undertook their quarantine at TLG. On completion of their period of quarantine the sheep were trucked to Sydney where TLG supervised their loading and AQIS clearance."

The flight went smoothly and the pregnant ewes were safely delivered to the client.

"Following a period of quarantine in Japan the client took delivery of his sheep and they have since lambed down."

The Israeli export also involved poll dorset sheep, selected for a client who had visited Australia and breeders several years before.

TLG worked with the client and Landmark agent Wilson Beer to organise the



Off to Israel: loading of the breeding sheep

export of the sheep.

"There was no export protocol for breeding sheep to Israel as we knew, so the client and TLG staff worked to get that established. It was a lengthy process as the sheep originally were going to go by air freight, but there were a lot of quarantine regulations such as being unable to stop in certain countries. Logistics saw the

consignment sent via sea freight instead."

The 545 sheep were purchased in Victoria and South Australia and trucked to Perth, where they underwent quarantine prior to them being shipped from Fremantle.

It's believed the shipment is the first time breeding sheep have been exported to Israel.

One of the most difficult parts of the process was organising the transfer of the sheep from the eastern states across the West Australian border.

"WA are Johnes and liverfluke free and therefore we had to satisfy the authorities that these sheep did not pose any kind of threat to them before the sheep could even get to quarantine."

It all went smoothly and the sheep have since settled into the quarantine facility of the Israeli breeder.



Spring 2009 has in many ways demonstrated the frustrations in farming with a good season experienced by many people but disappointing returns due to low commodity prices.

Through these challenging times, TLG has continued to focus on its services and export business with our export of some 550 sheep to Israel, and continuing exports to Japan which you can read about in this issue.

We are continuing to try and add value to our clients and our preparation of ABS export of bulls to China, and training of their new animal handlers I believe is a good example of this.

It also confirms that Australia is a good hub for international trade in genetics due to our unique animal health status.

Talent's milestone of a million units combined with the exceptional fertility I think is dramatic evidence of the quality of TLG product and our ability to deliver it on a world stage.

Going forward we hope the markets and commodity prices continue to improve for our clients and we can continue with the results of 2009.

*Shane Ashworth,
Managing Director,
Total Livestock Genetics*



Poll dorset and east friesian sheep ready for air export to Japan

ET management gets top results

Embryo transfer can be performed at the TLG facility, or on farm, according to clients' needs. TLG has been getting great results with its embryo transfer work in both situations, as the following shows:

ET ON FARM

On-farm ET work by TLG technicians Amy Stringer and Gary Sivesind has resulted in an extraordinary number of embryos produced by a valuable show cow.

The cow in question is Avonlea Robthom Connie 2nd, the International Dairy Week 2009 Supreme Champion Holstein.

Amy said Connie was flushed by TLG staff at her home farm in Tasmania four times between May and October.

"The average we get out of a dairy cow is four or five viable embryos but Connie gave us an average of 14 per visit. Overall, she produced 56 viable embryos in four flushes."

Amy said 37 of the embryos were transferred and 19 were frozen. She said the excellent way in which Connie was managed prior to the flushing no doubt contributed to the great success of the ET work.

"I think the reason this cow was so successful is that she had all stress factors eliminated. She is a milking cow but she was kept separate from the herd with no competition for feed and she was always sheltered."



Avonlea Robthom Connie 2nd

Connie's co-owner Lisa Thompson said the ET program had resulted in about 25 pregnancies so far.

Lisa said TLG sent over an easy-to-follow program and the drugs to use prior to each flushing.

"We deal with Gary and Amy all the time - they are consistent and organised and I couldn't recommend them any more highly. We get really good results with them - they handle the cows well and they are very upfront and helpful."

Lisa and her family trust TLG so much, they have even placed Connie's remaining embryos in their hands.

"Because Connie's eggs are quite valuable, we've sent them back to TLG to store

and look after them - it's better to have them in their facility than sitting here in our tank. She's still milking well and it looks like she's in calf so hopefully she will calve August-September next year."

ET ON CENTRE

A recent flush of 24 Blackmore Wagyu donors at TLG to produce embryos destined for the European Union has turned up great results.

The flush averaged at least 10 embryos over the donors and is a great example of the on-centre results which can be achieved at TLG.

The company can offer an 'all-in-one' approach to ET,

with experienced staff on site able to handle everything from export planning, donor programming, animal health and nutrition, flushing and finally despatch.

TLG Export Co-Ordinator Deb Emery said the herd achieved more than double the expected number of embryos. "We might typically expect 4-5 embryos on average," she said.

David Blackmore of Blackmore Wagyu has a long association with embryo transfer; he has imported 12-15,000 embryos of all breeds into Australia, "and a lot of that time I've worked with Shane (Ashworth)."

The first-calved heifers were managed in a TLG isolation facility especially for export donors.

"TLG looked after them from go to whoa and they did all the quarantine to get them into the EU, and that's fairly significant.."

As well as putting the heifers in a paddock with windbreak, TLG added bales of straw to increase the comfort level.

"Stress is the biggest factor which can affect your ET results and TLG went beyond the call of duty and in doing that we got these fantastic results."

In-transit insurance changes

Until now Total Livestock Genetics has maintained an insurance policy for goods in transit at no additional cost to clients.

Due to the growth of the business and the difficulty in tracking the value of individual shipments, TLG has been forced to discontinue this service.

TLG Accounts Manager Kathryn Cecil said clients should bear in mind semen or embryos dispatched from TLG now and in the future will not be insured.

"Clients will have to take out their own individual insurance if they wish to insure a consignment."

TLG can provide contact details for its insurance agent, which could arrange insurance on an individual shipment if required.

TNT and Vicfast, the freight companies TLG predominantly uses, also offers insurance on each individual consignment and TLG Despatch staff can organise this on a client's behalf. In this instance, the shipping costs, including the insurance premium, would need to be paid to TLG prior to despatch.

A reminder also that TLG does not have insurance for any client's product stored at TLG.

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