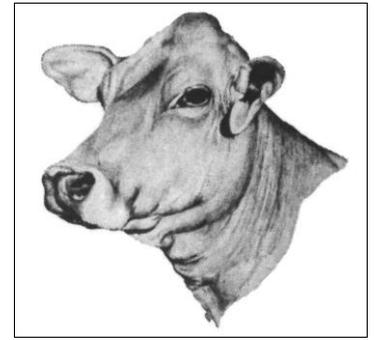# The New Zealand Brown Swiss Review

To everyone involved in the big brown cow

December 2015

World Dairy Expo Brown Swiss Show 2015

Senior & Grand Champion

Brown Heaven Glenn Fantasy (Glenn) (5 Year Old), Ferme Brown Heaven, QC

Reserve Senior & Reserve Grand Champion

Top Acres Supreme Wizard-ET (Supreme) (2nd 5 Year Old), Wayne Sliker, OH

HM Grand Champion

Cutting Edge T Delilah (Thunder) (Senior 2 Year Old), Kyle Barton, NY

HM Senior Champion

CIE Double W Em Favor (Emergency) (4 Year Old), Ken Main & Peter Vail, NY

World Dairy Expo Brown Swiss Show 2015

National Brown Swiss Show 2015, Supreme Dairy Show, St. Hyacinthe, Qc
Thursday, November 5, 2015

Grande Championne/Grand Champion
1 BROWN HEAVEN GLENN FANTASY , - Best udder Best Bred & Owned, Dave Rousseau et Josée Charron
Grande Championne de reserve/Reserve Grand Champion
1 BROWN HEAVEN THUNDER BETSY , Dave Rousseau et Josée Charron
Mention Honorable/Honourable Mention Grand Champion
1 JOLIDAI JONNY SUSELLE , JEANNOT & LISE DESHARNAIS

Swiss Classic 2015
Junior Champion

1 45 BINJA BLOOMING-ET Martiin Reichmuth Schwyz
2 50 GasserGenetic Dojano DOJANA DOJANO-ET Gasser Josef Entlebuch
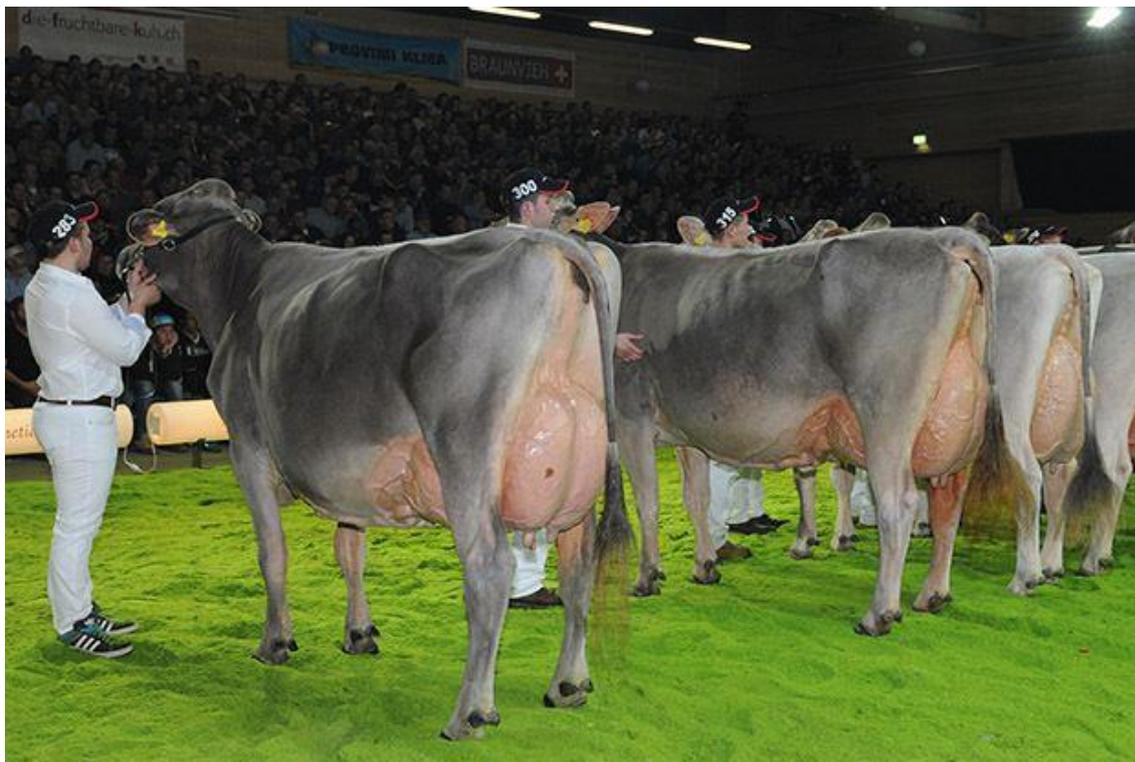3 9 Hofstetter's Jessys-Joe JEILA JESSYS-JOE Hofstetter Josef Entlebuch

Champion

1 256 ELISA JONGLEUR-ET Arpagaus Adrian Graubünden
2 247 Truaisch Flli. Panner FORTUNA PANNER-ET Vitali Matthias Ticino
3 332 Schmibach's Collection CORELLA COLLECTION Schmid Beni und Koni Pfulg Entlebuch

Brown Swiss on Farm Challenge 2015

Here are the results of our on farm show with comments from the judge Robbie Radel. I would like to thank everybody in participating and making the cows available for Robbie and the hospitality offered. 110 Entries all up

Firstly I would like to thank you and all the Brown Swiss breeders who made me feel very welcome and took time out of their lives to show me their cattle and farms. Whilst it is always enjoyable looking at Brown Swiss cattle, it was made even more enjoyable being able to share many stories with people who love their Swiss as much as I do.

Results.

Class 1.	1. EppSelect Age Ariel	by Agenda x Titlis Domin	Epp Family
2 years	2. Thurvalley Wm Bailey	by Wonderment x Pilatus Comet Briar	Thurvalley Partnership
	3. Thurvalley Bk Georgia	by Brookings x Thurvalley Ag Gyselle	Thurvalley Partnership
	4. Thurvalley Mj Kristy	by Mojo x Thurvalley Et Kayla	Thurvalley Partnership
	5. 44	by Goldmine	Moore Family

Class 1 was a particularly close and interesting class. Despite having a point range of 220 points to with for a final score, I actually ended up with 3 heifers on equal points the top of the line. So as you can imagine, it was quite difficult to to separate them as i had only my score sheets and very ordinary photography skills to rely on. In the end I have gone for the heifer that to me just blended together the smoothest and also had a very snug and firmly attached heifers udder. It was her udder and slightly more desirable set to her rump that eventually carried her over a very stylish long rangey heifer that placed second. I really admire the stature, length and particularly good feet and legs on the heifer in second and the way she blends together through the front end and in particular the chine region that placed her over the beautiful uddered heifer in third. When I think about what a heifers udder should look like, I keep coming back to looking at this heifer. From the well attached fore udder to her beautiful texture and teat size and shape and the wonderful strength of ligament, this was the best uttered heifer I saw in my travels.

Class 2.	1. Thurvalley Wm Rosey	by Wonderment x Greenridge Mc Rosa	Thurvalley Partnership
3 years	2. Virginia	by Vigor	Meier Family
	3. Greenridge Jusuv 1213	by Jusuv x DKWT 07- 15	Taylor Family
	4. Tarawera Presam Meggy	by Presam	Gretener Family
	5. Greenridge Prossli 1212	by Prossli x Greenridge Nick 04-33	Taylor Family

Class 2 was another interesting class and was in fact the class with the biggest point variance between top and bottom of the class. Standing in first place very comfortably was an exceptional young cow who blends together perfectly from front to back. She shows tremendous balance throughout and has capacity to burn for such a young cow. She carries herself comfortably around a super soft and well attached udder with near perfect teat size, shape and direction. This young cow oozes dairy character and had the highest scoring rump of the entire competition. Her overall size and scale carried her over the very sweet and dairy young cow I placed in second. This lovely young cow scores very highly when we are talking about dairy character and her incredibly silky skin indicated to me that she has the natural desire to work hard and pay the bills. If we were able to just slightly tidy up the set to the rear teats, this cow in second would have been closer to knocking on the door of first place. When adding up the score for all the place getters in this age group, this is the young cow that surprised me the most as she didn't score so highly on the general appearance as many other, but technically was very correct and her eventual score and placing in third shows this perfectly. A lovely rumped young cow who walks well and appears to have a nicely attached udder (despite being exhibited without much milk on her)

Class 3.	1. 134	by Td	Oliver Family
4&5 yr	2. Hilltops Pom Mirat	by Pomere x Hilltops Ps Mira	Andrews Family
	3. Webs	by Td	Meier Family
	4. Websalty	by Td	Meier Family
	5. Greenridge Presam Nelsa	by Presam x Greenridge Hunize Nesha	Taylor Family

As we move into the mature cows, this class really stands out as the age group with style. The winning cow in this group oozes show ring style and is a real eye catcher as she walks through the herd. Tall and sharp at the shoulder, she continues her dairy form right to the tip of her tail and is finished off with a near faultless udder. With a terrific set of feet and legs to carry her round, she is one of the cows that really appealed to me as suitable to handle the long distances travelled by cows here in Australia.

She is a clear winner. There was only 4 point between the next 3 animals, and another 10 to separate the next 10!! The next 3 cows in this class are very close in placing again, with the eventual second over third coming to the cow who had the more snugly attached for udder. These 3 cows had very nice capacious udders with great teat direction and size, however the cow in second was slightly superior in her attachment. She also had a slightly more desirable set to her rump. Third over fourth was mainly on rump structure again and a little more width right throughout the cow.

Class 4	1. Swiss Made Asterix Witch	by Asterix	Hurschler Family
6&7 yr	2. Greenridge Denver 0824	by Denver x Greenridge Jetson Collette	Taylor Family
	3. Greenrigde Driver Diva	by Driver x Pilatus Comet 0040	Meier Family
	4. 116	by Etvei	Oliver Family

The cow I placed in first position is jam packed full of quality and shows all the attributes of a cow that will last a very long time and produce large volumes for her owner. Here 'wow factor' placed here in first. Second over third placed with her super large capacity. In almost any other class, the cow in third would look very comfortable at the top of the line, but just lacked the overall balance of the 2 cows above her to be able to go any higher at this time.

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Class 5	1. Greenridge Hnize Nesha	by Hunize x Greenridge Atoms Nina	Taylor Family
8&over	2. Thurvalley Lt Saphira	by Leon x Pilatus Comet Sharira	Thurvalley Partnership
	3. Tarawera Lucas Alice	by Lucas	Gretener Family
	4. Greenridge Denmark Lucy	by Denmark	Frances Beeston
	5. Greenridge Playboy Shena	by Playboy x Pilatus Comet Sharira	Thurvalley Partnership

This group of cows is always a pleasure to look through and it always reminds me why I milk Brown Swiss. To be able to walk into any herd that runs Brown Swiss cows and almost always find a selection of mature cows still with great functional udders and terrific feet and legs is exactly what the breed is all about. old cows, still performing. This group was no exception. The winner of this class is the type of cow you could fill with milk and take into any show ring anywhere and expect to do well. The size, stature, udder attachments and feet and legs on this old girl are exactly what we look for in a Brown Swiss cow. Her huge muzzle and enormous capacity throughout are true to breed type and one of the comments that many people from outside the breed make when first seeing a Swiss cow. Its one of the characteristics the breed is known for and the breed as a whole need to be mindful not to lose this attribute in our quest for 'dairy' cows. All that being said, it was the height and width of rear attachment on the udder of the cow in first that placed her there by the narrowest of margins over the cow in second. The cow in second has a near perfect score for rump and for a cow in the aged class, that is worth a lot. With one of the highest scoring front udders in the challenge this year, it was impossible to go past her for second. The cow in third is the type of cow that anyone would like to take home. She walks well, has tremendous capacity, silky soft udder and looks as though she is made to work. Always a pleasure to look through the breed matrons, and this group was no exception.

Junior Cow Champion   *Thurvalley Wonderment Rosey*
Reserve Junior Cow Champion   *EppSelect Age Ariel*
Junior Best Udder   *Thurvalley Wonderment Rosey*

Senior Cow Champion   *134*
Reserve Senior Champion   *Greenridge Hunize Nesha*
Senior Best Udder   *134*

Overall Supreme Exhibit   *Thurvalley Wonderment Rosey*

In conclusion. It was an absolute pleasure to have the privilege of judging the on farm challenge for New Zealand Brown Swiss Assoc for 2015. I was extremely pleased with the quality right throughout all age groups and there were a number of animals who desperately deserved to place higher and get some recognition, but such was the quality that they missed out. I didn't see a single animal that I wouldn't be happy to own myself and with that in mind, I am confident that the Brown Swiss will slowly continue to make inroads further into the dairy industry in New Zealand. It was noticeable that the rumps on the younger animals are improving and the pin set is coming down on where the older cows are at. Congratulations to all exhibitors and a very sincere thank you to all for making your stock available for me to look over and work with.

Thanks, Robbie

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Around the World and Back Home Again

My Journey to Understanding Dairy Cattle Breeding

by Tracey A. Zimmerman
Taranaki, New Zealand

I read once that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. In my case, one step led me on two journeys, with a combined distance of 19,709 miles, and back home again.

At age 27, I had been farming for six years with complete control over the breeding program the entire time – first as manager of a 500 cow herd and then as a 50% sharemilker of a 280 cow herd. At the latter, the foundation of the Jersey herd had been bred using LIC Premier Sires for over 30 years. Having grown up with Holsteins bred using mostly American genetics, I felt the majority of these Jerseys needed drastic improvements to udder, feet, legs and overall stature.

I thought in the beginning that the herd's problems were a result of their LIC breeding. So initially I switched to CRV Ambreed, then to World Wide Sires, Samen, Genetic Enterprises, Semex, and finally Alta Genetics. I tried them all genuinely believing that, given time, one company would eventually prevail as being better than the others. As time passed and we became more financially secure, I started spending more on semen. I used the best, most popular, proven bulls I could source. But as the daughters of these bulls started coming into milk I realized that, despite systematically using corrective mating on each individual cow in my herd, the results were not worth the money and time I had invested. I was so confused! If I mated a cow that needs her udder improved to the highest udder index bull in the world, why did I get a daughter who needs the clusters held on for the first half of milking?

I subscribe to most of the international breeding publications available in NZ, so I read like a woman possessed trying to figure out the "magic formula" for breeding a great herd of cows. The more breeder profiles I read, the more I noticed that most of them have intensive embryo transfer programs. They flush their best cows and use their worst cows as embryo recipients. That made sense to me. Why would you want to keep a daughter out of your worst cow?

My father didn't mince words when I told him I was going to put my best cows into a small-scale flushing program. My parents spent a lot of money and achieved mixed results using embryo transfer when I was

growing up, and they concluded it was a waste of time. I understood the risks, but I also thought technology had progressed significantly since the days when my parents did ET. I proceeded with my plan, got mixed results, and ended up with a very large bill. I decided ET wasn't for me.

I looked into line breeding as a way to generate uniformity in a herd. The principles of line breeding made sense to me. But in reality, I didn't have a single Jersey cow I felt was good enough to be a safe bet for line breeding. So I put this idea on the back burner for the day in the future when I had a few great cows that would be worthy of bloodline intensification.

Next, I began reading breed histories. My uncle collects breed history books and he suggested I read "Creating Balance Between Form & Function," by Philip Hasheider, the life story of Bill Weeks, who created aAa® back in 1950. I had never heard of aAa® or Bill Weeks, so I didn't expect to finish the book. One winter day I said to myself, "Right, you'd better start reading that book, and if you don't like it after one chapter, take it back." After the first chapter, I could not put it down.

About halfway through the book, I thought, "All these years I've had mixed results from everything I've tried, spent good money after bad, and it's made no difference. I thought I always chose the wrong bulls, the wrong companies, but deep down I felt there was a piece of the puzzle missing that I couldn't articulate, let alone understand. I've questioned respected breeders and AI salesmen, they never shared a solution that worked consistently in my herd, and most breeders had just one successful cow family that was their namesake. Yet after reading only half of this book, I realize now that I *was* choosing the right bulls, good bulls, but I have been *using them the wrong way*."

At that point, I emailed the aAa® office to get contact information for my local Taranaki analyser, because I was not going to breed another cow until she had been analyzed. Unfortunately for me, there was no aAa® analyser in Taranaki…or in New Zealand, or Australia, or the entire southern hemisphere! The closest analyser willing to travel to NZ was in the Netherlands. In desperation, I decided to begin training to become an aAa® approved analyser myself. After an initial period of study via email and Skype, in order for me to complete my training I needed to travel to the Netherlands where four experienced Dutch analysers were willing to work with me.

As I stepped off the plane in Amsterdam, it occurred to me that I had placed a huge amount of faith in what I had read. I had never actually met an analyser, never had my herd analysed, and never seen a cow that was the result of an aAa® mating. But I somehow sensed as a farmer and a breeder that this was one of the most important things I could learn, and to do so when I was relatively young was a privilege.

Conditions on Dutch farms were much different than I was used to. Milking parlours, housed cows, feed rations and young stock facilities required some mental adjustment on my part. These were ordinary Dutch farms. When New Zealand pedigree breeders travel abroad, they often tour handpicked farms and see some of the best facilities and cattle a country has to offer. It's no wonder many breeders come away with a romanticized impression of overseas dairying and genetics, and return home with their pockets full of embryos.

One thing that shocked me about the 35 Dutch herds I visited was the variation in the quality of the cows. The cows in herds of long-time aAa® users were in a completely different league quality-wise compared with those in herds new to aAa®, although in many cases the bulls they used were very similar. The difference seemed to be entirely in the ways the bulls were used.

The herds who did not use aAa® had very few older cows. A 3rd lactation cow was considered old, and the majorities were 1st and 2nd calf heifers. In order to maintain herd numbers, these herds had very high replacement rates, requiring that much space be devoted to raising young stock. In contrast, herds who had been analyzing 15 years or more had many magnificent older cows. In these herds it was difficult to find a poor cow! These herds either do not have to rear high numbers of replacements or, if they have the facilities, a large amount of income is generated from selling surplus heifers as replacement animals to other farms.

I had the opportunity to study herds with the highest per cow production, highest lifetime production, and highest classification scores in the Netherlands. I found their philosophy is quite simple – good feeding of young stock and the milking herd, good management and housing, and breeding according to aAa®. The success of these herds made a real impression on me as a farmer and a breeder.

Jimm Holsteins in Boijl, owned by John De Vries, is the best herd of cattle I have ever seen. John has had the top classification scores in The Netherlands on several occasions, with an average exterior score of 88.3 points for the entire herd. He has many great show cows that run with the milking herd and get no special attention because his facilities do not allow for two management groups. A longtime aAa® user, John understands balance in breeding so well that he confidently uses extremely round, low type scoring bulls to bring qualities to a mating that his sharp cows need. Other breeders might be terrified to use these bulls, but the results in John's herd speak for themselves, as his herd continues to improve year after year.

After training in the Netherlands, I became an aAa® approved analyser in January 2015. Then in October, I travelled to Madison, Wisconsin for the World Dairy Expo and to Rockford, Illinois for the 2015 aAa® analyser conference. This was my first trip to WDE and I actually found the show itself rather tedious. The huge classes make judging so time consuming that it seemed to be the dairy equivalent of watching paint dry! Instead, I spent my time at WDE in the barns with my colleagues discussing cows. I have always loved learning, but here I discovered how easy it is to "learn wrong," and how important the choice of quality mentors is to life's destiny. I got a bit teary-eyed as I thought to myself, "If I could choose 3 breeding mentors to spend a day with, they would be Bill Weeks, Jan Schilder and Greg Palen. Bill Weeks died in 1994, but I get to spend two full weeks with Jan Schilder and Greg Palen. 2 out of 3 isn't bad!"

The aAa® analyser conference consisted of classroom training in the morning and study of real cows in the afternoon. The first herd we visited was Mil-R-Mor Holsteins, home of the famous Roxy. Bob Miller is an incredibly generous storyteller and was an absolute joy to meet, and Mil-R-Mor is the quintessential family operation.

On the following days, we studied at Wild Vale Holsteins and Mitch-Haven Holsteins, both small family farms who have used aAa® for about 7 years. Although you would not read about them in breed publications, both herds were full of good, functional cows in tie-stall barns, cows that easily stand the test of time. Both farmers mentioned how difficult it is to decide which of their really good heifers will have to be sold because now they have so many great replacements and fewer cows leave the herd due to functional problems.

After the conference ended, a group of us visited Luck-E Holsteins. It is hands down the best facility for dairy cows I have ever seen and the home of Luck-E Advent Kandi, the Senior Champion of the Red & White Holstein Show at WDE in 2014. She was dry when we visited and is being flushed extensively. Luck-E Holsteins sells a lot of animals for a very high price tag and many go on to be show champions around the USA.

Travelling with experienced aAa® analysers was eye-opening for me. They see a large cross section of results from the dairy genetics industry. They analyse bulls at all major AI companies around the world. Their farm customers range from tiny, hand-milked Amish herds in Pennsylvania to some of the largest commercial herds in California and Europe. They see AI companies struggling more and more to make ends meet. They observe that, although using genomics for AI bull selection is intended to reduce costs by sampling more bulls and keeping only the best, the opposite has proven true – since young bulls do not produce the same quantity of usable semen as mature bulls do, AI companies have to keep more bulls to meet demand. They see farmers all over the world finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet as cows' inability to function well decreases overall profitability in a herd environment. To me, they are the purveyors of genetic sanity in dairy cattle breeding.

All this started me thinking about animal welfare, and how its public perception is critical to sustainable farming. I believe animal welfare is made up of three key elements:

- Animal feed management, handling and husbandry
- Environment, housing and effluent management
- Breeding animals that can function normally without undue suffering

A great deal of emphasis is naturally placed on the feeding and environment of dairy cattle, but my travels abroad brought home to me the importance of breeding well-functioning animals. Breeding extreme

animals using single trait selection criteria may soon be regarded as animal cruelty in the eyes of the public, much as it has become so in the world of thoroughbred racehorse breeding. When our breeding decisions result in cows lacking the structural form to function normally, we as humans are responsible for their suffering.

Perhaps the most important thing I learned in my 19,709 mile journey is that you cannot put a price tag on passion. Learning about aAa® and traveling with my fellow analysers has reaffirmed my passion for breeding dairy cows. It has been a priceless experience to immerse myself in the vast knowledge and recollections of my international colleagues – colleagues who have now become my very good friends.

Thank you Tracey for the story about becoming the first aAa® analyser in the southern hemisphere. If anyone is interested in getting their cows analyzed get in touch with Tracey.