

Coyne-Farms:

How They Achieved 5 Global Cow Nominations in 3 Years

Numerous top TPI sires, globally impacting families and highly productive cattle thriving in a large scale environment are what symbolises the American Coyne-Farms herd. Home to the world-renown Yadda, Jelly and Daffers families, here we discover how this large scale dairy has continued to remain successful over the decades.

IZZY JONES HAN HOPMAN

'Because of Mogul, there's probably not a pedigree dairy farm in the world that hasn't got Coyne-Farms blood in it,' comments Greg Coyne of the 1000-cow Coyne-Farms herd in New York. 'Mogul's sire Coyne-Farms Dorcy is the most famous bull we've bred to date – and we've had bulls sourced for AI since the 1970s.' Already you know the enormity of the Coyne-Farms legacy and why they easily received a nomination for HI's prestigious "Most Influential Breeder" contest earlier this year. Alongside Dorcy, numerous herd-mates have also achieved elite sire status – including Yance, Massey, Jabir, Jacey and Jetset. Also to mention is Woodcrest Yoder, who although doesn't carry the Coyne-Farms prefix, is sired by Mogul and is from Coyne-Farms' Yadda family. But: Breeding bulls is not the goal at Coyne-Farms, Greg continues: 'We concentrate on breeding good females not males and we've bred for Productive Life (PL) for a long, long time. We want cows that last. In recent years we have also looked at the Zoetis Dairy Wellness Profit index (DWP). PL and DWP are real numbers, and you can see that first hand in our herd – the cows by high PL bulls last longer. We don't like cows too tall and we want cows with good components and reproduction.' This ethos has been withheld through the generations and is deeply rooted in the Coyne-Farms herd, particularly in its two oldest flagship families: the Ramos Jelly family that dates back to 1975 and the Bret Daffers family which traces to 1993 at Coyne-Farms. The Coyne-Farms were early users of genomics and this new information, teamed with the herd's steadfast genetic pool, had the "Midas Touch" for bull breeding. Greg: 'When genomics was introduced I went to a lot of AI meetings and I believed in the science early on. But things have changed and we don't have as much AI interest now. AI studs are trying to make their own bulls and we can't get pre-release semen. It's impossible for us to try and compete. And

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that's fine because we'll just continue with the breeding strategy we've followed for decades.' However genomics is still very present at Coyne-Farms and if you look around you will find a number of bulls being reared. Around 100 bulls are sold for breeding each year – all of which are genomic tested. And because they have too many females, a number of heifers are also genomic tested to identify animals to cull. Greg is also toying with the idea of genomic testing the whole herd for the same reason.

GLOBAL COW

Whilst most breeders will not realise one "Global Cow" nomination in their lifetime... Signifying how influential Coyne-Farms has been on the Holstein breed worldwide, in just two short years three cows from the herd were nominated for the Global Cow of the Year competition: Milkworth Manfred Yadda (2012), Coyne-Farms Ramos Jelly (2013) and Coyne-Farms Bret Daffers (2012, 2013, 2014). Another cow at Coyne-Farms closely associated to the Global Cow competition is Butlerview Colt Prairie VG-86 who was purchased as a yearling back in 2012. Prairie is the dam of the former Nr.1 TPI Red sire, Coyne-Farms Pat-Red (<Sympatico). A Supersire-daughter from Prairie's full-sister was nominated for the Global Cow competition in 2017. Greg: 'I don't think we have one family better than another. Our families have simi-



lar qualities and lots of dairy strength. At one point we were using a lot of Shottle and four of Yadda's Shottle daughters make up a large portion of the herd: Yup EX-90, Yeah VG-88, Yada VG-86 and Yes VG-85. We also have 4 Freddie-daughters from Ramos Jelly that have made a big impact on the herd. Using good genetics has been key to building up these cow families and we never use bulls that are too frail or sharp. High TPI, PL, DWP, production, components and solid type are key traits we look for in bulls. A2A2 sires are certainly important too!



Coyne-Farms in the US

- Located in Avon, New York
- Owned by Gerald, Greg, Shaun, Malarchy, Brian, Steven & Liam Coyne
- Milking 1,000 cows; 1,100 youngstock
- Average/day: 92lb (42kg) (x3) 3.9% 3.1%
- Cell count: 140,000
- 2,000 acres owned: 800 acres alfalfa hay, 900 acres corn for silage, 250 acres wheat
- Cow ration: 2/3 BMR corn silage, 1/3 alfalfa haylage, steam-flaked corn, cotton seed, soy hulls, canola, minerals
- AI sires: 90% genomic sires, using the top gTPI bulls

The Coynes L-R: Greg, Brian and Shaun.



Coyne-Farms Epic Melody EX-90 traces to Yadda via a VG Goldwyn and VG Shottle. Aside from the Yadda, Jelly, Daffers and Prairie families mentioned in this story, Coyne-Farms is also home to interesting members of the Barbie and Silk family.

at the moment, we have at least 30 and they are the best young cows we have. Jedi has also been good for us and we will soon be milking some Frazzled daughters – they look promising too,' says Greg.

DIVERSIFICATION

Whilst the US milk industry is experiencing extremely tough conditions currently, the Coyne family can find small relief in their side businesses. Located just 15 minutes away is Craigs Station Creamery, a farmer-owned milk marketing cooperative and dairy foods processor, owned by the Coyne family, Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) and seven other dairy farms. Between the eight farms, which all have an underlying ethos of being environmentally friendly, they collectively own 13,000 cows. You may be wondering what the Coynes do to be eco-friendly... Interestingly they have a unique partnership with "Worm Power", a vermicomposting company that turns waste from the dairy into rich, professional-grade organic plant food with the help of worms. The Coynes do not own Worm Power, but they own the land. Although the Coynes are not doing a lot of ET work currently due to the economic climate, instead they are making donors available and putting embryos in for other farms. Effectively they rent a donor and get paid for live calves, which are taken immediately after birth.

Whilst AI interest may have subsided in recent years, staying committed to their breeding goal of long-lasting, productive cows has continued to put the Coyne-Farms herd on a worldwide stage. And now through Craigs Station, Worm Power and embryo donors the Coyne family have added security to see them through the current dairy industry downturn in the US. Certainly: A visit to Coyne-Farms provides an interesting perspective. ●

HISTORY

The Coyne family has been dairy farming in Avon, New York for nearly 100 years. Greg's grand-father started milking 20 Guernseys by hand in 1922 and also raised some sheep, chickens and hogs. Like the solid bloodlines engraved in the herd, a strong family unit is behind this large scale operation and currently three generations of Coynes work on the farm: Greg and his son Brian, Greg's brother Shaun and his son Steven, plus Greg's uncle Gerald and his son Malachy and grandson Liam.

Today a total of 18 people work on the farm, including family, and everything is located at the same site. In 1993 a double-16 Germania herringbone milking parlour was installed with automatic take off, rapid exit, and an Affikim monitoring system was installed in 1999. All cows are milked 3 times-a-day and in the freestall the cows lie on water beds topped with sawdust. Although there is over 2,000 females at Coyne-Farms today, between Greg and his son Brian, they do all the matings themselves. 'We're milking a lot of Deltas