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2011 National Dairy Shrine Distinguished Dairy Cattle Breeder Awarded

Denmark, WI. Few dairymen fit the criteria of this award as precisely as William H. Peck. An active, progressive producer, who, through expertise in managing a dairy-breeding herd based upon sound genetic and business principles, serves as a model of success for contemporaries throughout the nation. And few herds have made more of an impact globally than the elite Holstein and Guernsey genetics from Welcome Stock.

"Bill Peck's legacy is much more than just breeding a great herd of cows. The entire Holstein Breed has benefited from the genetic contribution of the Welcome Stock Farm to our national herd and the international community. And let's not forget Bill's contribution to the "human part" of this industry," says Tom Lawlor, director of research of Holstein Association USA.

For these and many additional accomplishments, National Dairy Shrine honors William H. Peck, Welcome Stock Farm, as the 2011 Distinguished Dairy Cattle Breeder. Peck is the 39th award winner to receive the dairy industry's highest honor bestowed to a dairy cattle breeder. The formal presentation will take place Thursday, October 6 during the National Dairy Shrine awards banquet.

Peck is the fifth generation at Welcome Stock Farm and today it is also owned and operated in partnership with his sons, Bill and Neil. Also assisting on the farm from time to time are Peck's daughters Cindy Gallagher and Betsy Foote.

"Bill is ahead of his generation in breeding Holstein cattle. He was a very early adopter of genomics, and used it extensively to develop a strong maternal line with high genomic values. That, in turn lead to numerous A.I. contracts for young sires with the "Welcome" prefix," says Larry Tande, President of Holstein Association USA.

The admired Welcome Stock Farm consists of 1400 acres and is home to 1034 Registered Holsteins including the 589-cow milking herd. Ninety-five percent of those animals are homebred and carry the Welcome prefix. The herd has been on test for over 40 years and has a rolling herd average near 28,000 pounds of milk, over 1040 pounds of fat and 865 pounds of protein. Welcome Stock Farm has been participating in the Holstein Association USA classification program since 1973. To date, Welcome Stock Farm has bred 87 cows to receive the Gold Medal Dam status, 66 Dams of Merit and three with Gold Medal Sire status. In addition, Welcome Stock has received 14 Progressive Breeder Registry awards and 20 Progressive Genetics Herd awards. To further add to their credits, 685 cows carrying the Welcome prefix have surpassed the 100,000 lifetime mark for milk production, 548 cows with over 4,000 pounds lifetime fat and 634 cows with over 3,000 pounds lifetime protein.

"Bill has demonstrated a forward-thinking personality in business and herd management practices other than genetics, such as vaccination protocols, Leucosis, Johne's and Mycoplasma testing, and herd bio-security risk management. He and his sons have approached herd

expansion, facility construction, use of reproductive technologies like embryo transfer, sexed semen and IVF, and trends in genetic breeding and trait selection with a return on investment mentality, avoiding the fads of the moment and capitalizing on beneficial opportunities," says Angie Coburn, Dairy Procurement Manager, Genex Cooperative, Inc.

Welcome Stock Farm bases sire selection on the top NM\$ and top TPI bulls available in the breed. Animals are individually mated to improve or correct all traits including type, health traits, milk, fat and protein, NM\$ and TPI. Prior to genomics approximately 20% of the herd was mated to young sires and following the release of genomics, currently 50% of the herd is mated to young sires. The herd's average age at first calving is 23 months and an extensive vaccination program is used from birth through adulthood. All cows are tested for Leukosis and Johne's disease at dry off.

"Bill is perhaps the only breeder to have bred bulls from two different breeds achieving the number one TPI/PTI rank with the prominent Guernsey bull, Welcome Choice Admiral, and the very influential Holstein sire, Welcome Garter-ET.

The extensive list of Welcome Stock bulls that have entered A.I. organization in the United States spans 60 years and numbers 13 Guernseys and 345 Holsteins, of which 40% are still plus proven in a day and age of fast genetic progress," says Coburn.

Some of the most influential cows of the Welcome Stock herd include Welcome Jupiter Gala (VG-85 GMD DOM), Welcome Goldwyn Penya (VG-89 DOM), Welcome Aaron Penel (VG-87 DOM) and Welcome Mark Lacey (EX-91 GMD DOM). Gala is the matriarch of the "G" family at Welcome Stock and fourth dam of the former #1 TPI Sire, Welcome Garter. Gala is also dam to Welcome Valiant Gingersnap and consequently granddam of the sire, Grand in Canada. A more current headliner at Welcome Stock, Goldwyn Penya is dam to the #1 GTPI Mac daughter, Mac Peyton, and has many other emerging offspring. Aaron Penel is the matriarch of the "P" family and the granddam of Goldwyn Penya. Mark Lacey is the matriarch of the "L" family at Welcome Stock with numerous family members in the herd today backed by generations of high scoring and high producing cows with GMD and DOM status.

"When Holstein breeding truly went global, Bill was right there seeking information on top bulls from around the world. The same international people that Bill pursued to learn more from are some of the same people coming back to him and buying his animals," says Lawlor.

Welcome Stock actively markets top genetics through consignment sales from the east coast through the Midwest. These marketing opportunities are made possible through their active flushing program. Welcome Stock started embryo transfer in the early 1980s and currently is flushing 4-10 animals every two-three weeks. In addition, Welcome Stock has genomic tested over 400 females as of December 2010.

Besides Pecks on-farm responsibilities, he served on the Holstein Association USA Board of Directors from 2004-2010.

"As chairman of Holstein USA's Genetic Advancement Committee, Bill lead the committee with direction during a period of time when genomics were first being introduced. Through his leadership, Holstein's TPI rankings introduced health traits to the formula," says Tande.

Peck is also a director on the New York State Agricultural Society and previously served on the NYS Farm Service Agency State Committee and the NYADC/Genex Holstein Sire Selection Committee. Peck has been honored with the Cobleskill College Distinguished Alumni award and the New York State Century Farm Award. He is also a member, past Deacon and Elder at the Bacon Hill Reformed Church.

"Bill has an enthusiasm and passion for breeding Holsteins that's contagious. He smiles about his successes and shrugs off the setbacks. I cannot think of anyone more deserving than Bill Peck as this year's winner of this prestigious award," concludes Lawlor.

The annual National Dairy Shrine awards banquet will be held on October 6 during World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis. For more information about the banquet or about students, producers and industry representatives being recognized by National Dairy Shrine, please contact Dr. David Selner, Executive Director, at (920) 863-6333. National Dairy Shrine membership information is also available by phone or online at www.dairyshrine.org. Dairy enthusiasts are encouraged to become a part of this important organization to help honor our heritage, inspire future leaders and promote the dairy industry.