



**The comments of  
Brian Carscadden,  
judge of the 6th edition of  
the International Dairy Show,  
held in Montichiari  
on February 2, 2007.**

(by Delia Pertici)

*This is your first time in Italy as a judge.  
What is your impression of the show?*

“My impression was that the organization put on a real “show”. In a lot of countries where I have been that is something that they need to learn.

You could easily see that these people went to a lot of expenses, not only the exhibitors, but also the spectators. The shows are meant to promote our cattle, and for the breeders to gain in their breeding decisions. So, I really appreciate the job that Anafi and Apas did to put the show on: the music, the lights, the ring, the ringmen, the flowers.. a real show: To make it look like it takes lots of money, planning , time, commitment. I was amazed.

And, of course, the quality of the animal was very very good. Rewarding for me as a judge. And to be in the middle of the ring judging great cows for someone like me, with my passion for cows since I was a kid, it was a thrill.”

***What did you like most in the Champion cow? And, was there any other cow that you really liked?***

“There is not much that I can add to the motivation I gave... I would say that, to me, the champion had a great blending of balance, and along with that she had style. And, as I said, that is part of showing, of being in a ring.

I also really liked the cow that won the young cow Champion title, but she does not have yet the maturity of the others. Those six cows in the finale were really good cows, I am very happy.”

***Do you think a great show cow can also be a high producing cow? And, could any cow become a show cow?***

“I am sure there is a correlation between the type we select in the ring and the performance of those cows production wise. I am very curious to see what the record might be of the cows that won today; my champion, my reserve and my Honorable Mention ...I'd be surprised if they wouldn't be three of the highest yielding cows of the show. This because they have the right traits, the mammary system... they look like milk. And that's what I am looking for when I am judging.. For instance, some cows I place a little lower just because I don't think they look like milk.

Regarding your second question... I think it is difficult to take a cow from a free stall environment (where they live on concrete, the hocks are bruised, sometimes they are missing their tails) and bring her to a show. Once they get to the show they're going to have a different look...they are not going to be sharp, they are not silky, they probably do not eat because they are used to a TMR, while probably the best show cows eat dry hay, that gives them that shining look... Showing is a business. It is a small percentage of the world, but it is a 365 days commitment.”

***Are you afraid of criticism?***

“No. I have been an official judge for 5 year now I was a cattle groomer for many years, and I have been critical of judges for many many years. What it was... after I groomed the animal she would leave my stall, and I would never go to see her in the ring...she would come back with a yellow, blue or whatever ribbon and I'd be upset: how that one bit me? But until you see them in the ring... that's where it all happens, right there.

And I learnt that after I finish fitting, that there is a difference.”

***What are the criteria you use when you judge a show?***

“I basically follow the Holstein Canada classification system: 40% mammary system, 25% feet and legs. And I try to think of those things every time I look at an animal. I think: all right, how does she compare to the last one I’ve seen? And then I take into consideration style: are these animals better eye appealing? Maybe this does not mean anything to the everyday breeder, or to farmers milking cows, but it is a show and that’s all part of it, because they have to look good on parade. So, at the end everything goes together when I take my decision on who’s going to win.”

***When judging showmanship, what do you look for?***

“Judging showmanship, as we call it in Canada, is probably more difficult than judging conformation, because you are judging people, and you have to have a great memory too. I judged some of the most important showmanship contests around the world.. Two years ago I judged at the Royal Winter Fais 380 kids who had all qualified to be there, and every one was as good as my winning two young people today.

When you get to that level it takes a lot of concentration, they are all very good and, basically, you wait for someone to make a mistake..

In this kind of contest the presentation is very important, but certainly the quality of the animal they choose to present makes a big difference. Because if that animal is quite, calm, or is an animal that naturally keeps her head up high in the air, it adds to the style of the animal and it makes it easier for that person to look good showing that animal. I also look how they move in unison: do they walk together, is he cool, is he calm ..I often think of it as a dance: there are a couple dancing in the ring. When you get at high levels, they step in unison, they are just a team.. It is a thrill to watch the kids doing a great job, and they go on to be great leadsmen, showing cows to people.”

***What do you think is the future of Holstein breeding?***

“I have mixed feelings about this. In the last years the health traits have gained more and more importance. I know they are important, but I have concern about the data that goes in, besides, some of these traits have very low heritability and also low repeatability... The big trend in the US right now is towards selection for single health traits. In Canada, we know it is important to pay attention to it, but we are not ready to throw everything else away that we have bred for for years. Certainly we will not miss our marketing opportunities and/or perhaps in the future we will identify more genetic markers specific of health traits that will help breeding.

We think that to have a cow that lasts long and is healthy you must provide a cow that has the conformation traits to support a long life: it does not matter what health traits she carries if she has bad feet and legs!”

***Where did you see what you consider the best cows in the world?***

“The best cows I have seen at the Royal (Toronto) and in Madison, no question. But also Australia has some great cows, although they do not have the production of the other cows, but they do have larger frames that really impress. And at the National of the UK Holstein the cows were awesome. If it would have been possible to have all them together here, you would have had a show that



would parallel anything throughout the world.

I am not saying that these other cows would win, but it would have been great to see them compete.

I wish you have better luck in the future.”

