



Interim Executive Secretary  
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# THOUGHTS

## From The Secretary

### Legendary – In a League of Her Own – History in the Making

These were the comments heard around the Coliseum when Judge Dave Sprengeler, tapped Old Mill E Snickerdoodle as Grand Champion of the Central National Brown Swiss show at WDE on October 1, 2009. Truly a Brown Swiss legend, and perhaps not since Jane of Vernon, has one cow been so well known. Being named Grand Champion for the 6<sup>th</sup> time is an accomplishment no other cow has ever seen at WDE. On Saturday, Snickerdoodle garnered her second in a row WDE Reserve Supreme Champion recognition to go along with her crown of Supreme Champion in 2003. It was legendary that day and quite appropriate with Snickerdoodle standing in her Field of Dreams.

### Genetic Base Change – January 2010 (Good or Bad or Ugly)

Genetic bases used for sire and cow evaluations by AIPL-USDA, are regularly updated at 5 year intervals with the next update scheduled for January 2010. These updates are neither good, bad or ugly. It is just a means of adjusting the values we use to rank these animals to a level where anyone can realize that for most traits above this base is good and below is not so good. If no adjustment was ever made, we would be trying to compare bulls with PTA's for milk of +5000 versus +4000 based on a breed average from about 1980. The comparison would still rank the bulls the same, but it is a little easier to explain +500 and -500 out in the field. In addition, it gives an indication that one bull is a breed improver and the other is not, related to the current breed average in 2010.

Along with these updates, we gather valuable information by comparing how we have progressed during these 5 year intervals. This is where we come to see

some good, some bad and perhaps some ugly. Genetic progress or genetic trend is the main criteria we need to be considering and we do this by comparing PTA of cows born in 2005 with those born in 2000. Those cows at 5 years of age give us a clear indicator of the genetic level in 2010 versus 2005. Any genetic progress realized during this period will remain and can be built upon over the next 5 year period. The other contributor to overall phenotypic progress is realized from environmental changes. While positive advances here are also good, normally once realized, it becomes a dead end. For instance, you can make the change to TMR only once. Thus, we must concentrate on genetic progress.

Apparently Brown Swiss has not done a great job in this area over the past 5 years. (*The Bad*). While all breeds realized less genetic progress in the past 5 years than in the previous 5 year period for most production traits, Brown Swiss progress was at about 50% of the previous base change in 2005 for milk, fat, protein and productive life. The base changes in Brown Swiss for 2005 and proposed changes for 2010 are listed below.

Base Changes in Brown Swiss		
Trait	2005	2010
Milk	479	267
Fat	19	10
Protein	16	10
Prod. Life	.40	.27
Dau. Preg. Rate	-.20	-.45
Somatic Cell	-.04	0.01
Udder Comp.	.30	.25
Foot/Leg Comp.	.25	.10
Size Comp.	.55	.30

As we review these base changes, we see that Daughter Pregnancy Rate (DPR) has taken a turn for the worse (*The Ugly*).

Not only has DPR decreased, the rate of decrease has doubled these past 5 years. While we continue to select for more production, at some point in time we will find a limit as to how much volume a cow can manufacture. We need to increase our focus on traits such as DPR and Productive Life (PL) and do it soon.

The total or phenotypic progress that is realized over some period (5 years) contains the Genetic portion (discussed above) and the Environmental portion (management). Brown Swiss has experienced significant gains in the area of Environmental progress during this past 5 year period (*The Good*). These management changes which affect the total phenotypic results and thus the total progress during this period has been tops. But remember, as I stated above, many of these changes can only occur once. Environmental increases show Brown Swiss topped all breeds for Protein, Fat, and Milk in this period. So congratulations on your management techniques. Now we need to return to the genetic focus. Fortunately your Brown Swiss Board, Breeders and Related Industry took the necessary steps to provide Genomic Evaluations for Brown Swiss which will help the breed meet those challenges (*More Good*). Look for more good news regarding genomics in Dave Kendall's article on Genomics. — Roger