

## Solid Rock and Turnpike-View show support for DPAC

# They'll donate 50 cents from every unit of 'Deluxe'

By SHERRY BUNTING  
Special for Farmshine

STEVENS, Pa. — “We need to support the dairy farmers,” says John Weiler, owner and founder of Solid Rock Genetics, an A.I. company serving dairy farms in several counties in Pennsylvania. “I see DPAC working to generate change within the industry on how dairy farmers are paid for their milk.”

That's why Weiler said “yes” when Paul Horning of Turnpike-View Dairy, Stevens, Lancaster County, Pa. came to him with an idea.

“I was brainstorming about how to show more support for the Dairy Policy Action Coalition (DPAC), and I came up with the idea of donating money from the semen sales on my bull,” Horning reflects.

Last week, Horning and Weiler decided to go 50/50 on their donation: For every unit of semen sold from Turnpike-View Deluxe-ET VG-88, a total of 50 cents will go to DPAC. That's \$5 for every 10-units sold and \$500 for every 1000 units sold.

This bull is the product of two great cow families — Edi Delray and Skybuck Emily — bred by the Horning Family here at Turnpike-View Dairy. His dam — Delray — is EX-94 with a 94-point mammary. She had 186,818 pounds of lifetime milk after her previous lacta-

## DPAC Update

‘Controlling your own destiny’



John Weiler (center) of Solid Rock Genetics and Paul Horning (right) of Turnpike-View Dairy will donate 50 cents to the Dairy Policy Action Coalition (DPAC) for every unit of semen sold from Horning's bull: Turnpike-View Deluxe. Bernie Morrissey (left) serves as DPAC's treasurer, appointed

by the 20-member board of directors. DPAC observes its first year anniversary this month and expects to welcome new board members from southeastern and midwestern states at their November board meeting this week.

tion (no rbST), and she's close to 45,000 pounds on her current lactation. Last year she peaked at 207 pounds a day on 3x milking, and this year she peaked at 184 pounds a day on 2x milking.

The granddam “Della” is EX-92 with lifetime milk of 281,881 pounds after her eighth lactation. She just completed her ninth lactation, and she is due to calve again.

“Til we're done marketing from this bull, you'll be able to pay a few bills,” Weiler tells DPAC Treasurer Bernie Morrissey.

DPAC is funded solely by donations, not by dues or assessments. To-date, hundreds of individual dairy farmers have donated to the cause, along with donations from eight producer organizations. Together, these donations represent over 15,000 dairy farm families in 18 states. In addition, DPAC has received financial support from more than 50 agribusinesses in about eight states.

“Just this morning, I had two phone calls from concerned dairymen, who said ‘we need to do something.’ They were both aware of DPAC,” says Weiler. “As agribusinesses, we need the dairy farmers to be sustainable. Without them, we are finished. This is one way I can do some

turn to page 20

## DPAC support

from page 18

thing as an agribusiness to help.”

Weiler loved Paul's idea to tie the donation in with this bull. “That way, every dairy producer who buys semen from the Deluxe outcross can feel that they are also contributing to the DPAC cause,” he explains.

As far back as his high school days in the late 1970s with Ephrata Area Vo-Ag teacher Lew Ayers, Weiler has been involved in the A.I. business, running local routes for the former Atlantic Breeders. He has also worked for Sire Power and others in the industry. Then 12 years ago he started his own independent A.I. company: Solid Rock Genetics.

With a staff of four full-time technicians, Solid Rock has access to a wide range of genetics, but they specialize in working with the smaller A.I. cooperatives as well as in marketing semen for independent bull owners. The bottom line is to help individual dairymen improve their herd of cows, and toward that end, they carry bulls that serve a variety of needs — from commercial herd genetics to crossbreeding to the show circuit.

Looking at change in the dairy industry over the past 30-plus years, Weiler is most concerned about the instability. “Farmers don't know from one year to the next what income they will have,” he relates. “You have that in any business, but the cycles in dairy are too steep. They go too high and too low. These cycles need to level out to where dairy farmers can plan.”

“As dairy farmers, we've also lost trust in the system,” adds Horning. “And in politics, you have more and more people making decisions who do not understand agriculture. We dairy farmers need a stronger voice. With DPAC, we have a lifelong dairy farmer and former ag secretary working as our lobbyist and a professional writer working for us so our voice is heard when the policies that affect our future are being decided.”

Horning is one of the 20 charter members of DPAC's board of directors. The organization observes its first anniversary this month. He notes that it has been a fast-paced first year.

“It's amazing how the coalition got together from the grass-roots,” he explains. “Just getting farmers together and talking to each other across the country is a great thing. We're sending a message that we as farmers are not just sitting back anymore. We have sat back for way too long.”

He notes farmers are used to the ups and downs of weather and markets. “But in recent years, we have seen more downs — and steeper downs — than ups,” he says. “We have to figure out where the dollars are going and change the system. Right now, the dairy farmer carries all of the price risk. This needs to change.”

“I became part of this coalition because I am concerned about the future for my son and grandson. It's looking grim,” Horning



Turnpike-View Edi Delray is classified EX-94 with a 94-point mammary. She had 186,818 pounds of lifetime milk after her previous lactation and has 45,000 pounds so far in her current lactation. She peaked at 207 pounds per day on 3x milking in her previous lactation and 184 pounds per day on 2x milking in her current lactation.



Turnpike-View Deluxe is the product of two cow families that produce a lot of milk on forage and are known for longevity, dairy strength, super feet and legs and excellent udders. Paul Horning has spent a lifetime building these two cow families (Edi Delray and Skybuck Emily). The bull is marketed by Solid Rock Genetics.

continues. “Producers are concerned about how they can pass on their dairy farms that will be sustainable for the next generation.”

Horning is a life-long dairy farmer. He and his wife Shirley and their son Dustin and his wife Maureen milk 90 registered Holsteins and a few Brown Swiss at their Turnpike-View Dairy, where the genetic focus has always been on type and longevity.

“I don't focus in on the production. I want the type of bull that will make a better cow. My philosophy is: if the cow is made right, she is going to milk,” says Horning. “Dairy strength is probably my biggest thing. Another of my goals is to have a cow milk a lot on forage, and not have to put a lot of grain into her to get the milk. That's what I've been noticing in this cow family: They make a lot of milk on forage.”

Another thing that makes this bull unique is that his dam is out of one of Turnpike-View's own bulls. “Supersire Edi made a bunch of good daughters that really milk,” says Horning, adding that Edi's dam, Skybuck Emily, is the oldest cow in the barn at 13 and she's close to 300,000 pounds of lifetime milk on forage.

As a herd sire, Edi had 16 daughters: five were Excellent, eight Very Good, and three Good Plus. Delray was one those daughters that stayed home, and Deluxe is the result of that. Horning notes that because he is an outcross, Deluxe can be used on any cow. There is no Oman, Bolton, Durham, Goldwyn or Shottle in his pedigree.

Asked how he feels about the genetic progress represented by this bull, Horning said he has “spent a lifetime building these two cow families and now they are starting to shine.”

“We really appreciate the generosity of Solid Rock Genetics and Paul Horning to help DPAC continue its mission,” said Bernie Morrissey, who serves as the appointed treasurer under the direction of the producer board. “Now everybody who buys units from Turnpike-View Deluxe through Solid Rock Genetics is helping to support DPAC.”

In addition to supporting these efforts, John Weiler says he hopes their idea will generate discussion.

“We need to work together and let our lawmakers know it's more than the farms that are at stake here,” says Horning. “We depend on the agribusinesses and they depend on us.”

While the majority of DPAC's early donations have come from Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and Maryland, this quickly broadened throughout DPAC's first year to include donations from individual dairy farms, producer organizations and agribusinesses in the following additional states: Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Arkansas, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Idaho, Massachusetts.

DPAC's main focus has been on market transparency and price discovery. Dairy farmers agree that the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) is too thinly traded, vulnerable to manipulation, and highly volatile as the only market indicator of the value of products made from milk.