

Meet Hans Eggink – Holsteins Solutions Partner

Tars Cheema

Holstein Canada announced the hiring of Hans Eggink early in October, to the new hybrid role they have termed 'Holstein Solutions Partner.' "It is the first time our Association has integrated three services into one role," states Brad Eggink, Manager of Classification and Field Services. Hans will divide his time between Classifying, proAction assessments and Field Services in the four western provinces.

Arriving in Lacombe in 1982 from the Netherlands, Hans would spend the next six years dairying on his parents 120-cow operation. Eventually taking over the farm, Hans and his wife grew the herd to 160 milking by the time they sold in 2007. "I was registered, classified and milk recorded from day one. And I joined the Holstein Club pretty soon too." Hans' outgoing personality makes it easy to see him as a 'people person.' While he was focused on achieving top performance with the herd (top 5% production and management), he loved the dairy community camaraderie, especially the Lacombe heifer show which brought together showing and non-showing farmers. "It created a social, fun gathering for the farmers in our community." The heifer show and other 'Open Barn' events demonstrated to Hans that people will attend when they feel passionate about something. Essentially, he concluded the industry must continue to adapt to engage the people, while adapting to external forces too.

After selling the herd, Hans tapped into his interest in farming challenges and interest in people. He sold fertilizer; he set up and managed an AI tech service in central Alberta; he ran AI schools and sold genetics as time would allow. He then spent five years in the dairy nutrition consulting business. "I loved consulting with dairy farmers; we did bunker audits, troubleshooting of mixers, ventilation, calves and feeding/management." During this time, Hans learned to perform animal assessments, as he felt it was important to help producers adapt to the new proAction program.

"When I saw the job posting with Holstein Canada, it really piqued my interest!" He reread the description multiple times in the coming days, and he knew he had to put his application in. "I have passion for the cattle business, I enjoy working with people, and I'm a farmer," Hans summarizes with more than a hint of excitement.

Now, with over a month of training under his belt, Hans is excited by the range of services he will engage in. "I'm really comfortable doing animal assessments and have completed the proAction training with

Holstein Canada." Consulting with herdowners on Holstein Canada services is second nature to someone who was fully engaged in breed and club activities over his farming career. And he is enjoying the challenge of being on the 'other side' of classifying. "It's important that we put the correct score on a cow, but maybe even more important that we can explain clearly why we have arrived at that score. I want to be certain that I am delivering an objective score every time for the cow and the owner," Hans conveys with certainty.

Hans and his wife Monda have five grown children, making this better timing for a career change that will take him across four provinces, joining other classifiers in each area, and providing additional field service capacity to Morgan Sangster who continues to be based out of Manitoba.

"I'm going to love visiting with producers again. I want to help producers and share how the Holstein services can benefit them. Consulting, troubleshooting, finding solutions to improve – it's what I enjoy most."

Hans Eggink can certainly lay claim to the term 'adaptable' – taking on a sizable career shift at this point in his working life, and he sees more change facing the dairy industry as well. "I expect that as a service organization, we will keep evolving to do more and we will need to adapt our vision accordingly. As an industry, our end goal is to ensure we provide a secure supply of quality domestic food – and we have to do it **right** to keep the public's confidence. We will need to adapt to new technologies and rules."

When you meet Hans, I'm sure you will find the same enthusiastic, knowledgeable and forward-thinking farm guy that I did. The dairy industry has always been improved by people with passion! Welcome Hans! 🐾



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