

A Breeder's Minute with Tim Baumgartner, Oakdale, CA

By Karen Knutsen

At Holstein World, we have worked with Tim for several years. He's authored some fantastic stories about breeders and bulls around the world and his passion for the registered industry comes through in every piece he writes. This time, we turn the tables and interview Tim as he steps into his newest role; that of President of the RWDCA.

1) Congratulations! You were recently elected President of the Red & White Dairy Cattle Association! Tell us a little about yourself:

I grew up in a small community of 600 people in Eagle, Wisconsin. From the very start there were Red & White cows at our family farm. For as long as I can remember, I have been attending Red & White functions, including the early national shows in Elkhorn, WI. My parents were active with Red & White activities during the early years of the association, so being involved comes naturally to me.

For the last nine years, I have been working as an aAa (Animal Analysis Associates) analyzer throughout the USA and two provinces in Canada. I also do free-lance writing for publications such as the *Holstein World* and am the author of "*The Legends of the Tanbark Trail*". In addition, I always enjoy assisting at cattle shows and having the opportunity to escort a few around the ring. Judging shows and working with youth are a very rewarding experience. Researching dairy cattle history to prepare for new ideas and concepts yet to be written, has become a welcome past-time as well.

Prior to my work with aAa, I was employed with Semex USA as the manager of their genetic mating program and prior to that, I ran my own farm in Waukesha, WI, for six years. Working with this herd of Red & White cows was a tremendous experience, as the 30-cow herd received numerous All-American nominations, and afforded me an opportunity to sell young bulls into A.I. and export embryos worldwide. I believe that the last official BAA for the herd classification still ranks as the highest BAA ever achieved by a herd of 100% Red and Red Factored cows at 111.2%.

I still own a select group of red cattle that are housed throughout the Midwest. Recently, Model Strawberry-Red was classified EX-91 and became a 7th generation EX. Working with Red & White cattle and the people who appreciate them has been part of my life, and my work, from an early age.



2) How long is your term as President? What three major things do you hope to accomplish during your term?

Each member of the Board of Directors is elected to a three-year term, with no term limits. Each year following the annual meeting, a re-organizational board meeting is held where officers are elected. My term as President is a one-year term, but the opportunity to be re-elected will happen as long as I remain on the RWDCA Board of Directors.

While it is early in my position as President of the Red & White Dairy Cattle Association, I do have some concepts and ideas that I want to bring to our board members for the future success of our association. I truly understand that the dairy cattle industry, and more importantly, the registered section within the industry, is shrinking in numbers. I want to challenge our Directors to continually be looking for ways and opportunities to increase the value of registered cattle and the need for identification in hopes to turn this downward trend around.

I believe that our association is a business, and while it is a non-profit organization, we as a Board of Directors must always be looking forward to expanding opportunities that will be a logical fit for our membership. The RWDCA employs two very capable, full-time staff members in Stephanie and Nicole Stout. These two young ladies can take our association to new and exciting levels with some leadership and guidance, but this takes revenue. Without income, as in any business, things begin to falter. To me, this is not acceptable for an association that I have grown up with and members who are part of my extended family.

I touched earlier about value. I think this question, when it comes to Red & White cattle, has yet to be fully understood. Throughout the world, the Red cow has captured the hearts of dairy producers. But why is that? Is it due to her unique color that makes her stand out amongst her Black and White counterparts? Is it her ability to better adapt to various climates and/or stressful situations? Is it her ability to have higher components than her Black & White herd mates?

Or is it simple economics? Scarcity creates demand. When the first Red show was held at the 1995 World Dairy Expo, the majority of the Red cattle were put into a tent at the end of the fairgrounds with a few tied at the bottom end of different herd exhibits. The crowd in attendance on show day maybe reached 100 when Doug Savage named his champions. In 2008, at this same event, Red cattle stood in the first stalls with their Holstein counterparts and the class depth doubled in size and the quality ~ well it's priceless! Hundreds of people now come to watch the Red show and it has the same anticipated finale as a similar event scheduled for the following day.

3) What's the biggest challenge facing the RWDCA today (besides milk price)? How do you hope to address that?

While milk prices are the focus of everyone's attention at this moment, it is not a permanent problem. If it is a permanent problem in the USA, nothing else will matter

because everything, as we know it, will change. To me, dairy people are much like the cows they work with, they are creatures of habit. Our members had become accustomed to the familiar ways of our previous management team and location. That has all changed now and with change comes opportunities and new challenges, yet it's still a change.

As President, I need to listen to our members when they express concerns over current procedures or share ideas on future opportunities and bring this information back to our board and management team to best implement change. Bringing unity and vision for tomorrow is very important to me.

4) What's the biggest "hooray" at RWDCA these days?

To me, that is simple ~ OPPORTUNITY! Acceptance of the Red cow worldwide is amazing. No matter what portion of the industry you are involved in, you have to admit that acceptance of Red genetics is the fastest growing market out there. It has been a long road for the followers of Red genetics to get where they are today. The work of John and Joan Carpenter will always be appreciated and remembered. But it goes much deeper than just Holstein genetics. Our association is built upon a concept of identification of all dairy cattle. We do not pass judgment upon those who choose to blend their genetics, but identify parentage so they can best manage them. Yes, our association genetic base has more Holstein blood, but I believe our association is unique in that we register cows for all breeders, regardless of purity.

The growth of our association is rapid and acceptance of and that's evident by comparing the number and variety of young red sires being sampled today compared to 10 years ago. If you analyze the number of red calves being sold at your local or state sales, not saying anything about improved quality, just look at the difference compared to 10 years ago. Red genetics are making believers on many different levels and many different people.

5) What can we expect to see in terms of Red & White cattle at the fall shows this year - numbers? Big leaguers? Major events?

Well I have touched on the size and quality of shows at the World Dairy Expo already. What amazes me is that our association is getting requests each year for the start of new approved shows in new areas and these requests are coming from new people, just starting to get involved. I think the fun is just beginning and to see our friends north of the border start their own national show and their own All-Canadian contest is exciting as well.

Just who will win at the fall shows? Good question. I do have some thoughts on some very special individuals, but I will leave it up to the people who have been asked to serve as officials for our Red shows. I have been reminded by others who have judged at these shows before, and have always gotten the same statement "It does not matter until they walk in the ring. How they look the day before the show may not be the same as the day of the show."

And what about major events? Last year we witnessed a cow bring a million dollars, and it was a red cow named Apple! Years back, we read the news and witnessed first hand, as an incredible Holstein cow stood bridesmaid at the end of the day to a red cow named Scarlet. On August 1 of this year, I watched on my computer screen as a red cow named Marla brought \$295,000 and sold to another new red enthusiast, Jeff Butler of Illinois! We can't forget Mark Rueth and Redrose being named Supreme Champion of the World Dairy Expo, either.

Major events are happening with Red cattle on a daily basis. Just the other day, I watched as a baby Red calf was discovered at a traditional Holstein herd here in California. The excitement level of Beth Glaeser was high due to the birth of this Red calf as well as lifting the spirits of the farm employees. It was a major event on yet a totally different level. I said it earlier, the excitement is just beginning.

6) What are the big advantages that RWDCA does/has for its members?

There are many advantages to the RWDCA and its members. While we are not the largest or the oldest breed association in the USA, we are maybe one of the most diverse groups. I mentioned our open herd-book program and our full acceptance of the different breeding philosophies that our members choose to utilize. Being able to assist our members with proper identification is important and having programs that can make this process simple and very affordable has set us apart as a breed leader in this area.

We are working on expanding programs and new services that will be revealed in the coming months and years to support our current members and those who have yet to join. Our association web site (www.redandwhitecattle.com) is full of information and easy to follow. Our management team is using up-to-date current technologies. They are easy to contact and have a great understanding of our association programs. They even have the ability to register your calves for you right at your kitchen table...no waiting for registration papers via the mail anymore!

The breed publication, *'The Red Bloodlines'*, continually gets rave reviews, is produced in full color and is loaded with valuable information to assist our readers with sire selection to selling cattle to seeing who won at the latest shows. It often contains reports from around the globe and other breeds, so it does not limit those that think 'outside the box'. All of this is done by our management team, in house or on the road.

What I appreciate most, as I have from the very early age, is that the RWDCA is still a family-based organization. It is not very often that one can attend an event and know each person on a first name basis. How about calling the office and have a friendly familiar voice that you recognize answer the phone? The RWDCA is big enough to serve you and small enough to care!