

## The World Wide View

by Bruce Jobson



US cattle-breeding continues to dominate the world of Holstein sire procurement on a global-basis. World Wide Sires Incorporated, jointly owned by Accelerated Genetics and Select Sires, has played a major role in helping establish US bloodlines as the world's leading source of bovine genetic material. Bruce Jobson recently interviewed two of the company's leading figures, Vice President of Planning and Development, Mike Rakes and CEO John Schouten, at the UK Dairy Event and Livestock Show, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, England.



John Schouten



Mike Rakes

**BJ** "World Wide Sires has worked extremely hard over the past two decades in order to promote and develop US bloodlines in overseas markets. What's the reason for your success?"

**MR** “There are a number of factors that have contributed to the global dominance of US bloodlines over the past 20 to 30 years. First, the diversity of bloodlines we have available has made a significant contribution to advancement of the global cow population. US breeders have developed deep-pedigree cow families that have gained the respect of breeders in the US as well as, on an international-basis.

“From a global-perspective, international breeders ‘trust’ our cow families. Virtually every breeder in the world knows about Regancrest Farms, the Dellia family, Ocean View Farms and Zandra, to name a few. Significantly, breeders also ‘trust’ the US evaluation system as well as our classification programme. When a sire emerges in the US, breeders know that a bull proven through our rigorous evaluation system, will then perform in a multitude of environments in many other countries, and more often than not, will exceed their expectations.”

**JS** “I agree with Mike. At farmer level, we have immense trust in our product and have built a solid reputation for developing the world’s best available genetics. Throughout the past 40 – 50 years, US bloodlines have continued to deliver breed leading sires that have shaped the direction of global Holstein breeding. Sires such as Elevation, Bell, Blackstar, Chief Mark and more recently Durham, have established US bloodlines as the predominant source of global genetics. The influence these, and other US sires have had within international markets has been truly phenomenal. And if farmers don’t trust in your product; they won’t buy.”

**BJ** “OK guys. You both mention the trust farmers have in your product, and this is essential in a highly competitive international market, as is trust in the evaluation and classification system. But I merely suggest that sire analysts, on a global-basis, continue to pay enormous respect to US genetics by incorporating elite US bulls as predominant sires of son material within their own national breeding programmes?”

**MR** “Well, that’s a nice observation, Bruce! Obviously, it’s a huge compliment to our breeders that sire analysts from other countries view our cattle with such high esteem. It’s also a huge compliment to Accelerated Genetics and Select Sires for selecting and proving a bull, and subsequently, has the bull establish himself as an international sire of sons. Throughout the world today, we can see proven Durham sons, either US owned or owned and proven by our competitors, having a major impact. Where the US leads; others follow.”

**JS** “Some of World Wide Sires trading partners have also capitalised on US bloodlines, including top embryos, and have developed global sire of son material of their own. In Spain, Mesland Duplex is a prime example being a Durham X Emory x Holiday bred from Henkeseen bloodlines. The bull was originally proven in Spain, has a phenomenal UK proof of +3.10 and is currently (August 2009) the No.1 LPI Conformation sire in Canada with a type rating of +21. The ‘cream’ always rises to the top.

“Another example is Durham son, Regancrest Mr Sam. Farmers throughout the world immediately recognised the quality of his first US daughters and the bull has repeated his success in a number of countries. The bull offers +13 on Conformation score in Canada and is +3.00 on UK Type Merit (August 2009) As you know, Bruce, Mr Sam is an enormous success in the UK and his first 526

milking daughters have averaged 92% Good Plus and Better. That's why World Wide Sires has the global trust of dairy farmers."

**MR** "I'd just like to add to John's comments. We have to remember that Durham was unavailable in European countries such as the UK. The same applied to Marshall and as a consequence, farmers capitalised on these outstanding US bloodlines through their sons. Decker is another example of a Marshall son coming through with tremendous UK ratings. I know it's still early days but Decker's first 30 UK scored daughters have average 90% Good Plus and Better."

**BJ** "One sire worth mentioning at this stage is Oman. He's a World Wide Sires bull who is going to have a phenomenal world-wide impact. What's your take on this son of Cubby Manfred?"

**MR** "There's little doubt that Oman is going to have a major impact as a global sire of sons. I'm pleased that yet another World Wide Sires bull is being recognised for his ability to sire functional cattle with a tremendous 'will' to milk and therefore able to provide farmers with increasing levels of profitability. Oman is owned by Select Sires and he's sired by an Accelerated Genetics bull, Cubby. We're all extremely proud that the World Wide "family" has played a part in this huge success story.

"Oman is an outcross to many of today's popular bloodlines and has received extensive use in a number of countries. Oman sons are already emerging at a phenomenal rate and World Wide Sires already has numerous proven sons as well as, more young bulls coming on-stream in the near future. We're extremely confident his sons will provide dairy farmers, especially large herd owners, with profitable, long lasting, functional cattle."

**JS** “Oman is another massive success story for US genetics as well as World Wide Sires. The bull will cross well with most bloodlines and we can expect to see the emergence of sons bred from the likes of Durham bullmothers being extremely popular in the near future. On an international basis, we’ve seen a big uptake on his sons such as Bogart – he’s available in the UK with a +2.24 on UK MACE Type Merit. Another outcross sire is Oman Jake - he’s bred out of a Marshall dam and has a UK MACE Type Merit of +1.92.

“The expectation on Oman to deliver on a global-basis is immense. The top six sires on Canadian LPI MACE rankings (August 2009) are all his sons. Oman Oman is listed as the No.1 Canadian LPI MACE sire with a Conformation score of +10 and Bogart is listed at No.3 with a +9 Conformation score. Oman reflects the diversity of genetics available within the US cow population and his impact as a progenitor of sons will be colossal.”

**BJ** “World Wide Sires Inc is the international marketing arm or ‘umbrella’ organisation of Select Sires and Accelerated Genetics. We’ve seen dramatic changes in global milk pricing over the past 12 to 18 months – how has the company performed in these challenging situations?”

**MR** “We’re weathering the current economic situation well and 2008 was a record year in our company’s 38 year history. We’re expecting 2009 to be another extremely successful year and anticipate figures being close to our second or third best ever performance.

“Our company goals are to provide quality products at competitive prices, whilst at the same time, continuing to develop the best services for our farmer customers. Farmers need the best available services in challenging times and we provide cattle-breeders with a whole range of quality products and services. World Wide Sires is well positioned to provide reliable genetics and services in over 70 countries throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania.

“The World Mating Service (WMS) is mating over four million cows on a global-basis. Our web site allows farmers to create their own individual selection index in order to select the best available bulls required for their herd mating programme. Accelerated Genetics and Select Sires have more high fertility sires than any other global source. Our market share continues to grow.”

**JS** “Our farmer customer base continues to grow owing to the quality of our products and our renowned international customer service is second to none. The World Wide stud has never been as strong or as diverse, and this helps ensure we have the right genetic product to suit a multitude of breeding programmes on a global-basis. Sexed semen is another important product and the company offers sexed products from high ranking sires.

“Accelerated Genetics and Select Sires are also leading the way with genomic programmes and this technology will help develop the next generation of elite sires. The August 2009 USDA sire summary reflects the company’s growing influence on genetic programmes with 49% of the genes in the breed’s elite bulls emanating from World Wide Sires. Our three main US competitors by comparison,

collectively represent a 15% influence. Bruce, we're looking forward to next year, and the next decade, with confidence in our product, our services and our people."

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