



Introducing the New Holstein Profit Ranking (HPR) The Official Selection Index of the SA Holstein Society

The SA Holstein Society has officially released the Holstein Profit Ranking (APR), an index reflecting the genetic merit of individual animals for overall economic merit. The HPR provides a single value, expressed in ZAR, giving an indication of an animal's potential genetic contribution to herd profitability. This provides a means for farmers to achieve genetic improvement for profitability. The fluid index (**HPR_F**) is based on a payment system that pays for milk volume while the solid index (**HPR_S**) is for payment systems that only pay for solids (fat and protein).

The HPR was developed in a PhD study involving scientists from the ARC, University of the Free State and the universities of Colorado State and Iowa State in the USA. State of the art statistical modelling research was conducted, using information gleaned from the South African dairy industry. Thus, the index is appropriate for South African conditions. Extensive industry consultation was carried out and stringent quality checks were done by the SA Holstein Breed Improvement Committee, before the index was officially adopted.

The HPR combines five major traits directly influencing net farm profitability, *viz* milk volume, protein, fat, somatic cell score and calving interval. The contribution of each trait towards the final HPR value is 'weighted' according to its relative contribution to profitability. Other traits of economic importance, such as longevity, live weight and clinical mastitis will soon be added to the index, as part of ongoing development work. The index will be reviewed regularly as part of continuous improvement processes to ensure that it accurately reflects future trends in the South African dairy industry.

Essentially, the HPR is interpreted and used the same as EBVs for individual traits. The index value reflects profit per cow per year. Thus, an animal with an HPR of -400 has the genetic potential to contribute R400 less to herd profitability than the average base year cow (i.e. average cow born in 2005).

The SA Holstein breed is thus now on par with the rest of the developed dairy cattle world. A tool has been developed scientifically to enable farmers to easily make decisions on selecting the most profitable animals rather than get confused by massive amounts of information.