



Fair Play in Promoting Genetics in Canada

The sale and promotion of genetics is big business and the marketplace is worldwide. A quick look at a proof sheet, dairy magazine, sale catalogue or industry web site will confirm that producers have endless amounts of genetic information at their fingertips. Not only are there many sources, there are also many ways genetic information can be expressed. Producers may come across terms like LPI, TPI, NM\$, MACE, ISU, etc. - the possibilities are numerous.

With so much information expressed in so many ways from so many sources, how can a producer be sure the information they see is accurate and helpful in terms of making the best purchasing or breeding decisions? In an attempt to maintain the accuracy and integrity of genetic information presented when the Canadian dairy producer is the key audience, the *Canadian Dairy Industry Publishing Code of Ethics* was created.

What is the Canadian Publishing Code of Ethics?

Industry stakeholders including A.I. organizations, breed associations and Canadian Dairy Network (CDN) came together to create the Canadian Dairy Industry Publishing Code of Ethics in June 2010. This Code of Ethics provides guidelines for the fair, clear and ethical publication of information associated with dairy animals, embryos and semen in Canada. Abiding by this Publishing Code of Ethics is strongly encouraged when the primary audience for advertisement is Canadian dairy producers.

By joint development of this Code of Ethics, the various industry organizations work together to create the rules of fair play in terms of information available to producers in Canada. In essence, it sets the groundwork for the industry to be self-regulating in terms of what advertising is permissible and what information may be misunderstood, misrepresentative and just simply confusing to producers. In this process, CDN simply played the role of facilitator to encourage open discussion amongst the key stakeholders with the aim of establishing the agreed upon Publishing Code of Ethics.

Key Principles of the Code of Ethics

Specifically, the Code of Ethics covers the publication of information in three main categories, namely genetic information, performance (i.e.: phenotypic) records and herdbook data. A full copy of the Canadian Dairy Cattle Publishing Code of Ethics can be found on the CDN web site at <http://www.cdn.ca/articles.php>. In terms of the publication of genetic information, the Code of Ethics stipulates the following rules:

- (1) In general, CDN is the official source of all dairy cattle genetic evaluations expressed on the Canadian scale, which should be best understood by producers in Canada. For progeny proven sires with an official domestic proof and cows with an official Canadian index, this information must be used when any genetic information is included for promotion and advertising.
- (2) For young sires and heifers, the genetic (or genomic) evaluation information as published by CDN must be used for promotion and advertising in Canada. Genetic evaluations on other country scales may also be included as additional information.
- (3) For progeny proven sires and cows without Canadian daughter or performance data, the MACE (or GMACE) evaluation as published by CDN must be used for promotion and advertising in Canada.

- (4) Only in the case of progeny proven sires or cows with an official domestic evaluation in the United States, and not in Canada, may the US genetic evaluation be directly used for promotion in Canada. Ideally, such information would also be accompanied by the MACE (or GMACE) evaluation on the Canadian scale to minimize the possibility of misinterpretation by producers.
- (5) In any event, but especially when genetic information not provided by CDN is presented, the source country and organization as well as the publication date should be included.
- (6) When presenting genomic evaluations, the Direct Genomic Value for LPI or any trait may be included but only alongside the official genomic evaluation as published by CDN.

The Code of Ethics also outlines policies for publishing lactation and classification records as well as official herdbook data, including the animal's registered Purity Status when not purebred and codes for genetic recessives officially recognized by the respective breed association in Canada. The underlying rule for using this information in promotional material is to use the most up to-date data as available on the CDN or breed association web sites.

Code of Ethics Signatories

Given that the Canadian Dairy Industry Publishing Code of Ethics is a means for the industry to self regulate fair play for the promotion of dairy cattle in Canada, each industry organization has the option to support it or not. The organizations listed in Table 1 have opted to support the Code of Ethics and have therefore agreed to abide by its guidelines to assure fair and ethical publication of information associated with dairy cattle genetics in Canada. When any breach of this Code of Ethics is brought to the attention of CDN, the appropriate signatory organization will be contacted and CDN may impose appropriate consequences.

Table 1: List of Signatories Supporting the Canadian Dairy Industry Publishing Code of Ethics	
A.I. Organizations	Breed Associations
ABS Global (Canada)	Ayrshire Canada
Alta Genetics	Canadian Brown Swiss & Braunvieh Association
CIAQ	Canadian Guernsey Association
EastGen	Canadian Milking Shorthorn Society
Foundation Sires	Holstein Canada
GenerVations	Jersey Canada
Genex/CRI	Société des éleveurs de bovins canadiens
Nova Scotia ABC	
Select Sires Canada	
Semex Alliance	Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) Agencies
Trans-America Genetics	CanWest DHI
Westgen	Valacta
Magazines, Newspapers, etc.	Other Industry Partners
Atlantic Holstein News	Canadian Livestock Genetics Association (CLGA)
Holstein Journal	
La Revue - Holstein Québec	
Ontario Farmer / Ontario Dairy Farmer	
The Link - Holstein Ontario	

As signatories, the various breed associations have also agreed that their organization's publications (i.e.: *InfoHolstein* of Holstein Canada, Canadian Jersey Breeder of Jersey Canada, etc.) will conform to the Code of Ethics. Code of Ethics signatories will be displayed as a list on the CDN web site and broadly advertised in order to recognize their interest in the fair and appropriate delivery of accurate information to Canadian dairy producers.

Summary

In order to preserve the accuracy and integrity of genetic information in Canada, the Canadian Dairy Industry Publishing Code of Ethics was developed. This Code of Ethics will assist producers in making the most informed breeding and purchasing decisions. Promotional ads, sire proof sheets, sales catalogues, web pages and other forms of advertising produced by the list of signatories supporting the Code of Ethics can be considered as ethical and accurate. Breaches of the Publishing Code of Ethics by signatory organizations will be handled by CDN.

Authors: Lynsay Beavers, Industry Liaison Coordinator, CDN
 Brian Van Doormaal, General Manager, CDN

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