

# PRESS INFORMATION from *The Dairy Group*

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## **Dairy farmers beware the 'BY' genetic defect by Bas van Santen, The Dairy Group**

"After battling with BLAD (Bovine Leukocyte Adhesion Deficiency) and CVM (Complex Vertebral Malformation) a new genetic defect is becoming more apparent" says Bas van Santen from The Dairy Group. He goes on to say "the latest addition to the list of genetic defects is Brachyspina (BY) which relates back to the bull Sweet-Haven Tradition. Although the gene has been around for a while not many bulls have been tested yet. BY is a recessive gene which means that both parents need to be a carrier to have a 1 in 4 chance of getting the defect. BY causes abortion and stillbirth, shortened spinal cord, long legs and abnormal organs. Only in a few occasions will the off spring be born when it has the defect. There is also a 1 in 4 chance that when both parents are a carrier that the off-spring is free of the defect and a 2 in 4 chance that the off spring will be a carrier of the defect. In both cases the off spring will be normal and healthy.

The Bull Selector from The Dairy Group has been updated to include the 'BY' bull information. Go to [www.dairy-mci.com](http://www.dairy-mci.com) and register to use the web site and follow the link to Decision Support. The CVM column on the Bull Selector has now been replaced with the BY column as the majority of the bulls now available are free or non-carriers of the CVM gene. Be aware that not all the bulls have been tested yet for the BY gene. The updated bull selector lists 500 bulls which meet The Dairy Group minimum specification and of these 9 bulls are known to be positive for the BY gene. You can include the BY positive bulls by ticking the BY box. The Bull Selector allows you make your own bull selection based on a variety of traits to create your own short list. The website will be updated when more BY test results become available.

Also on the web site is The Dairy Group top 20 bull list, which is based on bulls meeting our minimum criteria and provide good value for money. The Top 20 was finalised after a lot of number crunching, checking prices, limiting too many bulls by the same sire and checking for the latest genetic defects. It gives a robust list of value for money bulls suitable for most farmers.

Changes have been made to how genetic codes are expressed in a bull's name. Carriers of a genetic defect gene are now identified with a "C" and animals tested free or non-carriers are identified with an "F". For example a carrier of the Complex Vertebral Malformation (CVM) gene will have the "CVC" expression and an animal free or non-carrier of the CVM gene will have the "CVF" expression. There is a good chance that some animals are tested for multiple defects giving them an array of expressions behind their name."

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For further information please contact:

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