

## Sooooooooo Big



After looking at many Holstein cows in a large commercial dairy system, I feel that a drastic change must be made in selection for body size if the goal of our industry is to produce more human food (protein & energy) with less inputs (feed & labor). Figure 1 on the next page shows the average PTA for stature for active A.I. Holstein bulls by their year of birth. Today's average Holstein cow is too large for commercial dairy systems. Yet, each year, bulls entering A.I. sire larger daughters than the previous year's group of sires. There are two reasons why we must reverse this trend and select for moderate sized cows.

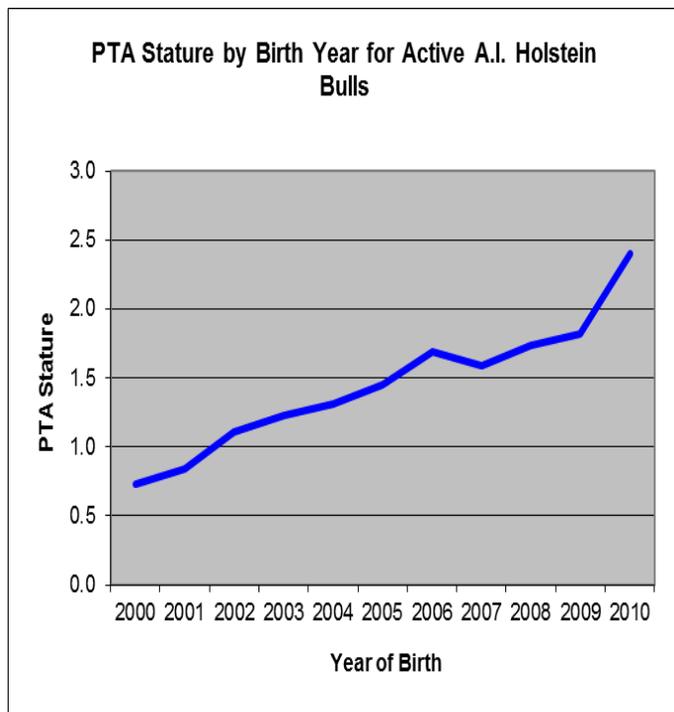
First, at the same level of production, larger cows require more feed to maintain themselves than smaller cows. Figure 2 shows that there is no relationship between PTA Stature and PTA Fat plus Protein for Active A.I. bulls that are at least 90% reliability for yield and stature. Bulls in the lower right hand corner of the graph in Figure 2 will sire daughters with the highest efficiency of feed utilization (high production and small size) .

Secondly, daughters of bulls that sire larger daughters do not survive as long as daughters of bulls that sire smaller daughters. Figure 3 shows this relationship for Active A.I. bulls that are at least 90% reliability for PTA Stature and Productive Life.

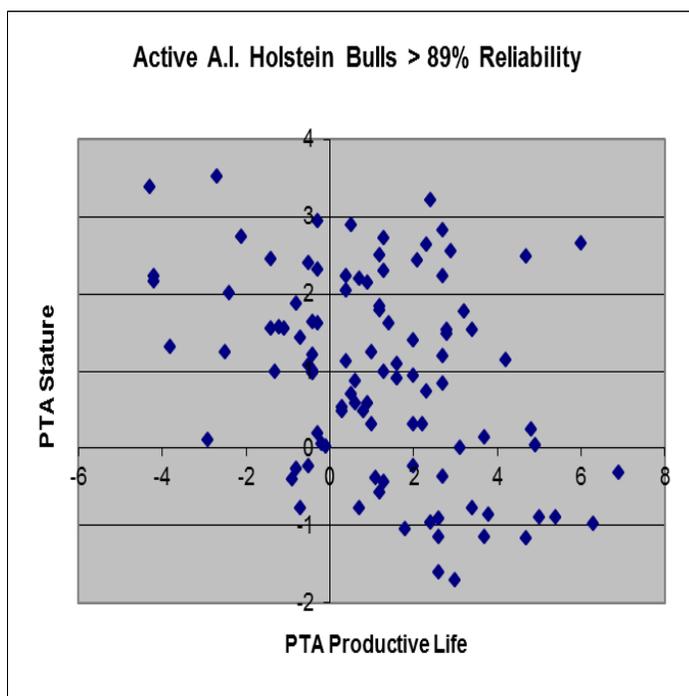
The root cause of Holstein cows becoming bigger over time is that larger cows receive higher scores for type (final score) than smaller cows. Figure 4 shows the relationship between PTA for Stature and Final Score for active A.I. bulls that are at least 90% reliability for both traits. The large positive relationship between stature and type causes an automatic increase in the size of our cows as we select for higher type scores.

Again, if we are in the business of producing human food with as few inputs as possible, we need to stop rewarding large cows and punishing small cows in our classification system. We don't need cows that are ten foot tall and bullet proof. We need cows that are less than half that tall and skid loader proof.

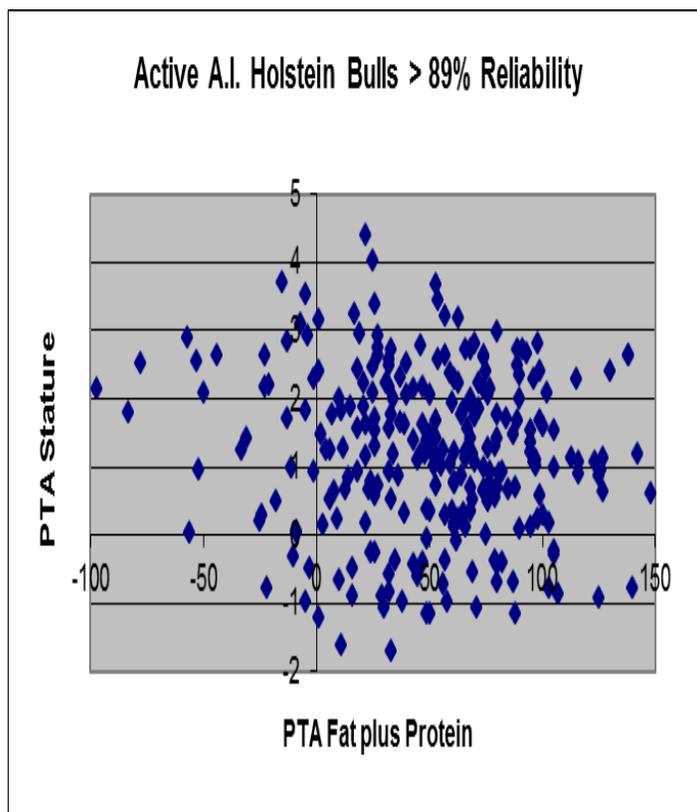
**Figure 1 - Trend for PTA Stature among Active A.I. Holstein bulls.**



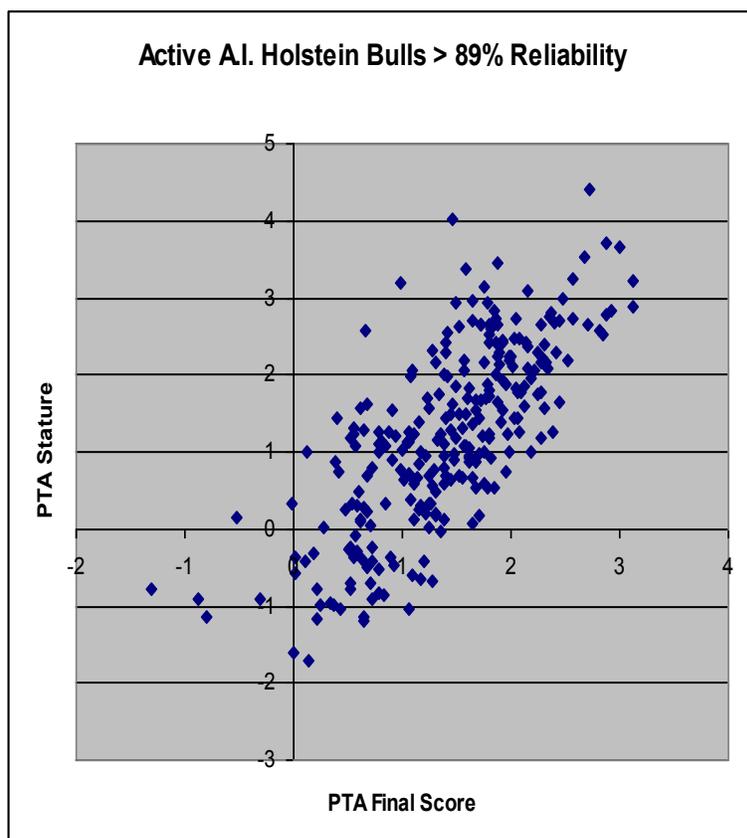
**Figure 3 - Relationship between PTA Productive Life and PTA Stature.**



**Figure 2 - Relationship between PTA Fat plus Protein and PTA Stature.**



**Figure 4 - Relationship between PTA Final Score and PTA Stature.**



## Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem

I recently read a book that I would highly recommend. The name of the book is “Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem” by Jay Richards. You can preview the introductory and ending chapters on the Amazon website if you would like to review it before buying a copy. The key point that the author makes is that the core of capitalism is not greed but instead is the creation of abundant wealth (for everyone) and that the creation of large scale wealth is the only sound method of poverty alleviation. Richards starts the book by saying that often capitalism is blamed for most social problems. He explains with simple examples the eight myths that cause most mistakes in economics. Richards gives a positive example of modern animal agriculture in the book which I appreciated. In the conclusion of the book, the author summarizes the top ten ways to create wealth and alleviate poverty. I think enough of the ten steps that I will list them below:

1. Establish and maintain the rule of law.
2. Focus the jurisdiction of government on maintaining the rule of law, and limit its jurisdiction over the economy and the institutions of civil society.
3. Implement a formal property system with consistent and accessible means for securing a clear title to property one owns.
4. Encourage economic freedom: Allow people to trade goods and services unencumbered by tariffs, subsidies, price controls, undue regulation, and restrictive immigration policies.
5. Encourage stable families and other important private institutions that mediate between the individual and the state.
6. Encourage belief in the truth that the universe is purposeful and makes sense.
7. Encourage the right cultural mores – orientation to the future and the belief that progress but not utopia is possible in this life; willingness to save and delay gratification; willingness to risk, to respect the rights and property of others, to be diligent, to be thrifty.
8. Instill a proper understanding of the nature of wealth and poverty – that wealth is created, that free trade is win-win, that risk is essential to enterprise, that trade-offs are unavoidable, that the success of others need not come at your expense, and that you can pursue legitimate self-interest and the common good at the same time.
9. Focus on your competitive advantage rather than protecting what used to be your competitive advantage.
10. Work hard.

Are attempts at milk supply management to increase the milk price a misguided attempt to control what should be a free market that can send the proper signals for more or less production to producers?

## Metzger Dairy Genetics

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