

# GENETICS in the making of an Alta 4-EVENT COW

One of the best ways to create more four-event cows for your future herd is to focus your genetic selection on health traits like Productive Life (PL). When you work with your trusted Alta advisor to put enough emphasis on PL in your customized genetic plan and strategy, it doesn't only mean that you'll create more old cows. PL predicts which cows will be toughest, healthiest and easiest to manage.

## How does a genetic plan relate to our Alta 4-event cow, 5677?

If you remember cow 5677, she is a second lactation cow living on a 1500-cow dairy – and she's an Alta 4-event cow.

We also know that her sire is 11HO11499 AltaMEGLO. As of April 2019, AltaMEGLO's PL value was +5.6. That means cow 5677 is expected to be productive in the herd for 5.6 months longer than her herdmates sired by a bull with a 0.0 PL value.

This actual measure of PL is not calculated until after a cow leaves the herd. However, we can look at other events in a herd's management records to see if higher PL bulls like AltaMEGLO actually create healthier and more trouble-free cows.

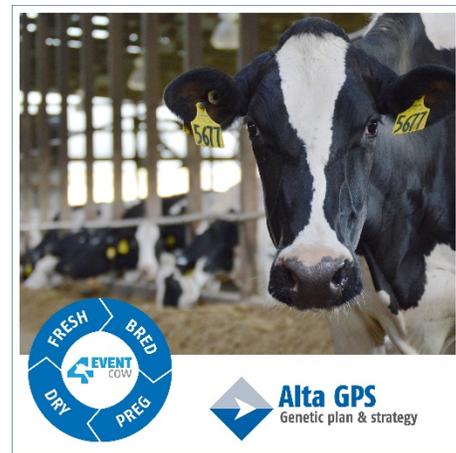
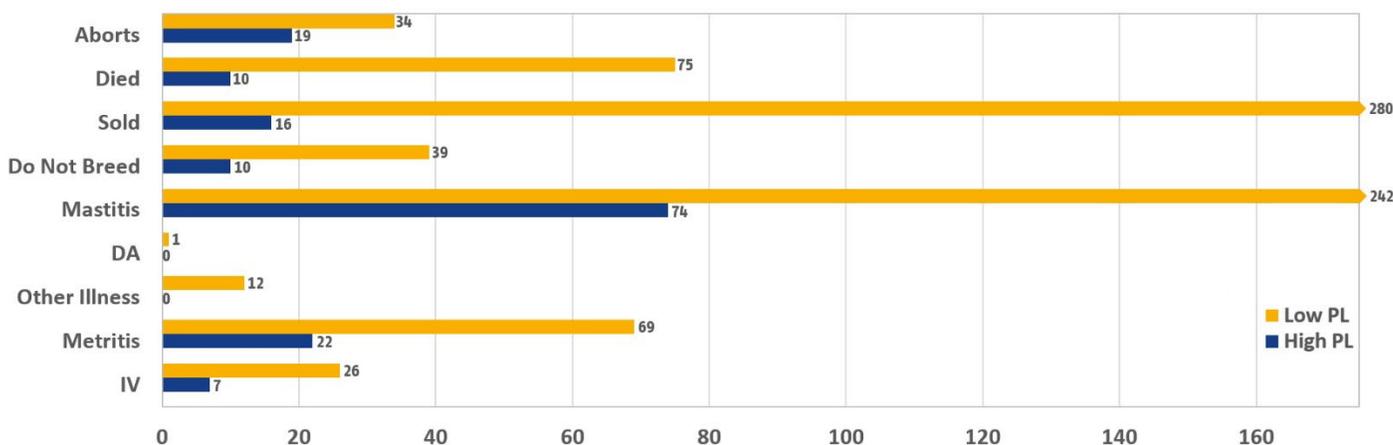


Table 1 below breaks down the events within the herd where cow 5677 lives. It includes all animals with known Holstein sire ID's. Based only on each animal's parent average for Productive Life, this shows the real difference in the health events between cows with a pedigree for high PL, and cows with a pedigree for low PL.

This graph illustrates the real number of events, recorded on this farm's herd management software program. Keep in mind, management is consistent throughout the herd, and no preferential treatment is provided for any given cow.



The table clearly shows the high PL cows had fewer issues after calving and throughout their entire lactation. High PL cows had fewer abortions, and fewer of them were coded as 'do not breeds' (DNB). The high PL cows also had fewer cases of mastitis, metritis, and other illness – all of the costly issues that cause headaches for dairy owners and managers. Because the high PL cows had fewer health problems, that also meant fewer of those cows were culled involuntarily.

Compare those results to cow 5677. We know that, because she's an Alta 4-EVENT COW, she had none of those events. Her sire, AltaMEGLO is at +5.6 for sire PL – even higher than the average of the high PL group. It's evident that aspect of her genetic makeup contributes to her status as an Alta 4-event cow with no health issues.

## Customize your genetics to create more Alta 4-event cows

Consider how much smoother your days would go if you didn't have any mastitis or metritis to deal with, and no IVs to give. A herd full of Alta 4-event cows like 5677 don't require costly treatments, and they don't drop in milk production due to those health concerns.

Any cow that has only the following four events in a lactation, is saving you time, money and headaches.

1. **FRESH** – with a healthy calf and no metabolic issues
2. **BRED** – serviced just one time, which means one unit of semen
3. **PREG** – confirmed pregnant from a single service, and with no subsequent abortions
4. **DRY** – dried off while healthy, and with no residual issues from throughout her lactation

Work with your trusted Alta advisor and select for Productive Life within your customized genetic plan. That way, you'll be sure to create more 4-EVENT COWS like 5677 as future replacements for your herd.