

Ferme Filiale inc. A remarkable Red & White section

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Jacquelin Fillion, Sylvie Morin, Vanessa, Marilyne, Martial Fillion & Éric Méthot

Thus began a love story forever engraved on the memories of the members of the Fillion family. They loved *Carmen* so much that when she died at the venerable age of 19 they reserved a resting place for her on the farm. Sylvie Morin, Jacquelin's wife and a shareholder in the operation, remembers *Carmen* as a "sweetheart of a cow to all of us."

Carmen, EX-5E 5*, a daughter of *Tripple Threat*, was certainly a productive member of the Filiale herd. She first distinguished herself in the show ring by winning both first Junior Two-Year-Old at Expo Québec and an All-Canadian nomination, in 1986. She then went on to win three Grand Champion titles: one in 1987, in the Beauce, as a three-year-old, and two in 1989, in the Beauce and Thetford Mines. As well, *Carmen* is the dam of 15 daughters classified 87% GP or better.

Today the Filiale herd includes 27 of *Carmen*'s descendents, including 10 VG and 4 GP in addition to many heifers. *Carmen* was also the reason the owners of the Filiale herd became interested in Red and Whites.

Carmen's reputation quickly spread to the south when her first two heifers were sold to Americans. This sale heightened the Fillions' interest in dairy breeding and confirmed the outstanding potential – both genetic and commercial – of their cow.

It was those two heifers in particular that brought the family to the attention of breeders. *Filiale Mylene ET-Red*, VG-87-3yr in Canada and EX-91 in the United States, was named All-American Red & White Five-Year-Old in 1993 and Reserve All-American Red & White Four-Year-Old in 1992. As for *Filiale Eden ET Red*, VG (CAN and US), she won All-American Red & White Two-Year-Old in 1990.

Mali too exerts her influence in North America

The family of *Filiale Jubilant Mali-Red*, GP-84-2yr-CAN and EX-91-USA, made its mark in the United States as the source of one of that country's most important Red and White families, namely the *Marker Mandy* family. *Mali* was sold as a two-year-old in the spring of 1993, the same year she won second Senior Two-Year-Old in Madison. Her daughter, *Bar-Lee MS Marcy Red*, EX-92-USA, was All-American Red & White Senior Two-Year Old in 1997 and Reserve All-American Red & White Five-Year-Old in 2000. She is dam to *Bar-Lee Marker Mandy Red*, EX-94 3E USA, All-American Red & White Senior Two-Year-Old and Five-Year-Old as well as Reserve All-American Red & White Senior Three-Year-Old. This cow has one red and white daughter, *Greenlea Rub Marlene Red*, EX-94 2E USA, and three black and white daughters, including *Bar-Lee Storm Maggie*, EX-93-USA, dam to the famous *KY-Blue Rubens Marla-Red*, EX-94 2E USA, named Red & White Intermediate Champion in Madison, in 2007, as well as All-American Red & White Senior Three-Year-Old and Five-Year-Old and Honorable Mention All-American Red & White Senior Heifer Calf and Four-Year-Old.

But because *Mali* was sold at a young age, it is through her dam, *Beaulain Miki Volcan*, VG-86-3yr 4*, bought in co-ownership with Francine and Ghislain Bolduc, of Saint-Georges, that this family exerted its influence on the Filiale herd. *Miki* is the dam of eight daughters classified 75% GP or better. One of those daughters is *Beaulain Skychief Mirage*, VG-88-4yr 2*, herself dam to five daughters (1 EX, 3 VG and 1 GP). One of them, *Filiale Chrome Mira*, EX, has already produced six heifers, including four by *Sanchez*.

Other families worth developing

The Fillion family also counts on *Proulade Twety Toby Red*, GP 82-2yr, who, in 2006, won second Intermediate Female Calf at the Spring Show and third at the QIHS. She is the holder of a Superior Lactation and is the dam of *Louidgi Redliner Trissia*, who, in 2010, won first Red & White Summer Yearling at the Spring Show as well as in Madison and Toronto.

Filiale Juror Star, EX 2E 5*, is another cow at the head of an outstanding family. In 2009, she was the Beauce Holstein Club's My Favourite Cow nominee and a finalist in that contest. She is the dam of five daughters, classified 3 EX, 1 VG and 1 GP. In nine lactations, she has produced 119 756 kg of milk, with 3.8% fat and 3.4% protein, for BCAs of 250-247-262. Her daughter *Filiale September Staki Red* is the farm's first red and white cow bearing the Filiale prefix to be classified EX. She was second Summer Yearling in the Beauce, in 2006, and, like her two EX sisters, holds a Superior Lactation certificate.

Ferme Filiale is also one of the five joint owners of *Del-Hollow LPT Jodi Red*, VG-86-2yr, first Senior Two-Year Old at the Ontario Red & White Show in 2009. Now in her second lactation, projected to yield 11 786 kg of milk, she has an excellent chance of providing the Filiale farm with embryos from another outstanding family of red and whites. Indeed, *Jodi* is the daughter of *Frandon R Mark Jodie Red*, EX-91 2E 2*, a leading light in the show ring, having won, among others, the title of Red & White Grand Champion at the QIHS in 2004, Honorable Mention All-American Senior Three-Year Old in 2004, and All-American Summer Yearling in 2002. Moreover, she is the dam of 10 daughters, all classified GP or better.

Ferme Filiale also purchases embryos to improve the genetics of its herd. Those embryos have included a few from *Maryclerc Morty Splendide*, VG-86-2yr 8*, one of which gave them *Lesperron Shottle Splenda*, VG-86-2yr. Born in 2008, this young cow from the family of *Glenn Drummond Splendor*, VG-86-2yr 34*, is currently in her first lactation, with a projected yield of 11 084 kg of milk, 4.3% fat and 3.2% protein. She has already produced three heifers and four sons. The Fillion family has great hopes for one of those sons in particular, namely *Filiale Spiderman*; his semen will soon be available through Trans-America Genetics (TAG).

For the same reason, the Fillions also acquired a few embryos from *Ronelee Toystory Darva*, VG-87-3yr USA, a full sister to the bull *Ronelee Toystory Domain*, and who, in her first 305-day lactation, at the age of two, produced, with thrice-daily milking, 13 381 kg of milk, with 3.1% fat and 3.3% protein. So far, *Darva's* embryos have resulted in two heifers and three bulls, which are owned jointly by Ferme Filiale and TAG.

For a long time, the Fillions focused their sire selection on conformation. While their interest in shows remains strong, they now base their selection more on the LPI and positive health traits, in addition to solid pedigrees, in order to access the markets for embryos, dairy cattle, and bulls for artificial insemination.

A special effort for forage milk

The Filiale farm stopped producing cereal crops last summer. About 170 hectares are now devoted to producing haylage (a mix of alfalfa, clover, fescue and bromegrass), while 15 ha are used to produce corn silage. These feeds are incorporated in a TMR and the herd is fed as one group. Thus, whereas the farm used to harvest about 25 000 small hay bales, that number is now reduced to 5000.

The governing idea behind this change is to increase milk production with forages, with a view to improving the health and wellbeing of the animals. Before, explains Jacquelin, the cows produced close to 3 kg of milk for every kg of concentrates. Over the course of the past year, however, they produced more than 4. Martial adds that forage intake is now about 42 kg per animal per day, equivalent to 17 to 18 kg of dry matter.

Up until now, the hay was harvested in round bales that then needed to be chopped to incorporate the feed in the TMR. Considering the large quantities required and to ensure they obtain young, easily digestible forage, the Fillions have turned to more high-performance technology. In anticipation of the summer of 2011, they have invested in two machines – a mower with a 7.5-m cutting width and a forage harvester with the same capacity – that will enable them to reach their goal, which is to harvest about 40 hectares of haylage per day so as to finish harvesting in three days. This will allow them to mow in the morning and then harvest the chopped hay in the afternoon, while the moisture level is still high, and store it in bunker silos.

As Éric Méthot, Marilyne's boyfriend and an employee of the farm, explains: "It's this modernization, starting with the purchase of the mixer, that has brought us closer to the true nature of the cow."