

# REMEMBERING BILL WEEKS AND AAA

By Merlin Carlson

**Growing up on a small dairy farm** with grade cows, I began farming in 1950 with my wife, Marilyn, and by 1953 we were milking 40 cows at Poplar Grove in northern Illinois. We had become interested in Registered Holsteins from our neighbors, such men as Don Ellingson, Clyde Curtis, Lawrence Larson and George Crawford. We decided to invest the proceeds from the sale of a few cull cows into purchasing some registered cattle.

In 1954, we bought 10 registered heifers but because we were new in the business, they had been misrepresented to us. I became discouraged and told my friend Don Ellingson I was going to quit. Don encouraged me to attend the Boone – Winnebago Black and White Banquet which we did.

Bill Weeks was the speaker, explaining his aAa breeding program using “sharp” and “round.” After the speech I talked with Bill and he offered to come look at our heifers. I remember at the coffee table he wrote some notes on what the daughters of these heifers would look like and what the calves they were carrying would look like. As these animals calved in, it turned out to be like what Bill had predicted.

As Bill had just moved to Rockford, he asked if he could come out and work on the new system of applying numbers after the letters identifying the biggest need in the mating. He and I spent many hours in my Squaw Prairie Holstein herd. I think for every mating we looked at, the offspring turned out precisely as he had predicted.

Bill and I became good friends as I continued to develop my registered herd. He helped me select a Raven son that was RRS and also chose a Lone Elm Texal Highcroft son from Grant Richards in Utah, an SSR bull. The Raven son analyzed 5-4-3-1-2-6 and the High Croft son 2-1-6-3-

4-5 so they complemented each other and I used them on the entire herd for several years.

He also helped select consignments when I was manager of the Boone - Winnebago Holstein Classic Sale for several years.

Once again, I took Bill’s advice and accepted the job that my church friend, Wally Lindskoog, offered to manage Arlinda Farms. Bill had analyzed the Arlinda herd for several years. Marilyn and I moved to California in 1961. Arlinda had used the Elsie Leader bull and his maternal brother, 49’er, both bred by Elmer Dawdy in Kansas, and Chambric ABC from Chambric Farms in Illinois. All three bulls went on to great careers in A.I.

We had lots of milk in our cows, but as Bill reminded us, we needed a little more bone and strength. He suggested going to Pawnee Farms in Nebraska for their dispersal. They had used a couple of bulls that really put the bone and strength in the cattle, but they still milked well.

One of my first jobs at Arlinda was to go to that sale and look over the herd. I was especially impressed by the Beauty cow. With her clean bone, deep rib and wide front end, she seemed like a very efficient cow.

The most interesting part was that she was bred to an R R R bull that made the AI stud for production.

We called the son she had for us Pawnee Farm Arlinda Chief, named after our friend that was head of the dairy department at Modesto Junior College... a full blooded American Indian. As Chief matured, he developed into a very strong code 4 bull. When his daughters were yearlings, we thought they were too round front-ended to work well enough, but when they freshened, our milker, Joe Silva, told Wally and me, “We’ve got a bull whose daughters like to milk.”

Bill Weeks was right again. As Arlinda Chief daughters developed around the country, he became the highest production bull of the breed. Even more importantly than that, I think he sired more high production sons and grandsons than any other Holstein bull.

I thank Bill Weeks and aAa for guiding me through my journey with Registered Holsteins. It’s been a great life spending 40 years with Registered Holsteins, helping some of the finest breeders in selecting and merchandising their cattle.

I want to send greetings and thanks to Bill’s daughter, Mary. I remember the day you were born. For many years, I drank a lot of coffee at your mother and father’s house in Rockford.

And thanks to Holstein World for a great tribute to Bill Weeks, a great cow man. □

*Editor’s Note: An Illinois native, Merlin Carlson spent much of his Holstein career in California where he managed Arlinda Farms in Turlock and then was a Holstein auctioneer and sale manager for many years. He has retired back in his home state at Rockford, IL. He wrote this letter in response to the focus on Bill Weeks featured in the April issue of the World.*



**PAWNEE FARM ARLINDA CHIEF (EX-95-GM)**  
This immortal Holstein sire was a result of the breeding philosophy Bill Weeks who was instrumental in the bull’s birth at Arlinda Farms where Chief was heavily used, promoted and sold in AI.