



Ernst Gubelmann was born and raised in Switzerland in Brown Swiss dairy farming along with his four brothers and four sisters. This is where he attributes his learning and passion for working in dairy and Brown Swiss cows comes from. Ernst met and married Yolanda and started a family. With limited farming opportunities back in the home country, the Gubelmann family made the courageous decision to immigrate to Canada from Switzerland in 1991. Stefan joined the family farm full time after graduating from Ridgetown College in 1996 and married Rita in 2002 and she joined the farm full time after their oldest daughter Katrina was born in 2004.

The Gubelmann's started their Canadian story by renting a farm and milking 50 Holstein cows. Struggles were immediate for Ernst and Yolanda; 'when the phone rang, nobody wanted to answer it because we couldn't speak English'. In addition to maintaining a dairy operation, the family did custom fieldwork while taking English lessons in nearby Listowel. When not in school, Stefan was in the barn while his father Ernst was in the fields.

The transition to a Brown Swiss herd started slowly and steady. Ernst had never used a calf puller while in Switzerland and could not understand why he had to help calve his Holsteins. Leaning on his experience with Brown Swiss, he knew the breed could perform in comparison. Little by little, Brown Swiss cows acquired through dispersals were added to the existing herd. Neighboring dairy farmers furrowed their brows at the decision to mix the herd, but the Gubelmann's followed their goal and decided to let the best cows win. Based on the criteria of longevity, components, hardiness and character over the years, the Brown Swiss breed won out.

During the years, the Gubelmann family's core philosophy was: "We have to get good before we can get big" as Ernst puts it. Good meant always improving the herd top qualities when making breeding decisions. To find bulls with equal or better scores for key traits, Stefan has been leading the way, having inherited the decision making from Ernst, in making those critical breeding choices.

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**Gubelmann Family
Walton, Ontario**

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Gubelman Brown Swiss

Stefan looks through all the information available from bulls from around the world to choose the sires to use to improve the next generation. If a chosen bull meets Canada's strict health requirements we will find a way to import his semen! Bulls are chosen based on component production kg and %, mammary system, feet and legs and SCC. They are then mated individually onto each animal trying to perfect the next generation.

Currently, they milk 64 Brown Swiss cows in the tiestall barn with a few switch cows during fall incentives. There are four good cow families, which the Gubelman's have developed through thorough and careful breeding decisions. As Ernst put it: 'It takes a bit of good luck and a lot of patience' to develop the next generation of Brown Swiss calves. The Dora cow family is the great achievement as roughly 65% of their current herd traces back to Dora through the maternal side as well another 20% or so that have Dora blood in them through the use of her sons or grand sons. Petdale Devon, the grand dam of Gubelman Gordon Dora was purchased at the Petdale dispersal. We stopped planting corn that day to attend the dispersal sale, which turned out to be a very good decision!

As the herd developed and gained recognition in the Brown Swiss circles, people have come to their barn wanting to purchase their animals. Tough decisions were made when debating which cows to keep and which ones to sell. When the market is good, they sell about 30 head each year, which is great news for the breed.

The farm business supports two Gubelman generations, owned by Stefan and his wife Rita, and his parents, Ernst and Yolanda. The third generation is on the way, working hard on the farm, at local shows and 4H – in fact, the 2019 Swiss Miss honor goes to Katrina.

In the CanWest DHI's 2018, Ontario Progress Report, Gubelman Brown Swiss Ltd. had a score of 325.3, the highest score in Western Ontario and the fourth highest in Ontario. BCA (breed class average) measures milk, fat and protein.

The farm also ranked seventh in Ontario for milk value per cow. The farm also had 10 cows finish over 80,000 kg in 2018, two of which were over 100,000 kg for lifetime production.

The Canadian Brown Swiss and Braunvieh Association are proud of the Gubelman's accomplishment and truly deserve the recognition as Recipients of the Master Breeder Award in 2018.

