

# Canadian Blonde d'Aquitaine Association

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## BREEDER PROFILE

The Canadian Blonde d'Aquitaine Association is pleased to offer this space to profile our breeder members. If your operation has been featured in a magazine or newspaper, please contact Myrna Flesch at [westwind@telusplanet.net](mailto:westwind@telusplanet.net)

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### **MBRHEO CATTLE CO.**

**Our dedication is evident by our involvement**

*Rheo, Sharon, Randi & Devin Machina, October 2005*

MBRHEO Cattle Co. Inc. is a co-operative effort of Rheo, Sharon, Randi & Devin Machina. MBRHEO is pronounced embryo as we decided to fast track our breeding program through embryo transplants. Our Mission Statement is "Our dedication to the Blonde breed is evident by our involvement! Our dedication to Blonde breeders is evident by our cattle!"

MBRHEO Blondes began as a passion of Rheo's longing to be a beef farmer. Rheo grew up in the city of Windsor and mathematics (numbers) was his forte! He graduated from the University of Guelph in 1990 with a degree in Water Resources Engineering. Following Rheo's graduation, an opportunity presented itself and he volunteered to help on his uncle's farm. That year, Rheo bought WSS Risa 2R from the WSS Dispersal Sale. He approached Jack McCoubrey of Liahn Farms Ltd. about flushing Risa. The first flush resulted in 8 #2 embryos which were implanted into four recipients. One pregnancy developed and it resulted in the first animal of our breeding program, a heifer calf which Rheo called "Rheo Cheyenne"! At this time, Rheo was dating Sharon Fisher.

In 1994, Jack McCoubrey approached Rheo to be the Herdsman at Liahn Farms in London, ON. This meant Rheo leaving Sharon in Clifford while he headed to be the Herdsman for one of the most prominent Blonde herds in Canada! Rheo went there "with open eyes and ears" willing to learn from one of the best cattlemen. During Rheo's days at Liahn Farms, he was responsible for two bull test groups and three heifer development groups, along with the daily chores of the 200+ cow herd. Unfortunately, in the spring of 1995, Sharon's mother became sick and passed away. In the fall of 1995, Rheo & Sharon were headed to a cattle show in Lindsay with a rented truck and trailer, the truck caught fire and then the fire entered the gooseneck where "Rheo Cheyenne" was the first animal tied. Cheyenne and Liahna Desiree's halters melted from the heat of the fire and they made their way to the back of the first compartment. The third animal, Liahna DeeDee, was pushed into the flames (to this day she still has scars from the fire). Six weeks later, Cheyenne was named Senior Cow Champion at the Royal. That day, the Blonde and Charolais cattle shows were stopped because someone decided to make a marriage proposal - Sharon said YES!

In 1999, Bryan Durst and Rheo headed out to Brandon, MB for the National Show with five head. Marcel Fouillard provided accommodation for the cattle to climatize a few days prior to the show. Following the show, Bryan and Rheo had accumulated six belt buckles between the two of them - four for Bryan and two for us. "Rheo Cheyenne" was crowned 1999 National Champion Female! She would be the first Ontario bred female to be crowned Blonde National Champion Female.

In 2000, we decided to hold an Internet Production Sale from our own website - the first of its kind in the Blonde breed. We offered bred yearlings, heifer calves, pregnant recipients and embryos. The sale was very successful with animals going to Alberta, Kentucky and Ontario. The Sale proceeds went towards a new truck and the decision was made to sell the Holsteins and concentrate on beef cattle. With time away from the show ring, we decided to pursue the performance side and sent four bulls to a BIO bull test where Rheo's passion for numbers was once again brought to the forefront. He would study and review test data as it became available.

At the end of test, Rheo could not believe the results - our four Blonde bulls collectively led in five different categories. They had the highest EOT weight, highest ADG, highest WPDA, highest ribeye and biggest SC. YES, our Blonde bulls had bigger nuts than bulls from the Angus, Charolais and Simmental breeds! One of these bulls was selected by Roger Paulgaard of Provost, AB, one of the biggest Blonde herds in Canada. We knew our homework was paying off - pay strict attention to genetics, ask lots of questions and stick to your game plan (ideas that Jack put into Rheo's head)!

In 2001, we decided to broaden our horizons by sending two bulls to the New Liskeard Bull test station. We thought that if our bulls could compete with the 60 bulls (of all breeds) in the group, that we would have found a new focus. Following test, "Rheo Ladies Man" finished 6th out of 60 bulls for growth but had the largest ribeye. He was crowned the 2001-2002 Top Performance Blonde Bull in Ontario.

In 2002, we sent three Blonde bulls to test with one finishing as runner-up to the Top Performance Blonde bull in Ontario.

In 2003, the BSE crisis caused us to send only one Blonde bull to test. Being a son of "Rheo Ladies Man", we knew that he would be in the hunt for top honours. Sure enough, when all the data was compiled, "Steaks Alive" was crowned the 2003 - 2004 Top Performance Blonde bull in Ontario. He sold to Roger Paulgaard.

In 2004, we decided to test only one Blonde bull again, this time one of different genetics. "Prime Ribeye" rose to the top and was named the 2004 - 2005 Top Performance Blonde bull in Ontario. He sold to Mervyn Skjevland of Ferintosh, AB.

In addition to these show and performance achievements, we have been featured in the December 1997 issue of *de Blonde*, Holland's National magazine. In 1999, we were featured in the *Ontario Farmer* magazine for our embryo work. In 2000, we were featured in the *Ontario Farmer* magazine for our Internet Production Sale. To date, our genetics are at work across Canada, as well as Brazil, Costa Rica, Denmark, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States.

Rheo has spent 6 years as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Blonde Association and is completing his ninth consecutive year as a National Director! Sharon has been a Director of the Ontario Board for the last two years.

We are proud of our accomplishments and our involvement within the Blonde breed. We are always looking to implement fresh and new ideas when promoting our herd and the benefits of the breed. Our cattle continue to speak for themselves!