

More polled cows in all dairy breeds

Until a few years ago, it was only a few beef cattle breeds where some or all animals were polled. For example, the Angus breed is characterized by all animals being polled. In dairy cattle it has not been common and until recently almost all dairy cows had horns. In recent years, however, it has been a trait with great focus and there are polled bulls available in all breeds.

Genomic tests give the answer

You can see or feel if the heifer calves have horns or is polled, but if you want to know if the calf carries the polled gene from both sire and dam, or only from one parent, you can get the answer through a genomic test - this is one of the information you get automatically.

If you want to know if the AI bulls you are using in your herd carries the polled gene, you can find the answer on [NAV Bull Search](#). On the search page, bulls that are double carrier will have the code POS. Bulls that are single carriers have the code POC and bulls that do not carry the polled gene have the code POF.

How to inherit polledness

Polledness is inherited dominantly, ie. that the heifer calf only needs to inherit the gene for polledness from one parent to be polled. If the heifer calf is only a carrier of a single version of the gene for polledness, it does not have horns, but can pass on the gene for horns to its offspring. So, half of its offspring will be horned if mated to a horned bull

Step increase in last years

There is a widespread use of genomic testing in dairy breeds and it is thus possible to follow the change in proportion of animals that are single carriers (POC) or are double carriers (POS). Figure 1 shows the change from 2015-2021 in proportion of the polled gene per year of birth for the dairy breeds.

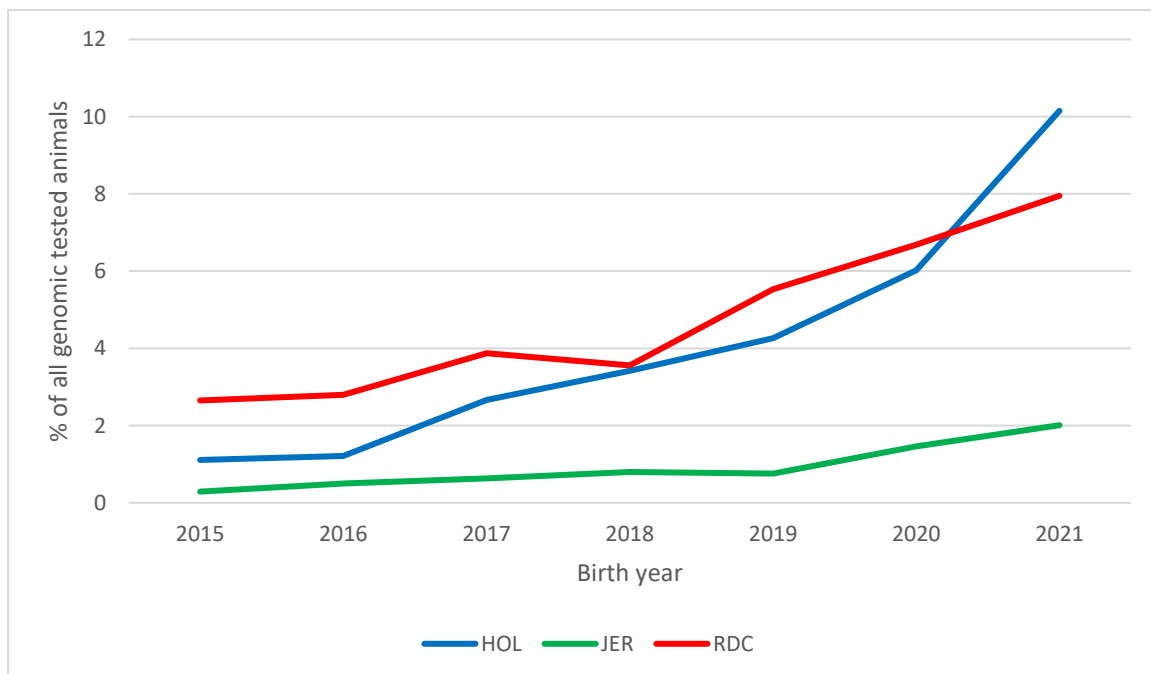


Figure 1 Change in proportion of single carriers (POC) from 2015-2021 among all genomic tested dairy calves

Figure 1 shows that there has been a strong increase in proportion of animals that are single carriers in the period for Holstein and RDC, while Jersey has a smaller change. There are still only a few animals (less than 0.5% within year) that are double carriers, but this proportion will increase when the polled gene becomes common in the breeds