



# A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters and Handling the Need For Classification in The Future

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Holstein USA



# Holstein USA Classification has some of the same struggles with keeping large herds active in classification as much of the world does:

1. Struggle with the direct need for classification.
  - a. Validation of genomic data for conformation
  - b. Feeding information for the next generations of bulls/ genomic data
  - c. Building pedigrees and marketing enhancement of high quality animals
2. Time spent to classify 200/500/1000 cows one to four times per year (labor, loss of milk production)
3. Money spent themselves for data that is being used by the world
4. AI companies requesting for Young Sires to have daughters classified (continual decline since GENOMICS started in 2008)



# Classification Trends

Cows classified per year:

2019	219,658
2020	220,921
2021	232,956
2022	234,343
2023	235,375

Unfortunately I feel this will reverse slightly because of the trends due to economic factors in the USA!

1. Reduced fluid milk consumption
2. Strong trend of beef on dairy semen usage
  - a. Dairymen making less dairy calves which equates to less registrations which equates less classification numbers

The key positive with this: better quality cows and less total replacement numbers which increases the value of cows



# Classification Value for Large and Small Herds Beyond Marketing and Herd Improvement

Holstein Complete program:

1. Encompasses most all of Holstein USA programs and services into one package
  - a. Tiered costs based on herd size
  
2. Working relationship with USA's largest Genomic data company
  - a. Cost savings for herds who utilize genomic company and Holstein services together





# Conformation Matters

Jeffrey Bewley  
Genetic Specialist  
Holstein USA



# Data



Holstein Association USA official classification scores were used for linear classification data



Only first score in first lactation used in data set



Official production records were used for production and culling data



Only completed 305 day production records used



Lifetime Milk production- only first six lactations used

# Data



Cows included had at least 5 herdmates with similar year and season of calving



**AFTER EDITS 937,603 COWS IN 5,496 HERDS QUALIFIED**



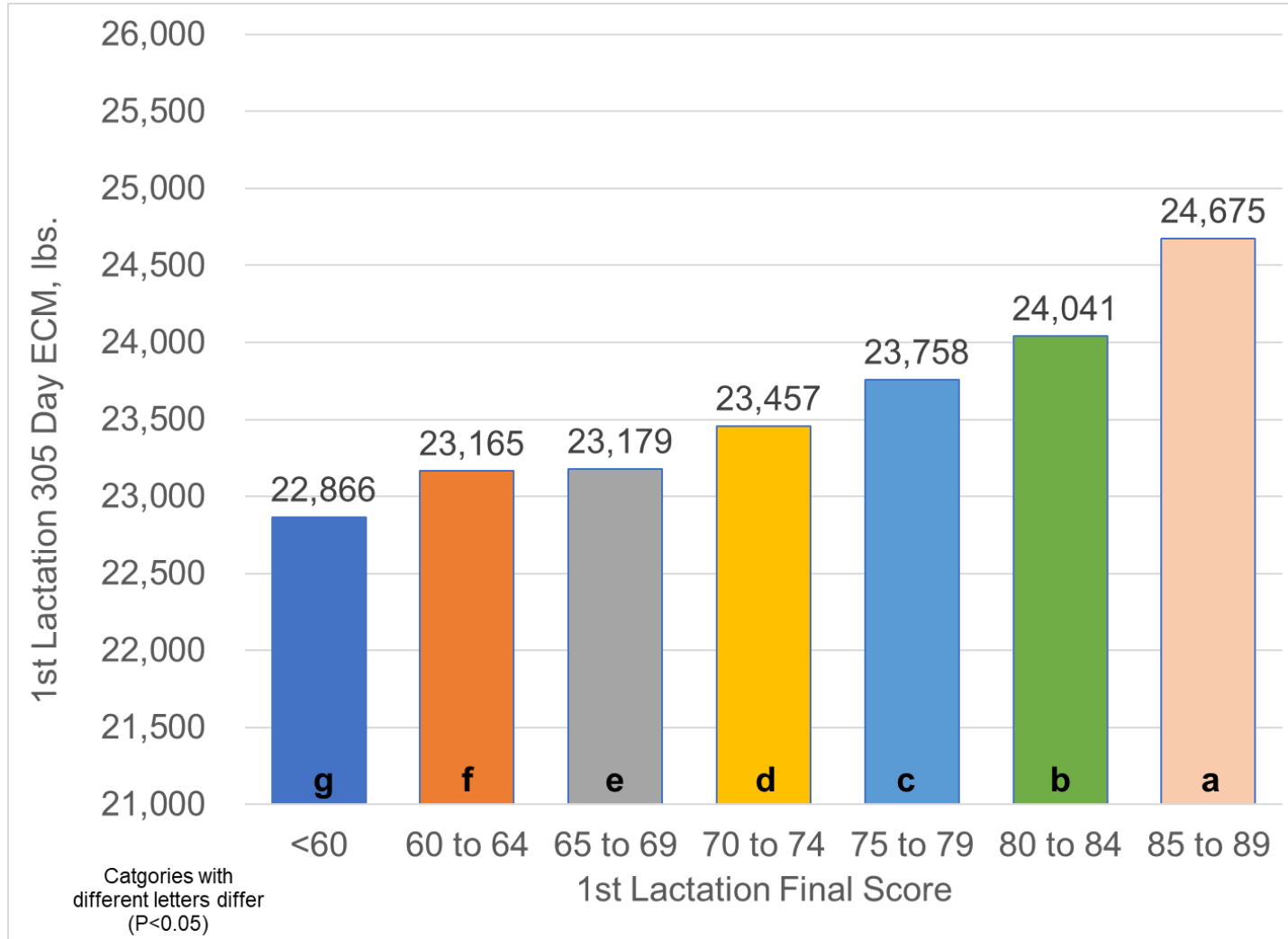
# A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters Study

Relationships Between  
1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Energy  
Corrected Milk and  
Conformation

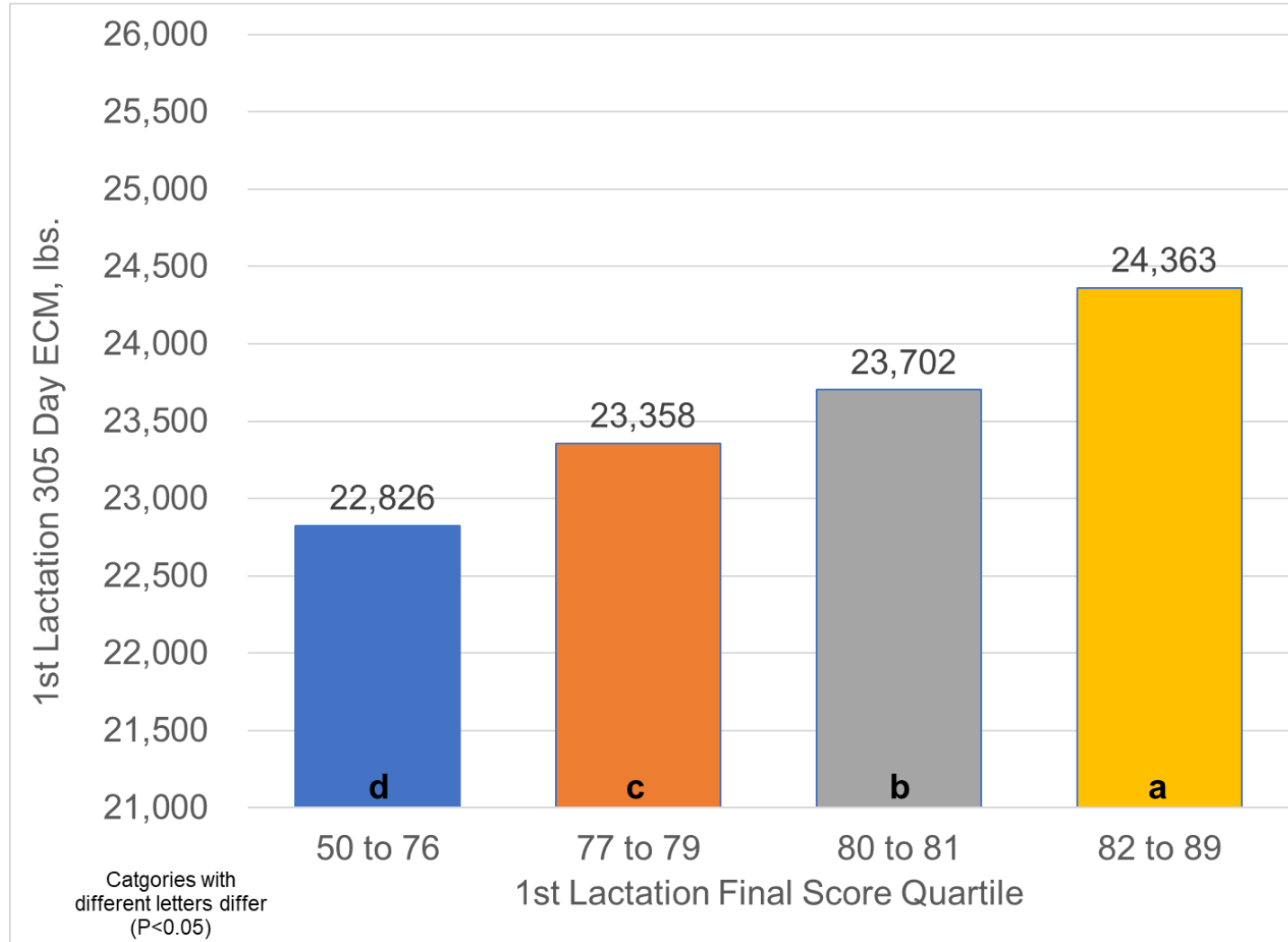




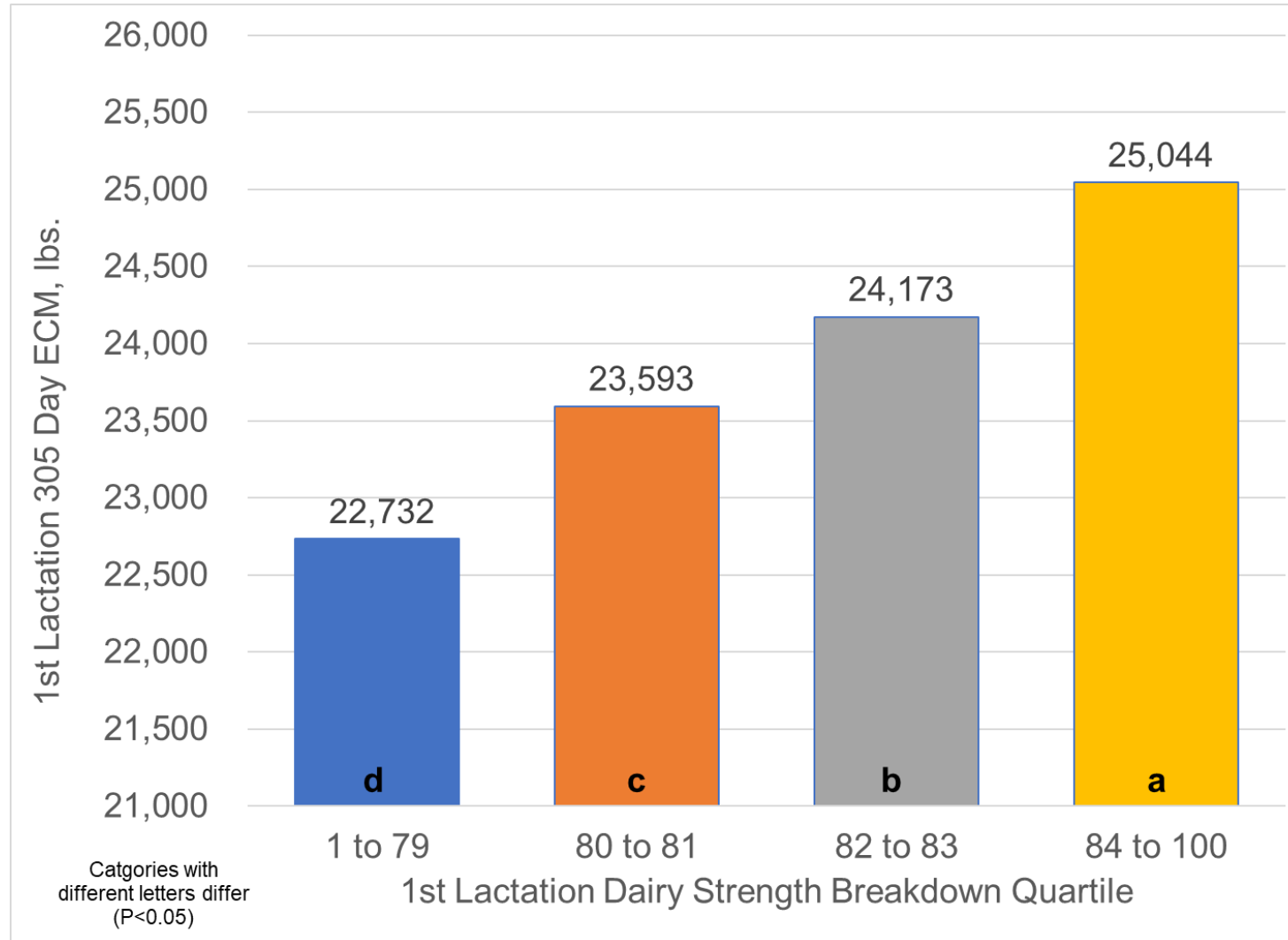
# 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Energy Corrected Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Score Category



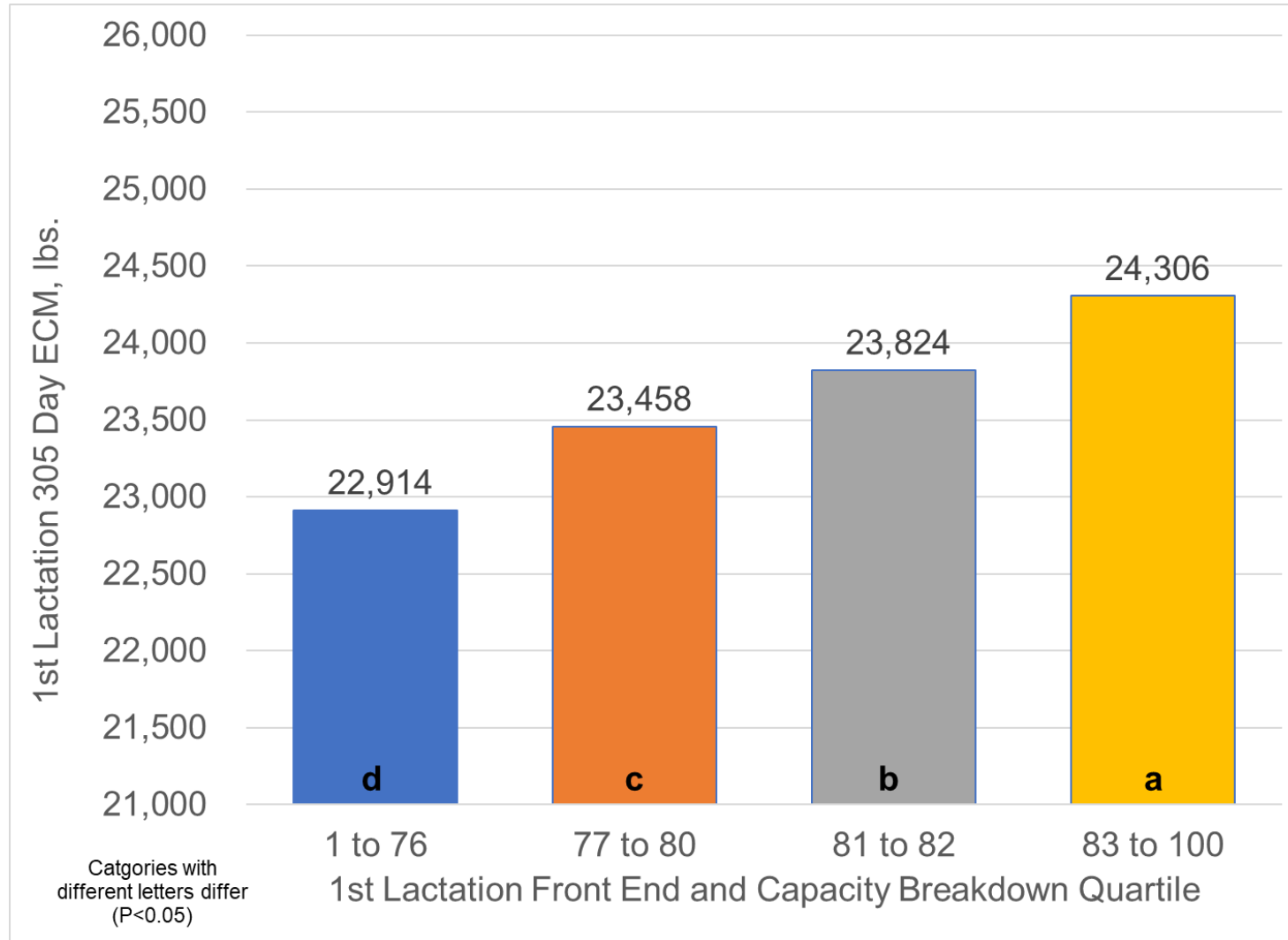
# 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Energy Corrected Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Final Score Quartile



# 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Energy Corrected Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Dairy Strength Breakdown Quartile



# 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Energy Corrected Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Front End and Capacity Breakdown Quartile



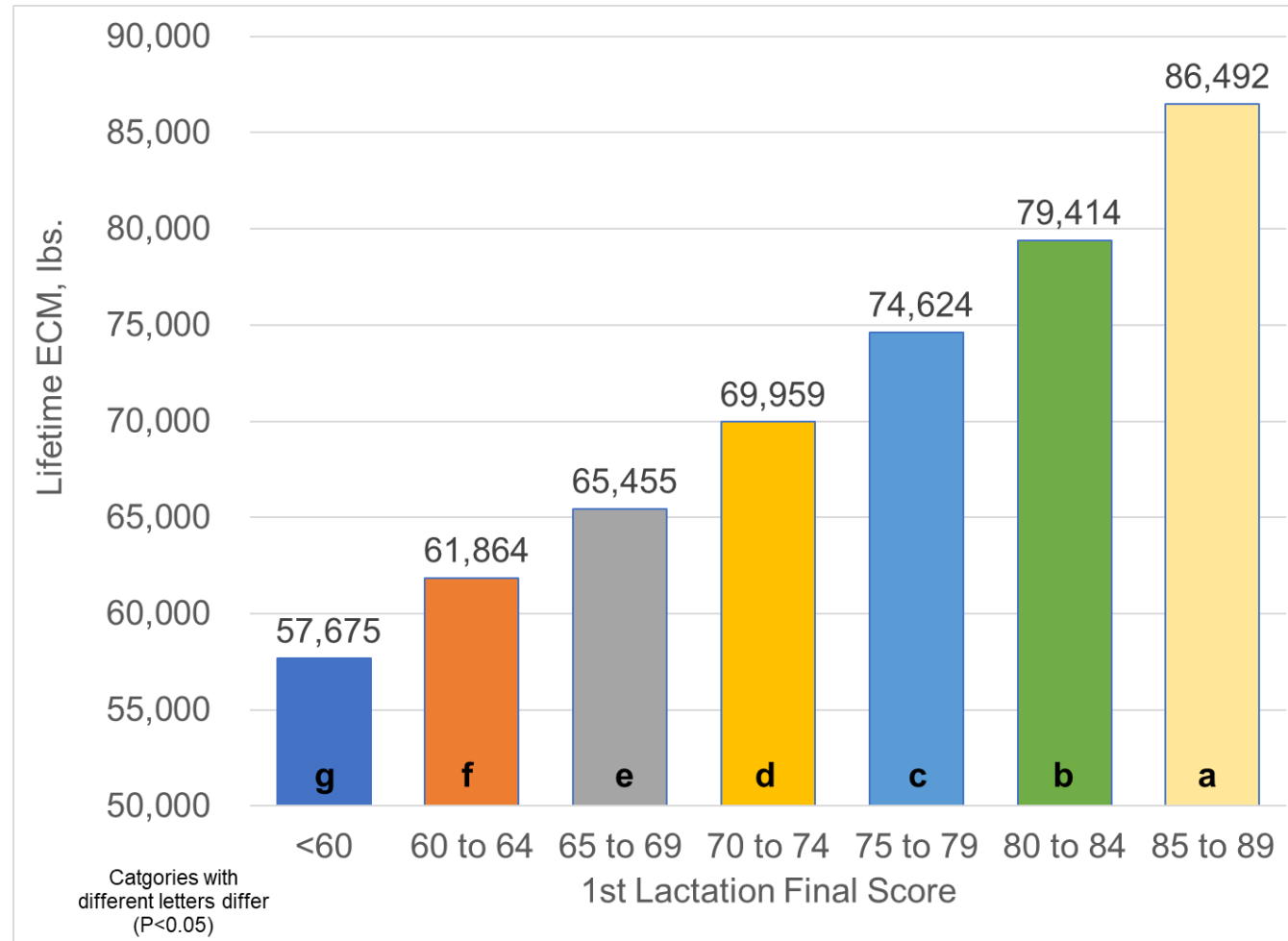


# A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters Study

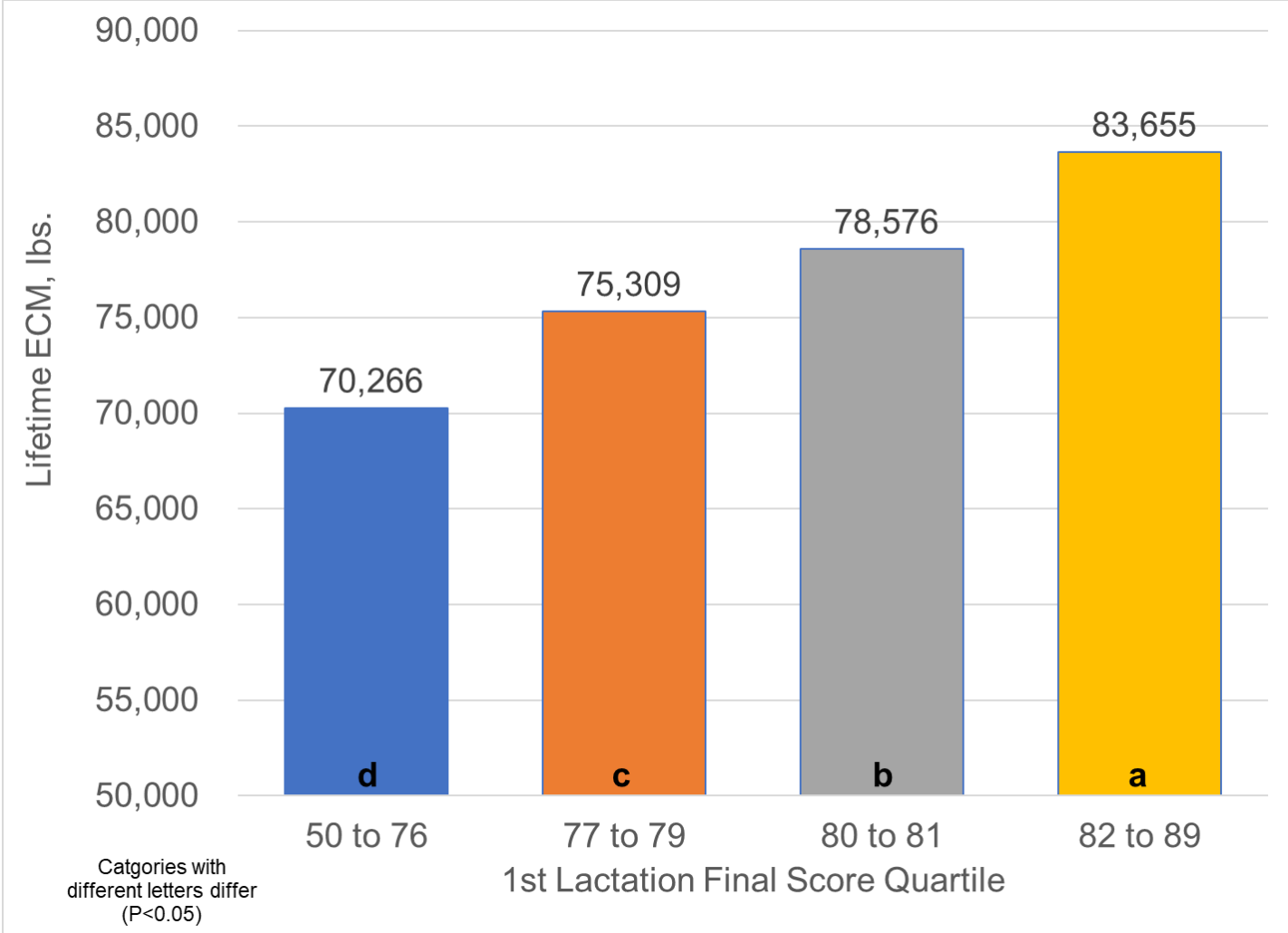
Relationships Between  
Lifetime Energy  
Corrected Milk and  
Conformation



# Lifetime Energy Corrected Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Score Category



# Lifetime Energy Corrected Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Final Score Quartile





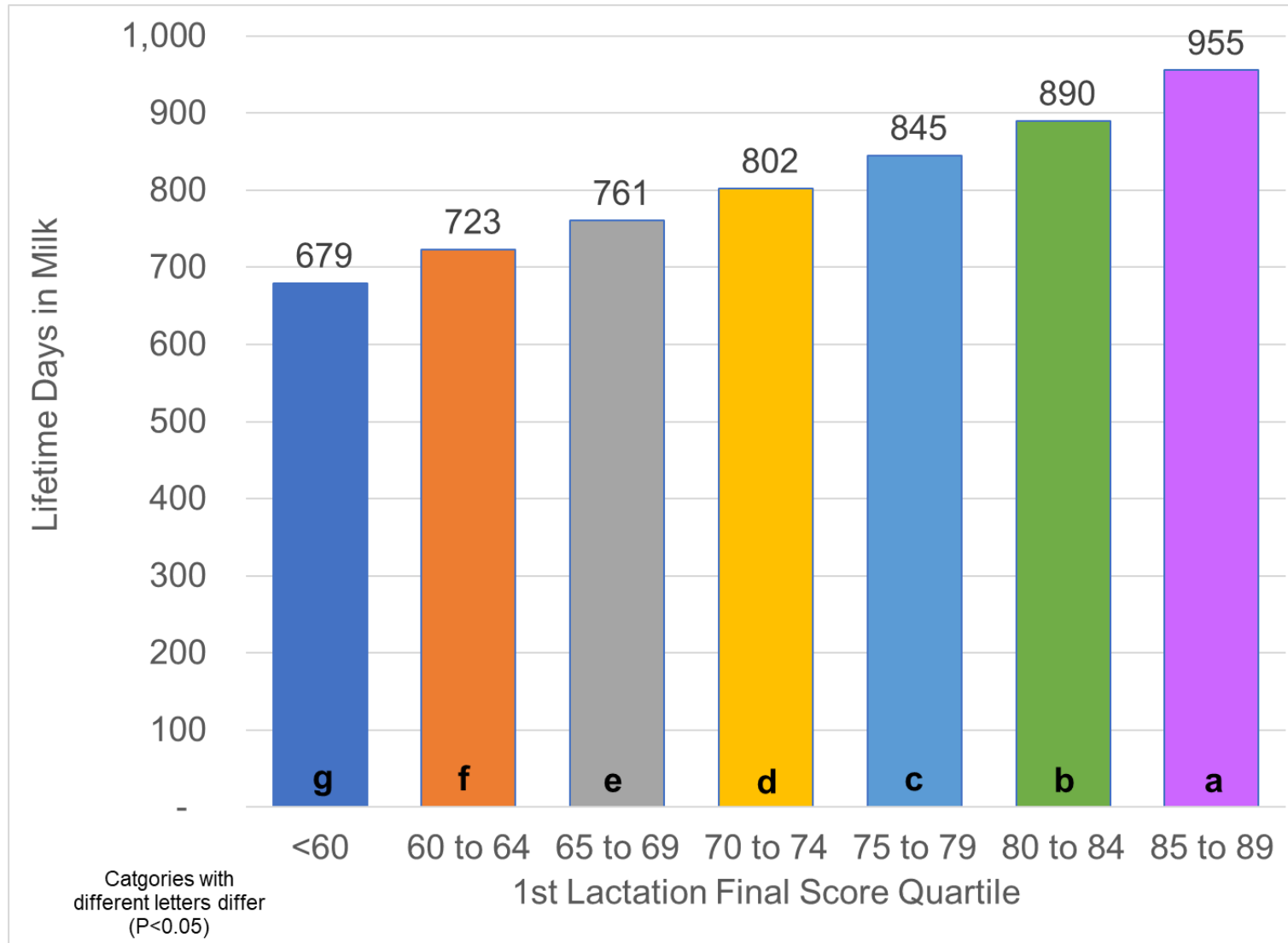
# A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters Study

Relationships Between  
Lifetime Days in Milk  
and Conformation

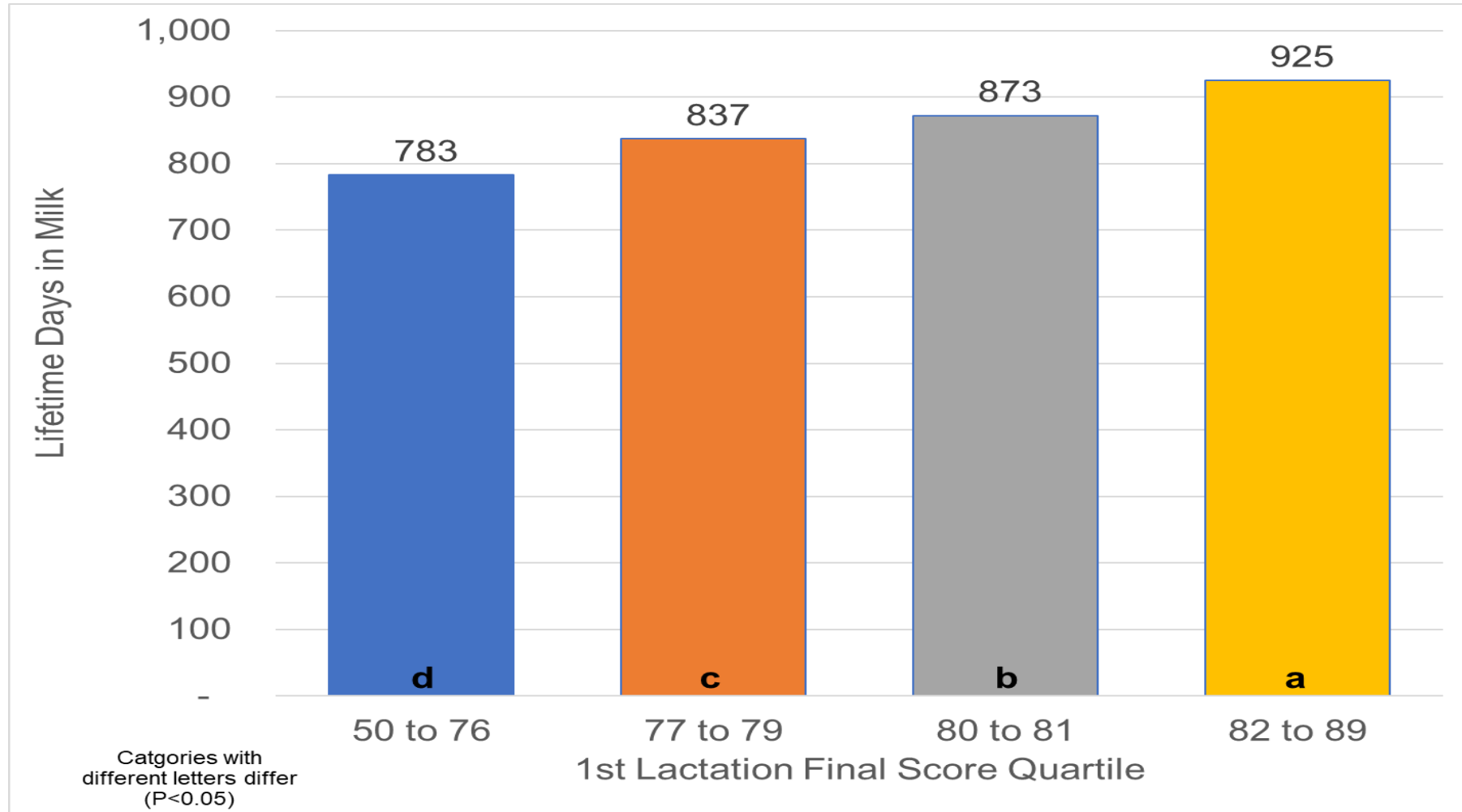




# Lifetime Days in Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Score Category



# Lifetime Days in Milk by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Final Score Quartile





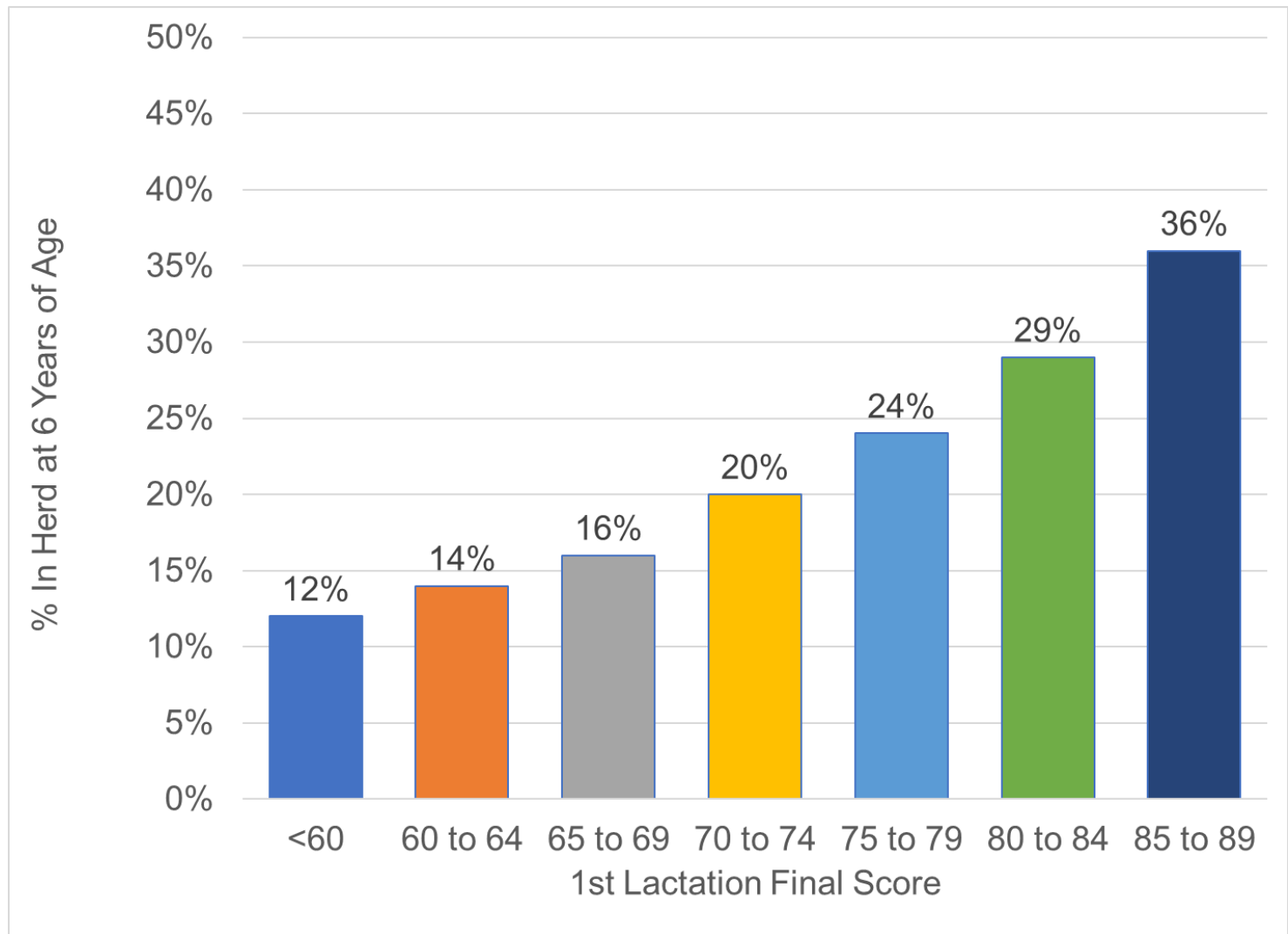
# A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters Study

Relationships Between  
% in Herd at 6 Years of Age  
and Conformation

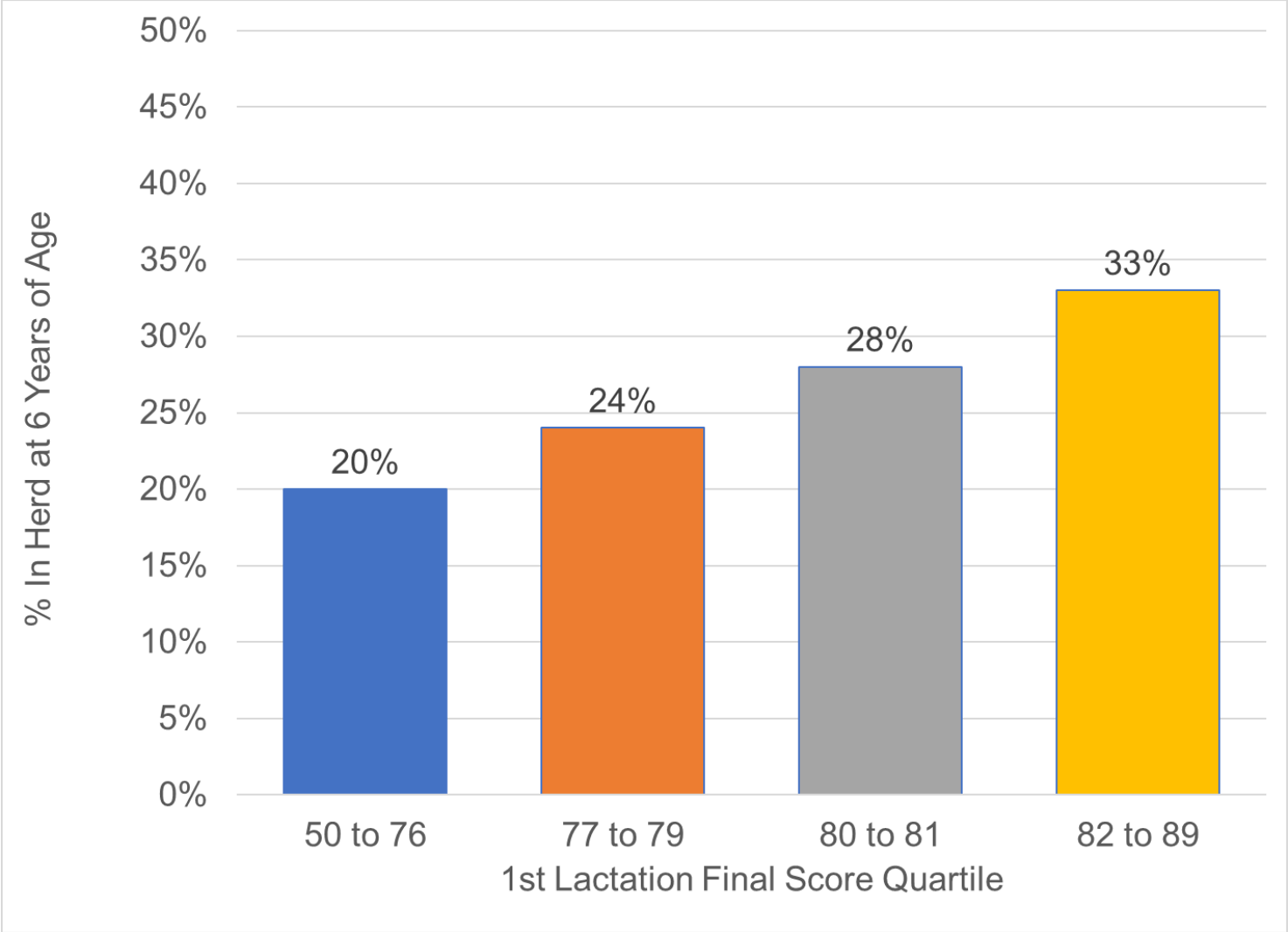


HOLSTEIN ASSOCIATION USA, INC.

# % In Herd at 6 Years of Age by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Score Category



# % In Herd at 6 Years of Age by 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation Final Score Quartile



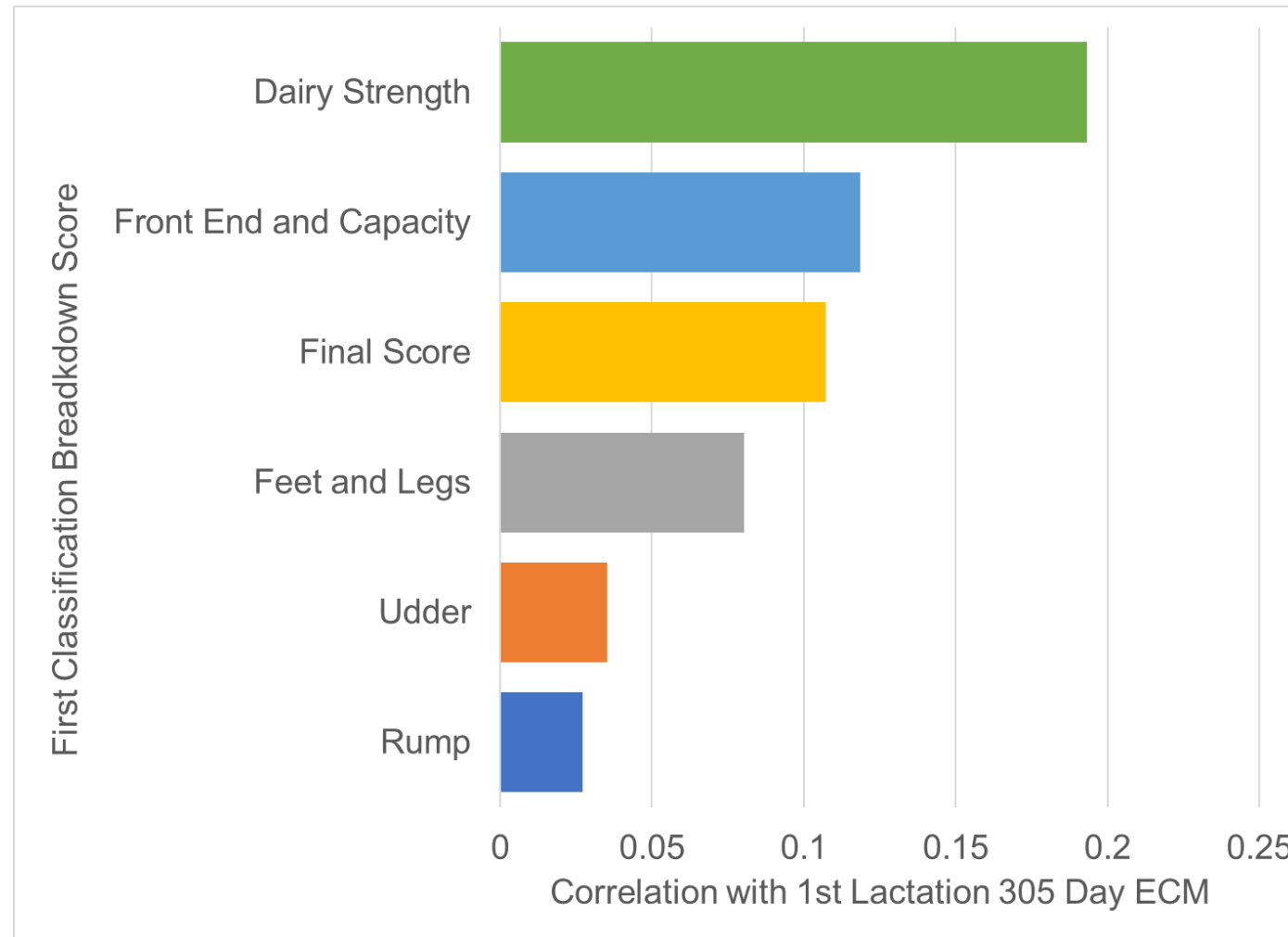


# A Million Reasons Why Conformation Matters Study

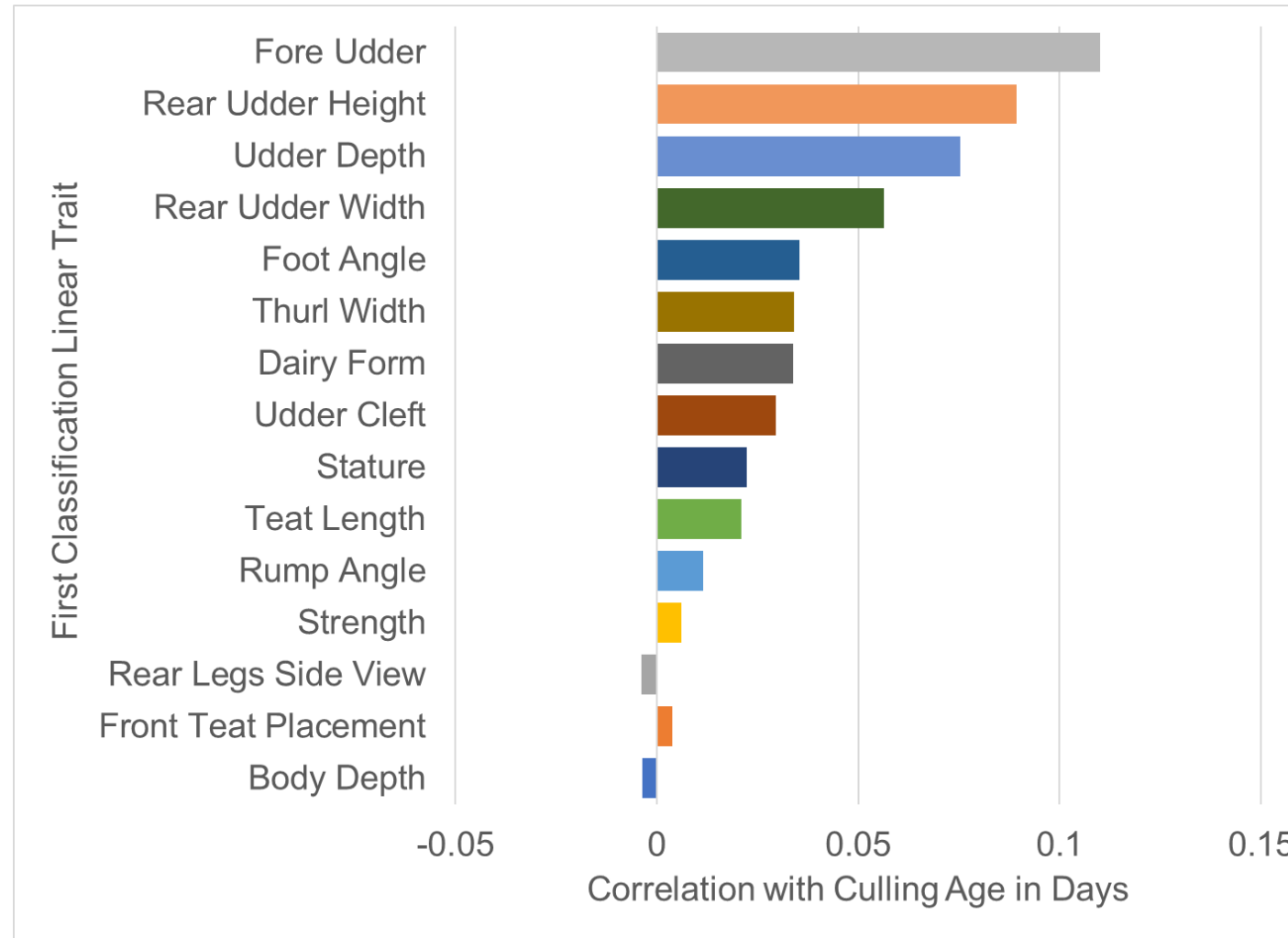
Correlations Between  
Classification Scores  
and Economic Traits of  
Interest



# Correlations Between Classification Breakdowns and 1<sup>st</sup> Lactation 305 Day ECM

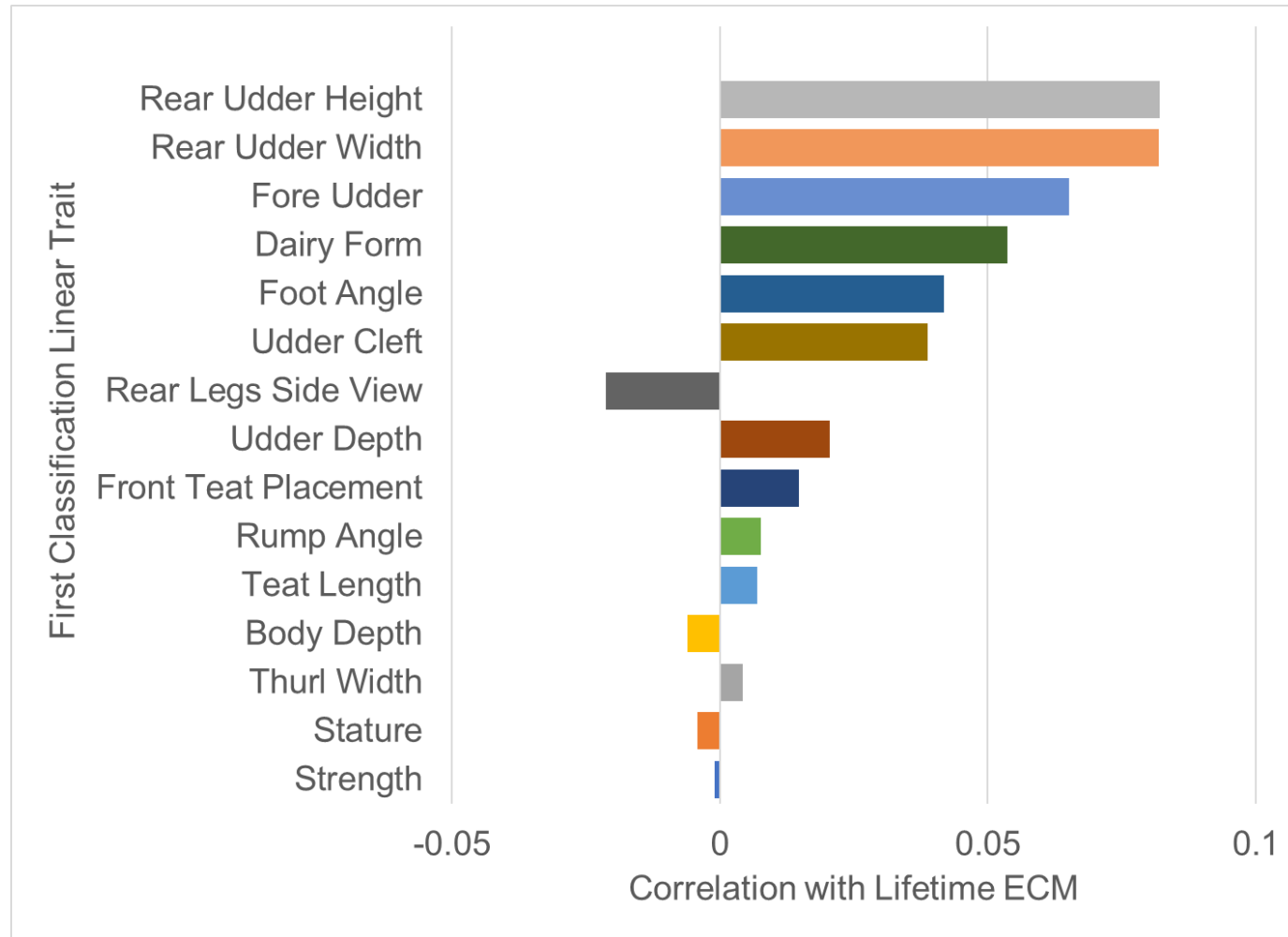


# Correlations Between Linear Traits and Culling Age in Days





# Correlations Between Linear Traits and Lifetime ECM



# Data Utilization

Dr. Bewley spent an immense amount of time creating this valuable analysis

## PROMOTION OF THE DATA

1. Brochures/ handouts
2. On farm customized demos primarily by our field representatives
3. Webinars
4. Conference presentations by Jeffrey Bewley
5. Classifiers educating dairymen while on farm by promoting the data analysis
6. HOLSTEINS WEBSITE gets a lot of traffic



# In Conclusion

Holstein USA struggles with maintaining large herd involvement with classification due to time commitment, labor, loss of milk etc...TIME EFFICIENCY HAS HELPED IMMENSELY!!!

Number of classifiers in USA has been reduced over time while total number of cows classified per year has grown

- a. 1990 43 classifiers
- b. 2024 12 full time and two part time classifiers



Handheld computers have had the biggest influence with efficiency.

Some question our ability to score so many cows in a day:

When you look at a cow for 3 minutes vs. 1 minute...does she look any different?

This has helped IMMENSELY with keeping large herds participating

Holstein and Zoetis (genomic testing) partnership

Program called ENLIGHT (genomics management program)

Genomics TESTING = \$47 USD

Members on COMPLETE and ENLIGHT = \$37 USD

**SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS WHICH HELPS  
CLASSIFICATION NUMBERS IN LARGE HERDS**



All people/classifiers have their own personalities and abilities to work in larger herds vs. small traditional herds and we are transitioning to fit each persons abilities.

We have our most technologically advanced classifier working with some large herds to help them analyze their classification data and help make herd improvement recommendations based on their data and herd breeding goals.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO TRANSITION AS NEEDED TO WORK WITH OUR CUSTOMERS NEEDS.

*GRAZIE*

