



## What is it?

The genetic ceiling is the concept of a figurative “glass ceiling” that is limiting your herd. The genetic ceiling is something that isn’t often thought about and even dealt with at all up until about the past five to ten years. No matter how good of a genetics program a farm has, the genetic ceiling is always in place. The important part is where the “ceiling” is, and is it limiting your herd from hitting your goals.

## Financials

The testing supplies cost about \$2/animal and the base cost of the testing itself is about \$46/animal. To put a potential dollars gained value on this is difficult because there are so many variables involved. I think that this is just a necessary cost of doing business, as the information gained from this is invaluable for the herd. Understand the genetic ceiling and how to work around it is a must for an aggressive dairy and dairyman.

### **References:**

Holstein Association  
Zoetis

## Understanding the Genetic Ceiling

Jared Bliss



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# Why is it important?

As a manager it is very important to be conscious of this factor. Often times producers scratch their heads over the ever important question, why can't I make more milk? Most times it is because of flaws in minut or big details. However, sometimes there is nothing that can be changed in order to produce more milk. As mentioned earlier, because of some great management, within the last 5 to 10 the genetic ceiling has become something getting more and more attention in order to increase milk yield.



## *Learning how to manage it*

### Testing

A rather recently widespread genetic testing service offered by Zoetis has vastly increased the producer's ability to understand what their herd's genetics actually look like. This procedure can be performed on tissue sample acquired through ear notches taken from the animal's ear, tail hair, and blood. The ear notches have primarily arose as the most popular due to its simplicity and accuracy. Once the samples are collected they are sent in and analyzed. Once the results are received they are then intended to be used to make informed and optimal matings.



## *Learning how to manage it (Cont.)*

### Mating Technology

There are many different mating services available on the market today offered by a variety of companies. Most stud services offer use of the program to their customers for free or for a fairly reasonable price. This software takes the genetic information from the test results of the animals in the herd and matches them with the bulls that best fit the criteria set up by the software. Each of the different software options emphasize different mating parameters, so that is something that needs to be taken into consideration when choosing one for your farm.

