



Inbreeding Update - August 2026

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Each year, based on official animal registration and pedigree information within its database, Lactanet Canada computes current inbreeding statistics within the Canadian cow population of each dairy breed.



In this way, the average level of inbreeding for animals born in the most recent complete calendar year as well as trends in the level of inbreeding over time can easily be monitored.

The following table is based on females born in Canada since 1970 up to and including registered heifers born in 2025.

Among the four major dairy breeds in Canada, the average inbreeding level for heifers born in 2025 is highest for Holstein at 10.32%, followed by Jersey (7.74%), Brown Swiss (7.23%) and Ayrshire (7.12%). In terms of controlling the rate of increase in inbreeding for females born since 2010, the Jersey, Ayrshire and Brown Swiss breeds are doing the best among these four breeds, averaging +.11%, +.12% and +.12% per year, respectively, compared to rate of increase of +.25% per year for Holstein.

Among the breeds with the smallest populations in Canada, Canadienne continues to have the highest average inbreeding, now at 10.94% for females born in 2025, but the average rate of increase since 2010 has been relatively low at +.09% per year. Guernsey heifers born in 2025 average 6.25% inbreeding and the average change since 2010 has also been at +.09% per year. For Milking Shorthorn, heifers born in 2025 average 3.28% inbreeding based on available pedigree data for the breed and the rate of increase has been low at +.06% per year for heifers born since 2010.

Below is a graph showing the inbreeding trend for the four largest dairy breeds based on registered females born in Canada since 1970 as well as a specific graph for the Holstein population alone. For further information, please feel free to contact Lactanet Canada staff.

Current Inbreeding Level and Change in Average Inbreeding by Breed						
Breed	Average % Inbreeding for 2025	Average Annual Increase in Average Inbreeding Percentage by Time Period				
		1970- 1980	1980- 1990	1990- 2000	2000- 2010	2010- 2020
Ayrshire	7.12	.24	.20	.06	.00	.12
Brown Swiss	7.23	.06	.23	.13	.12	.12
Canadienne	10.94	.16	.22	.30	.19	.09
Guernsey	6.25	.07	.12	.14	.20	.09
Holstein	10.32	.07	.10	.27	.09	.25
Jersey	7.74	.15	.08	.13	.06	.11
Milking Shorthorn	3.28	.01	.02	.25	-.13	.06

Figure 1: Inbreeding Trends in Canadian Dairy Breeds

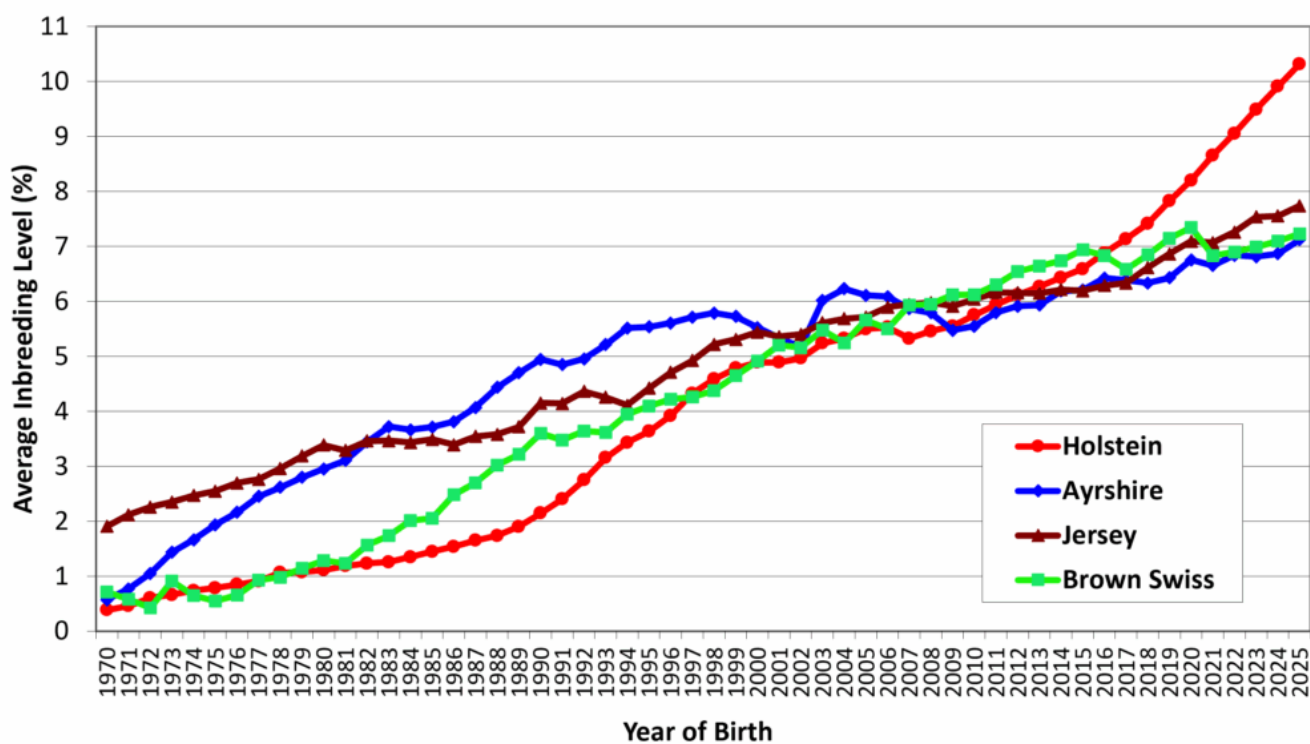
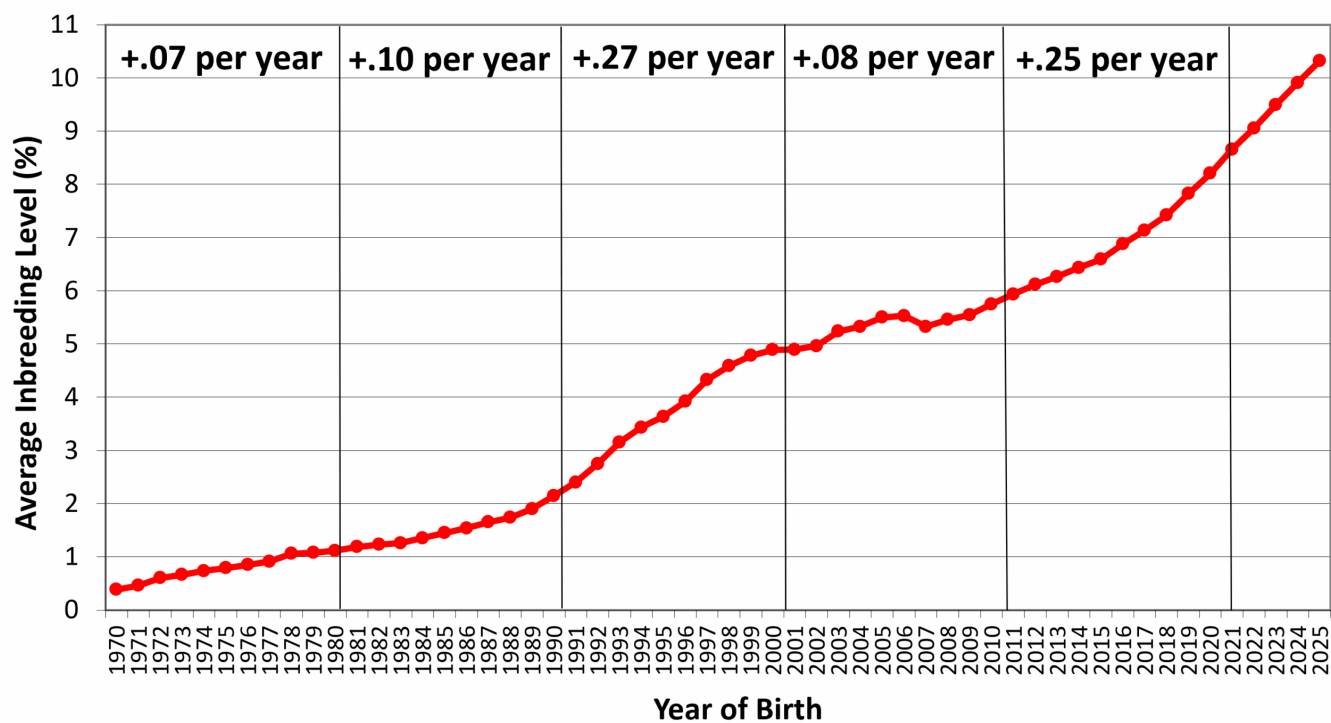


Figure 2: Inbreeding Trend in Canadian Holsteins



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For further information, please feel free to [contact Lactanet Canada staff](#).



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Hannah discovered her passion for agriculture during her undergraduate degree at the University of Guelph and through work experience in the dairy industry. She holds a B.Sc. in Molecular Biology and Genetics and a Ph.D. in Animal Genetics, focusing on the genetic improvement of dairy cattle fertility.