



## Cow of the Future: Breeding for reduced methane output possible

Hilary Parker | Updated: 12/26/2012

Research commissioned under the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy's Cow of the Future project suggests that enteric methane emissions could be reduced as much as 26 percent via genetic selection of methane-associated traits.

“Although measuring methane emissions directly from animals is costly and laborious, associated selection traits such as residual feed intake or methane emissions predicted from feed intake and diet composition could be used in genetic selection programs,” the Innovation Center writes. “A large portion of the variation in the amount of enteric methane produced by dairy cattle is inherent genetic variation among individual cows. Breeding programs could select cows that emit less methane per unit of milk produced if appropriate selection traits are identified.”

The authors of the research, which was published in the *Journal of Dairy Science*, are not sure if this selection would result in a reduction of actual, measured methane emissions. Additional research is needed, they say; the Innovation Center has agreed to fund such research.

Click [here](#) for online version.