

Snow No Match for Vermont Jersey Breeders

The record-setting snowfall that hit the Northeast this winter and generated the new term "snowicane" didn't deter Vermont Jersey breeders from traveling to Barre for the annual meeting of their state Jersey organization. The gathering at the Hilltop Restaurant on February 13, 2010, was opportunity to break from the chores imposed by the snow, catch up with friends and recognize peers.

Derrick and Beverly Wright, Randolph, were honored with the Outstanding Breeder Award. The couple has been breeding Registered Jerseys all of their married life and raised four children on the farm. The herd is ranked among the top 100 herds in the nation for Jersey Performance Index (JPI) with an average JPI of +40 for the January 2010 genetic evaluations.

The Distinguished Service Award was given to Tim and Janet Angell, Randolph Center, for their willingness to lend a hand at any Jersey event, from the farm show to the state sale. The Angells operate White Rock Farm, a herd of 55 milking cows enrolled on REAP. The pair is very active supporters of youth programs and served as deans for the inaugural Jersey Youth Academy this past summer.

The Good Neighbor Award was given to Megan Letourneau, East Charleston. Letourneau graduated from Vermont Technical College in May 2008 and started dairying on her grandfather's farm two months later. Her growing herd of 23 cows includes nine Registered Jerseys and a dozen crossbreds that she plans to breed to Jersey sires and bring into the herd book through Jersey Expansion program. Letourneau also milks cows for Helenek Jerseys in West Charleston. She has been chairman of the state youth committee since 2007 and is an eager promoter and active volunteer at the Vermont State Show.

The Goodrich Production Awards for milk and protein were earned by a pair of cows at Molly Brook Farm of West Danville. Molly Brook Paramount Prilly was the state's top milk producer. The Excellent-90% daughter of Rock Ella Paramount-ET, GJPI +97, produced a 305-day record of 26,400 lbs. milk, 1,134 lbs. fat and 884 lbs. protein in her fourth lactation at 5-3. Molly Brook Fate Flume, Excellent-90%, produced the high protein record among Vermont Jerseys. She is sired by Molly Brook Gatekeeper Fate, JPI +36, and made a 4-11 record of 26,210 lbs. milk, 1,082 lbs. fat and 891 lbs. protein.

Lucky Hill Farm, Danville, took home the Goodrich Production Award for

fat with Lucky Hill Legion Jolly. The Excellent-92% daughter of BW Legion, GJPI +84, completed a 5-0 record of 24,810 lbs. milk, 1,280 lbs. fat and 803 lbs. protein.

In the junior awards program, Lewis Fox, Leicester, won the Robert J. Churchill and Family Trophy and earned the accompanying \$500 scholarship. Nathaniel Brigham, St. Albans, and Claire Stanley, East Fairfield, each received a \$500 scholarship from the state Jersey organization as well.

Will Maxham, South Hero, placed first in the youth production contest with Mountainbrook Roman Macey. The Very Good-82% daughter of Imperial Roman of Saybrook, PA JPI -39, made a record with an m.e. of 32,836-1,419-1,157 in her second lactation. Whitney Maxham, also of South Hero, placed second with Mountain Brook R Florence, Excellent-91%, who produced a record with an m.e. of 25,876-1,315-965 on her first lactation.

The meeting also provided Jersey breeders with opportunity to learn more about timely dairy industry topics. Seven months into his first term as American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) Director, Wes Snow reported that there is growing support to raise the national minimum standards of fluid milk to match those now required in California (8.75% solids-not-fat and 3.5% fat for whole fluid milk). The effort, endorsed by National All-Jersey (NAJ) Inc., is also gaining ground with milk cooperatives, including two of the region's largest co-ops, St. Albans Cooperative Creamery and Agri-Mark. Many other small companies across the country are also implementing the increased standards on their own.

Colleen Leonard of the Vermont Department of Agriculture spoke about the agency's programs, one which is designed to keep farms operating in the state. She reported that the low milk prices of 2009 cost the state more than \$2 million in revenue and illustrated how milk price impacts the entire infrastructure.

AJCA-NAJ Area Representative Brenda Snow thanked Jersey breeders for their longstanding support of the national Jersey organizations. She relayed statistics from the record-setting 2009 and showed how the breed has grown over the past decade. Registrations increased 50% from 1999 to 2009; performance program enrollment grew 41%; cow appraisals increased 61%; and contributions to Project Equity gained 86%. Gains have been made because of the value of the Jersey cow. The breed

is on the move, with significant interest from those who milk Holsteins.

Brenda also updated Vermont Jersey breeders about the 2012 AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings, which will be hosted by New England Jersey breeders. The event is a combined effort among all New England states and members are encouraged to become involved by volunteering to serve on a committee (fundraising, transportation, registration, hospitality and youth).

Brenda invited members to attend the New England Jersey Breeders annual meeting and banquet on April 23 in Middlebury and the New England Spring Sale on April 24 at the Addison County Fairgrounds in New Haven. About 300 head are planned to be sold, including 25 high-quality milk cows.

Breeders are also invited to exhibit at the Vermont State Jersey Show on September 4.

Officers elected were: president, David Carmichael, Vergennes; vice president, Eric Daggett, Derby; secretary, Heather Brigham, St. Albans; and treasurer, Tom Pyle, Shoreham. Directors elected for three-year terms include David Carmichael; Eric Daggett; Wanda Emerich, Mooers, N.Y.; B. J. Hanfield, Woodstock; and Reid Richardson, Woodstock.