

McReynolds Named Vermont Outstanding Breeder

Members of the Vermont Jersey Breeders Association met for their annual meeting on February 8, 2014, at the Hilltop Restaurant in Barre. About 55 Jersey breeders attended the event to recognize accomplishments, catch up on industry news and socialize with peers.

The Vermont Outstanding Breeder Award was presented to Henry and Jennifer McReynolds of Danville. The couple operates Lucky Hill Farm with his parents, Everett and Martha, and their family. Henry is the fourth generation to operate the family farm and has been in partnership with his parents since 1991. He and Jennifer, who grew up on a small Jersey farm in New Hampshire, manage the 180-cow Registered Jersey herd and have four children, Luke, 10, Andrew, 8, Abigail, 6, and Nicolas, 5.

The herd is enrolled on REAP and has a 2013 lactation average of 19,269 lbs. milk, 975 lbs. fat and 680 lbs. protein. Lucky Hill Farm ranks among the top 25% of REAP herds in the nation with a herd average JPI of +71 (December 2013). Nine cows rank among the top 1.5% for JPI or Genomic JPI.

Lucky Hill Farm was initially a mixed herd of Holsteins and Jerseys, but has been all Jersey since 1981. The herd was expanded and facilities upgraded in the late 1990s to better utilize the land. A new bedded-pack heifer barn with headlocks was built in 2001 and a 160-stall free stall barn was completed the following year. The facility is equipped with larger stalls with mattresses, rubber mats in the alleys and a computerized ventilation system. Automatic alley scrapers were also installed to reduce manual labor and create a cleaner environment. A new double-12 parallel parlor with automatic take-offs was constructed in 2007, along with five calving pens. Most recently, a 52-stall addition was made to the existing free stall barn, bringing milking herd capacity to 212.

Lucky Hill Farm has extensively used AJCA programs to develop the herd and have capitalized on breed efficiency. Calves are fed a total mixed ration and high quality feed for growth and freshened early. The farm has used the Jersey Expansion and Genetic Recovery programs, JerseyMate and heifer reports for breeding, marketing and culling decisions.

Henry and Jennifer received the AJCA Young Jersey Breeder Award in 2003. Jennifer is a former director of the Vermont

Jersey Breeders Association and New England Jersey Sires and past secretary of the New England Jersey Breeders Association. She now is the dairy leader for the North Danville Willing Workers 4-H Club.

In the production awards ceremony, members of the milking string at Lucky Hill Farm received all the major production awards.

The Goodrich Production Award for the state's high milk and protein record was earned by Lucky Hill Brazo Star, Very Good-86%. The daughter of Sil-Mist RMBM Buttons Brazo-ET, GJPI +104, produced a 305-day record of 22,360 lbs. milk, 1,023 lbs. fat and 768 lbs. protein at 6-5. The award for the high 305-day fat record was given to Lucky Hill Bomber Whitney-ET, Very Good-85%, who produced a 9-1 record of 21,150 lbs. milk, 1,165 lbs. fat and 739 lbs. protein. She is sired by WF Brook Bomber, GJPI -16.

In the youth production contest, Luke McReynolds took home the top prize with his entry, Lucky Hill Joker Poppy Pop. The daughter of Lucky Hill Joker, GJPI +154, produced a record with an m.e. of 25,850-1,127-884 on her first lactation at 1-8. Actual production is 18,694 lbs. milk, 817 lbs. fat and 634 lbs. protein.

Abigail McReynolds placed second with Lucky Hill Gannon Charlie. The Very Good-80% daughter of PR Oomsdale Jace Gratude Gannon-ET, GJPI +143, made a record with an m.e. of 22,187-1,131-806 in her second lactation.

Other juniors to place in the youth production contest were: Virginia Patz, Shoreham; Jarrett P. Snow, Brookfield; Andrew McReynolds; Nicolas McReynolds; and Samantha Flint, Brookfield.

Business Meeting

Members were brought up-to-speed on the animal disease traceability (ADT) program by guest speaker, Dr. Joel Russo, USDA-APHIS Veterinary Medical Officer. Russo told the group that USDA works cooperatively with state veterinarians to implement and enforce ADT rules. The program is focused on traceability rather than prevention and designed to shorten the amount of time it takes to trace a disease to its source, therefore reducing the number of animals to be quarantined or disposed of.

Russo reported that ADT rules apply to animals that are moved across state lines. These animals will need to be identified with official identification or 840 tags which have the state shield and animal identification number. Tags can be obtained from breed associations,

including the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA), state veterinarian offices and Dairy One.

Members also heard from AJCA Director Wes Snow, who spoke about new records for the Jersey breed in 2013. The official lactation average climbed to 19,278 lbs. milk, 932 lbs. fat and 702 lbs. protein on a record 105,913 lactations in 2013. New benchmarks were also established for registrations, herds on REAP, cows on REAP, cows appraised, sales of JerseyTags and contributions to Project Equity. He noted that more than 80% of registrations are now originating from herds enrolled on REAP.

Snow talked about increases in REAP fees, which have been adjusted upward just twice since the program was introduced in 1995. Per-cow fees will be increased; herd fees remain unchanged. He also told the group that transfer fees for REAP herds will be decreased for transfers in volume.

Director Snow encouraged Jersey breeders to attend the upcoming AJCA-National All-Jersey Inc. Annual Meetings in Alexandria, Va., which will be hosted by the national Jersey organizations June 25-28.

David Carmichael, Vergennes, reported on changes to some of the traditional sales in New England this year. The New England Spring Sale will continue to be held, but the Vermont Fall Sale will be discontinued. The spring sale was renamed the Northeast Jersey Classic and Breeders Sale and will be held on May 3 at the Vermont State Fairgrounds in Rutland. The sale will catalog about 220 head, with 20 elite, tie-up consignments and the balance sold as volume lots. The sale chair is Tom Pyle, Shoreham. Other committee members include David Carmichael, Jason Johnson, Woodstock, John Kokoski, Hadley, Mass., and Tom Sawyer, Walpole, N.H. The sale will be managed by Jersey Marketing Service and cried by Lynn Lee, Smyrna, Tenn. A portion of the sale gross will be evenly split between the New England and Vermont Jersey associations.

The New England Jersey Breeders meeting and banquet, which was traditionally held in conjunction with the New England Spring Sale, will be held on May 2 at the Cortina Inn in Killington.

Members heard reports from the organization's auditor, secretary and reporter and were encouraged to visit the Vermont Jersey Breeders Association website at <http://JerseySites.USJersey.com/VermontJerseys>.

Officer Elections

Officers were elected to serve the Vermont

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Vermont Meeting

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Jersey Breeders Association in 2014 as follows: Paul Flint, Brookfield, president; Jason Johnson, vice president; Tom Pyle, treasurer; and Heather Brigham, St. Albans, secretary. Paul Stanley, East Fairfield, was elected auditor. New directors serving three-year terms include: Dawn Blodgett, Brookfield; Wanda Emerich, Mooers, N.Y.; Paul Flint; Art Ling, Hardwick; and Andrew Wright, Randolph.