

## Juniors Honored at Iowa Picnic

The Iowa Jersey Cattle Club (IJCC) summer picnic was hosted by Doug and Jody Fairbanks at their farm in Anamosa on June 2, 2016. Members of the Iowa Ayrshire Breeders Association joined the social gathering as well, to enjoy a picnic lunch with industry peers and recognize achievements of juniors.

Neil Metzger, Lester, received the organization's highest junior award, the



Metzger

Iowa Jersey Youth Achievement Award. The son of Rodney and Polly Metzger graduated from West Lyon High School in 2015 and is now working full-time at the family farm, Summit Farm Inc.

His herd of three cows and five heifers is managed with the 180-cow Registered Jersey dairy in the northwest corner of the state. Neil has found his calling with milking and feeding and also lends a hand with breeding and field work.

He was president and vice president of his 4-H club and served his FFA chapter as president and chaplain. He was a member of the FFA dairy judging and conduct of meeting teams, earned the chapter's star farmer award and was a star finalist in ag placement at the state level. Neil also played football for his high school and was active with his church youth group.

Neil will receive a Registered Jersey calf from an Iowa Jersey breeder for winning the award and be eligible to compete in the 2016 National Jersey Youth Achievement Contest.

Nick Bagge, Worthington, earned the IJCC Memorial Scholarship. The son of Loras and Jolene Bagge is a freshman in the dairy program at Northeast Iowa Community College-Calmar. He plans to return to the family farm, which has been in his family since 1964.

Nick has been vice president of his 4-H club and shown cattle at the Iowa State Fair and World Dairy Expo. He was a member of dairy judging and quiz bowl teams that topped state 4-H contests the past two years. His team represented Iowa at the national dairy judging contest held with World Dairy Expo in 2015 and will compete in the



Bagge

national quiz bowl contest held during the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) this fall. He was a member of the FFA dairy judging team that topped the state contest in 2014 and then competed at the NAILE. Nick won the Iowa Jersey Youth Achievement Award in 2015.

Lakaya Lyon, Toledo, was crowned as the Iowa Jersey Princess. The daughter of Kathy Lyon and the late Greg Lyon is a senior at North Cedar High School. She has served as president of her local FFA chapter the past two years and plays volleyball and basketball. She also plays in the band and sings in the choir.



Lyon

Lakaya plans to attend Iowa State University and major in agriculture business.

She has presented awards and represented the dairy industry at the Iowa State Fair and Jersey shows this summer and is eligible to compete in the National Jersey Queen contest held during All American festivities in Louisville, Ky., in November.

### Farm Tour

Picnic goers were also treated to a tour of the farm operated by Doug and Jody Fairbanks and their children, Pierce, Abby, Kaylee and Luke. The Fairbanks family milks a mixed herd of 250 Holstein, 40 Jersey and 30 Brown Swiss cows and breeds cattle using the Wapsi-ana prefix, a fusion of two local landmarks—the Wapsipinicon River and the town of Anamosa.

Recent upgrades to the facilities include a 300-cow, sand-bedded free-stall barn and a rapid-exit, double-12 parallel parlor completed in September 2014.

Though Doug is a second-generation dairy producer, he is a first-generation land owner and Jersey breeder. He grew up on a farm rented by his parents to manage a herd of Holsteins and then farmed in partnership with them after high school graduation in 1988. He and Jody bought the cattle, feed and machinery in 1995 and then jumped at the opportunity to purchase the farm in 1999 when it became available. Today, the Fairbank family raises crops for the herd on 300 acres of owned land and an additional 300 acres of rented land.

Jerseys were added to the herd five years ago during a self-described "mid-life" crisis for Doug. "Outside my family,

they are the best thing that happened to me," noted Doug. "These cows pack some powerful numbers, especially considering their size. Averaging 80 lbs. of milk a day, with tests of 4.9% fat and 3.5% protein, the Jerseys hold their own against a tank average of 95 lbs. milk."

The first Jersey purchase of about 25 head came from the K&K Dispersal in 2011. Additional purchases were made at the Heartland Production Sale in 2012 and a number of Prairieland Production Sales. The Fairbanks family plans to grow Jersey numbers so they account for half the herd in the coming years.

The herd is enrolled on REAP and has a 2015 actual average of 21,497 lbs. milk, 1,024 lbs. fat and 754 lbs. protein on 24 cows. Last year, the dairy ranked among the top 10 herds in the nation for milk in the division for 10-39 cows. Currently, the dairy ranks among the top 25% in the nation for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +34 (August 2016). The herd has an appraisal average of 85.9%, with eight Excellent and 32 Very Good cows.