

Iowa Juniors Recognized

Iowa Jersey breeders gathered for their summer picnic and to honor achievement of juniors at Rock Bottom Dairy in Alford on July 29, 2017. Members of the Iowa Jersey Cattle Club took a break from chores to hold a brief business meeting, enjoy a picnic potluck and partake in the hospitality of hosts Bernie and Rachel Bakker and their family.

Grace Howe, Waukon, was named winner of the Iowa Jersey Youth Achievement Award, the club's highest junior honor. For her achievement, Howe will receive a Registered Jersey calf donated by Summit Farm of Lester. Howe was also crowned as the 2017 Iowa Jersey Princess.

The daughter of Matt and Shelly Howe is a junior at Waukon High School. She plans to attend Iowa State University, majoring in agriculture business.

Her herd of 15 Registered Jersey cows and heifers is managed with the herd at Fossum Farms in Waukon, owned by her uncle. She does relief milking at the dairy and works for Lucky Brothers Farm in Waukon as well.

Howe has served as president, vice president, secretary and treasurer of her 4-H club and secretary of her FFA chapter. She is a member of the FFA dairy judging team and enjoys showing cattle and helping others.

The outgoing Iowa Jersey Princess, Lakaya Lyon, Toledo, received the club's Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$500. The daughter of Kathy Lyon and the late Greg Lyon is a recent graduate of North Cedar High School who plans to attend Des Moines Area Community College and major in agriculture business.

She grew up on a Registered Jersey dairy and hails from a family with a rich history in the Jersey breed. In school, she was active in band, sang in the choir, sat on student council and played basketball and volleyball. She was president of her FFA



Outgoing Iowa Jersey Princess Lakaya Lyon, right, congratulates her successor, Grace Howe.

chapter for three years.

Farm Tour

The Bakkers established Rock Bottom Dairy in 2002 as an investment and hobby, with 100 Jersey cows and 12 acres of land. In the years since, the herd has grown to 1,950 Registered Jerseys and is a viable, profitable business for the couple and their children, Oliva, Jordan and Micah.

The Bakkers kicked off renovations to the farm in 2003 with the construction of a double-10 herringbone parlor. Over the next two years, a heifer barn was renovated to a 450-cow freestall barn and a new holding pen, crowd gate and lagoons were added. By 2007, the herd had grown to 750 cows. An additional freestall barn was built and the parlor was upgraded to a double-14 herringbone parlor. That year, the Bakkers began transitioning the cross-breeding program to a fully-Jersey herd. In the past seven years, additional milk and manure storage has been constructed along with a shop, commodity shop and heifer facility.

The latest upgrades include a new milking facility with a double-25 parallel parlor, opened in January 2017, additional freestalls and lagoons and a large concrete pad for silage and commodities.

Rock Bottom Dairy is enrolled on REAP and uses JerseyMate in the breeding

program and JerseyTags for permanent identification. The herd ranks among the top 25% in the nation for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +50 (August 2017) on 962 cows. Well over half the heifers are P-level 8 or higher. The herd average hovers around 17,000 lbs. milk, with component tests of 5.0% fat and 3.85% protein.

The Bakkers also operate a nutrition company for swine, beef and dairy operations, with locations in Rock Valley, Iowa, and Zeeland, Mich. Jordan and Micah run a feedlot operation on the farm as well.

Bernie received the AJCA Young Jersey Breeder Award in 2017.



Harvey Metzger and Calvin Graber take a closer look at the milking equipment in the basement of the double-25 parallel parlor at Rock Bottom Dairy.



Jersey breeders tour the heifer facilities at Rock Bottom Dairy, which began transitioning from a cross-breeding program to a fully-Jersey herd in 2007.



Harvey Metzger, center, and Marvin Metzger, right, learn more about the milking cow facilities from herd owner and picnic host, Bernie Bakker.