

Lyon Jerseys LLC

Lyon Jerseys LLC, Toledo, Iowa, will be honored as the 72nd recipients of the Master Breeder Award of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) at the Jersey Breeders' Recognition Banquet in East Peoria, Ill., on June 25.

The Master Breeder Award is bestowed annually to a living AJCA member, family, partnership or corporation that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has bred outstanding animals for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.



Lyon Jerseys LLC is a family business that has been long recognized for breeding Registered Jerseys of extraordinary quality, as pioneers in soil and water conservation, and for leadership in cooperative marketing, dairy product research and dairy promotion. Their breeding philosophy remains focused on three areas: (1) balanced type, longevity and production; (2) butterfat and protein pounds; and (3) udder traits.

"When we began our own serious journey with Registered Jerseys, and the business development of Hilmar Cheese, the Lyon family's dual commitment to the Jersey breed and to individual dairy farmer involvement was already in place," said Richard Clauss, Hilmar, Calif., past AJCA and National All-Jersey Inc. (NAJ) president, in a letter of support. "This provided leadership for the Jersey organizations on a national level and presents an example of supporting a large family by milking profitable Jerseys."

The farm was established in the 1920s as a partnership between brothers Robert and Earl Lyon to further the interest their 4-H age children had in Jerseys. Today, it is operated as a family LLC consisting of G. Joe Lyon, his son Eric, and his nephew, Stuart.

The trio work very well together. Joe, at 86-years-young, still manages the overall planning and the farm finances, in addition to handling calf registration and continuing his involvement in various industry-wide milk marketing organizations. Stuart di-

rects the extensive farming operation that provides the majority of the herd's forage needs as well as corn for grain. Eric takes charge of the milking operation, young stock care, matings for herd's breeding program and the merchandising of cattle.

In 1958, their operation was just 44 milk cows and 320 acres. The dairy now has 400 milk cows and the farming operations span 1,600 acres, with 12 full-time employees. The herd has a 2014 AJCA lactation average of 19,178 lbs. milk, 981 lbs. fat and 697 lbs. protein on 340 lactations. The September 2014 type appraisal average was 84.3% with 59 Excellent and 274 Very Good cows in the herd of 382. They have developed more than 240 cows to date with lifetime totals of more than 100,000 lbs. milk. The herd today includes cow families that have been bred by the Lyon family members for more than three-quarters of a century. Two families now have 26 direct maternal generations in the herd.

In the April 2015 Green Book there are 12 Lyon-bred bulls listed in the All Summarized Bulls that have been marketed by A.I. companies. Leading the way are three bulls marketed with ABS Global: 29JE3527 Lyon Impuls Amity, GJPI +112; 29JE3788 Lyon I.Louie Eline, GJPI +108; and 29JE3752 Lyon Impuls Louie Chart, GJPI +106.

"The Lyon family has clearly planned and conducted a breeding program which insists a Jersey cow in their operation must

milk profitably and breed back easily, while maintaining a quality udder, across numerous lactations," said Larry Schirm, ABS Asia Business Director in a letter of support. "They have also insisted that increased volume of production must be achieved without compromising higher component percentages with the volume of milk produced for a cheese yield milk market."

Lyon Jerseys came to national prominence after a bull-buying trip to Michigan in 1953. Joe and his cousin, Russell "Bud," purchased Jester B Noble Aim from Meadowridge

Jerseys for a mere \$500. He proved to be a profitable genetic investment by the cousins, as he did well in the show ring as did his daughters. He was soon purchased by COBA for \$6,000 to be added to their sire lineup. At the 1958 All American Jersey Show, COBA partnered with the AJCA to promote him with a daughter group that was showcased under a large sign that asked and answered the question "What's A Jersey Daddy Worth?" His most famous daughter was Lyon Jesileus Madeline, sold in the 1958 All American Sale for \$6,000, after capturing Grand Champion honors earlier in the year at the National Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo, Iowa.

From those original heifers the Lyon family has exhibited for decades at the Iowa State Fair. They have been named Premier Breeder and Premier Exhibitor many times, most recently in 2014. They view their participation in such events as "being there and participating, for the benefit of seeing others' cattle and discussing topics of the moment, and for promoting dairy to the consuming public."

One of the most prominent cows in recent years is Lyon Character, Excellent-94%. Not only was she a class winner at the Iowa State Fair and a Top 200 JPI cow in her era, but she has produced three records in excess of 21,000 lbs. milk, 1,200 lbs. fat and 800 lbs. protein. Her best record was made at 6-5, when she produced 24,340 lbs. milk, 1,279 lbs. fat and 835 lbs. protein. She is

(continued to page XX)

AJCA Master Breeder

(continued from page XX)

the dam of "Louie Chart" and the grandam of 7JE5004 River Valley CeCe Chrome-ET, GJPI +134. His dam, Lyon Celebrity Cece-ET, Excellent-91%, was purchased by River Valley Farm, Tremont, Ill., where she completed a 4-3 record of 22,660 lbs. milk, 999 lbs. fat and 823 lbs. protein in 271 days.

Another standout bred by the Lyon family is Lyon Duke Dutchy, Excellent-95%. This tanbark beauty has been owned by some very prominent Jersey breeders through the years. She was first purchased by Norman Nabholz and Judy Rainey, West Union, Iowa, in 2003 and then sold to Ken and Kathy Elliott and Budjon Farms, Lomira, Wis., in 2005, before heading to River Valley Farm in 2009. She was named Grand Champion of the All American Junior Show that same year. In 2013, she was Junior All American Aged Cow and was first in the 100,000 lb. class at the International Jersey Show in Madison, Wis.

In addition to these standout cows, the Lyon family is also very well-known for selling more than 100 natural service young bulls every year to commercial dairy herds wishing to include Jersey genetics in their breeding programs. As a REAP herd, the Lyon family provides the transferred registration paper to all of their bull buyers at no cost, hoping to encourage them to use the management tools and programs available through the association.

"The Lyon family has a long-time effort of placing profitable Jerseys in non-Jersey herds, thus growing the Jersey presence in the U.S. dairy industry," said Calvin Covington, former Executive Secretary of the AJCA. "Today, many of these herds that started their Jersey experience with a Lyon bull have converted to Jersey."

One of those breeders that the Lyons helped get a start in the Jersey business was Andy Buttles and his wife, Lynn. The couple owns and operates Stone-Front Farm in southwestern Wisconsin. The couple received the 2010 National Dairy Shrines Progressive Dairy Producer award in the large herd division. While the majority of the couple's herd is Holstein, they purchased two standout cows from the Lyon family to jumpstart their herd: Lyon Paramount Iota and Lyon Sambo Jules. Both cows are now appraised Excellent-92% and A.I. companies are writing contracts for offspring descending from "Jules."

"The Lyon family breeds the kind of long-lasting, profitable cows that every dairy producer would love to milk," wrote Andy Buttles in a letter of support. "Besides breeding and merchandising outstanding Registered Jersey cattle, the Lyon family are also tireless spokespeople for the Jersey

breed. Their willingness to volunteer to serve in leadership positions really demonstrates their passion for the Jersey cow."

And leadership is important to the family. Both Joe and Eric have served on the AJCA Board of Directors, and Joe has served as president of both AJCA (1969-1972) and NAJ (1976-1984). Joe played a very crucial role in the development of the Equity program for NAJ. He also received the AJCA's Distinguished Service award in 1987. Joe's late wife, Duffy, was a huge dairy spokesperson as she was known around the world as "The Butter Cow Lady." Through her sculptures, she was invited to appear on The Today Show and Late Night with David Letterman, as well as articles profiling her in *Time*, *Life*, and *Newsweek*. The couple instilled the love of the Jersey breed to their nine children and numerous grandchildren. Joe and Eric are the only father-son pair to have judged The All American Jersey Show: Joe in 1988 and Eric in 1998. Eric is among a small group of individuals to have judged all three shows at the All American.

"The leadership, determination and willingness to do what was best for the Jersey breed in the face of adversity, exhibited by Joe Lyon with the support of his family, is a noteworthy characteristic," said Calvin Covington, former Executive Secretary of the AJCA. "During his tenure as president of the AJCA, the stark choice was between providing leadership in breeding a profitable Jersey for the commercial dairy farmer, or breeding a Jersey that was only fit for the hobby farmer. Thanks to Joe, with the support of many others, the breed chose the correct road and the rest is history, dramatically shown today by the growth of Jersey genetics."

The family has supported the NAJ Equity program since its inception in 1976. As well, the Lyon family has maintained enrollment in the AJCA's performance and type appraisal programs since 1961, building pedigrees that have laid the foundation for their herd and many others across the country. They are contract advertisers in the *Jersey Journal* and *Iowa Jerseys Today*. The family has long understood the power of advertising to their merchandising program and are one of the most effective at using photos to promote and represent the herd with their advertising. You can often read with their ad, "And there are more where she came from."

"The Lyon family may not have put a large number of bulls into A.I., owned many National Class Leaders, or won as many classes at the All American as some previous Master Breeder honorees," observed Covington. "However, their breeding philosophy and standing up for this breed-

ing philosophy, especially when it was not popular, helped put the Jersey breed at the forefront of all dairy breeds, today and for the future."

"It is forward-looking individual Jersey breeders like the Lyon family who have laid the foundation for the success we all enjoy with Jerseys today," said Clauss.

Master Breeders

- 1944 William MacPherson, Thomasville, Ga.*
- 1945 W. R. Kenan, Jr., Lockport, N.Y.*
- 1946 George W. Sisson, Jr., Potsdam, N.Y.*
- 1947 E. S. Brigham, St. Albans, Vt.*
- 1948 Guy Miller, Modesto, Calif.*
- 1949 Dr. Howard D. Odum, Chapel Hill, N.C.*
- 1950 Judge J. G. Adams, Asheville, N.C.*
- 1951 N. M. Tibbles, Independence, Ore.*
- 1952 Frank W. Barber, Fayetteville, Tenn.*
- 1953 Herman F. Heep, Buda, Texas*
- 1954 Dale Dean, Ridgeway, Mich.*
- 1955 Maurice Pollak, Lincroft, N.J.*
- 1956 J. L. Hutcheson, Jr., Rossville, Ga.*
- 1957 John R. Sibley, Spencer, Mass.*
- 1958 J. Chester Elliff, Tulia, Texas*
- 1959 A. W. Sweet, Sixes, Ore.
- 1960 Col. H. G. Wilde, Lenox, Mass.*
- 1961 C. Edward Knolle, Sandia, Texas*
- 1962 Russel Hoar, Newark, Ohio*
- 1963 William Ross Proctor, Pittstown, N.J.*
- 1964 Clifton F. Russell, Rossville, Ga.*
- 1965 Chester Folck, Springfield, Ohio*
- 1966 C. Scott Mayfield, Athens, Tenn.*
- 1967 E. E. Greenough, Merced, Calif.*
- 1968 Henry Uihlein, Lake Placid, N.Y.*
- 1969 Charles S. Kelly, Hudson, Wis.*
- 1970 H. Fowler Hupman, Springfield, Ohio*
- 1971 Milton Humbert, Cleveland, Tenn.*
- 1972 Willis Rupert, New Waterford, Ohio*
- 1973 Earl Hutchinson, Tunbridge, Vt.*
- 1974 Antone J. Regli, Ferrndale, Calif.*
- 1975 Mrs. Diana Ryan, Newport, R.I.*
- 1976 James and Georgia Pappas, Modesto, Calif.*
- 1977 Mrs. H. G. Wilde, Lenox, Mass.*
- 1978 Henry W. Black, West Baldwin, Maine*
- 1979 John Bishop VI, Columbus, N.J.*
- 1980 Mrs. A. G. Rankin* and Sons, Faunsdale, Ala.
- 1981 W. L. Payton, Stephenville, Texas*
- 1982 Curtis Hobson, Athens, Tenn.*
- 1983 Stanley N. Chittenden, New Lebanon, N.Y.*
- 1984 Walter H.* and Joan Brown, Hughson, Calif.
- 1985 Newell Mills, Fallon, Nev.*
- 1986 John R. Owen, Lewisburg, Tenn.*
- 1987 Robert S. Pike* and Family, Cornish, Maine
- 1988 Ray Chamberlain, Wyoming, N.Y.*
- 1989 Ralph* and Betty Reichert, Riley, Kans.
- 1990 Stanley K. Bansen, Dayton, Ore.*
- 1991 Henry P. Knolle, Sandia, Texas*
- 1992 Phil V. Fanelli, Hilmar, Calif.*
- 1993 Dr. J. J. Malnati, Newberry, S.C.*
- 1994 Walter and Sally Goodrich, West Danville, Vt.
- 1995 Edward*, Harold, and Donald* Wright, White River Junction, Vt.
- 1996 Elmer D. Larson, Roy, Wash.*
- 1997 Albert Bradford, Turner, Maine*
- 1998 Robert Stiles Family, Clear Brook, Va.
- 1999 Robert and Barbara Howard, Tillamook, Ore.*
- 2000 Charles L. Lutz, Newton, N.C.*
- 2001 Duane Kuhlman, Snohomish, Wash.
- 2002 Duane Wickstrom, Hilmar, Calif.
- 2003 James Chaney, Bowling Green, Ky.*
- 2004 Charles J. Steer, Cottage Grove, Tenn.
- 2005 William G. Mason Family, Buhl, Idaho*
- 2006 Aaron F. Richards, Farmington, Utah*
- 2007 Robert Bignami, Orland, Calif. and Harlan Askeland*, Orland, Calif.
- 2008 James S. Huffard III, Crockett, Va.
- 2009 Ahlem Farms Partnership and Ed Fisher, Hilmar, Calif.
- 2010 Donald* and Elsa Sherman, Hilmar, Calif.
- 2011 Dan Bansen, Dayton, Ore.
- 2012 Dutch Hollow Farms, Schodack Landing, N.Y.
- 2013 Bearl and Joanne Seals, Cloverdale, Ore.
- 2014 Silver Spring Farm, Syracuse, N.Y.
- 2015 Lyon Jerseys LLC, Toledo, Iowa

* deceased

AJCA Master Breeder

(continued from page XX)