



## Staying the Course: President Chittenden Urges Focus on Jersey Strengths Amid Industry Shifts

At the 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Jersey Cattle Association, held June 28 in Lexington, Ky., President Alan Chittenden addressed the membership with a candid but forward-looking report on the state of the breed and the association.

While noting he came without a grand farewell or sweeping vision, Chittenden struck a tone of grounded realism. The top topic of conversation during the week, he acknowledged, had not been dairy policy or technology—but rather, beef prices. From beef-on-dairy calf premiums to cull cow returns, the value of beef has buoyed dairy finances across the board. For many breeders, it’s been a much-needed lift.

But not all news was positive. Chittenden reported a significant decline in Jersey registrations in the past year—a reflection, he said, of both fewer calves being born and a shift in breeder behavior. “People have just enough for what they need,” he said, noting that leaner herd sizes and reduced cattle movement are also impacting revenues in areas such as Jersey Marketing Service sales, despite stronger sale prices.

Still, Chittenden emphasized that what is in the industry’s control is the Jersey cow itself.

Pointing to a major competing breed, he noted, “They’ve made their cow more like ours—higher components, smaller, more efficient.” These gains, he said, are largely driven by advanced genomic testing

and robust data collection, giving that breed faster and more reliable genetic progress.

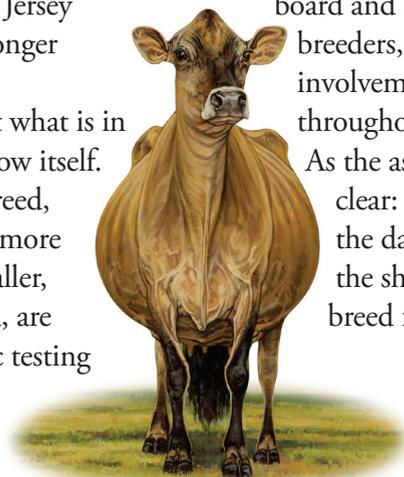
To keep pace, Chittenden urged Jersey breeders to prioritize increased production, efficiency, and expanded genomic testing, not just for the sake of progress but to remain a compelling option for commercial dairies once the current beef premium recedes.

“We have to preach the efficiency of our cow,” he stated, noting that the value of reliable data will become increasingly critical. He challenged the association and its industry partners, including the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding (CDCB) and the A.I. industry, to explore ways to incentivize data contribution from producers—especially as participation in key AJCA programs faces pressure from broader economic realities.

Despite the headwinds, Chittenden closed on a note of gratitude and optimism.

“I’m proud to stand up here representing your board and the staff,” he said. “Thank you, our breeders, for your passion for the Jersey cow, your involvement, and your participation today and throughout the year.”

As the association looks ahead, the message was clear: focus on what sets Jerseys apart, invest in the data that drives progress, and hold firm to the shared commitment that has defined the breed for generations.



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