



## Celebrating Jersey Youth: A Tradition of Leadership and Learning

In 1958, the Board of Directors of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) expanded its programs for youth. Since then, the AJCA has never looked back—continuing to strengthen and grow opportunities for the next generation each year.

Jersey youth programs have a long and proud history. They date back to 1917, when Jersey calf clubs were established across the country, making this perhaps the oldest breed youth program in the United States. The modern framework—achievement and production recognitions, scholarships, awards for youth shows and judging contests, the All American Junior Jersey Show, and the Pot O’Gold program—took shape in 1958 and remains the foundation of today’s offerings.

Now, AJCA counts 3,697 junior members—more than twice the number of active adult members. This month’s Jersey Journal highlights the latest group of young leaders inspired by the Jersey cow. Their accomplishments, numbering more than three dozen stories in these pages, are nothing short of remarkable. Each year, juniors set the bar higher with the encouragement of their families, youth leaders, and the incentives of AJCA’s programs. Whether they go on to own and operate Jersey dairies or pursue careers across agriculture and beyond, these young people hold immense promise as the future leaders of AJCA, National All-Jersey Inc., and the wider industry.

The beauty of the AJCA youth program is its steady development. Over time, it instills a business sense and practical skills that serve juniors for a lifetime. This aim comes into focus through national achievement and production contests and is vividly on display each November at the Pot O’Gold Sale. There, parents and grandparents talk with their children about how to finance a calf, and juniors can be seen studying pedigrees, evaluating heifers, and placing bids—each trying to secure the best value for their investment. The learning continues long after the sale, as heifers grow into cows, complete their first lactations, and are ranked alongside their peers from the same sale year.

Jersey breeders have always

demonstrated unmatched generosity, offering some of their best heifers for youth to develop into the foundations of their herds. The results are evident: in the performance levels of this year’s Pot O’Gold winners, in the National Youth Production Contest standings printed in this issue, and in every September youth-focused Jersey Journal for decades.

Then, there’s the commitment that has been made to continuing financial support. The original stake of \$11,000 for the national Jersey youth program came from the 1956 (all donation) All-American Sale of Jersey Starlets, and basic program funding has been secured on an annual basis since through the National Heifer Sale. Tax-exempt permanent funds were established for scholarships starting in 1965, growing in both number and fund value to provide over \$50,000 for educational awards this year. The activities touching hundreds of youth at the All American are possible because of annual contributions from breeders, state organizations and allied industry, plus the Maurice E. Core Jersey Youth Fund, and the Pot O’Gold program is self-funding.

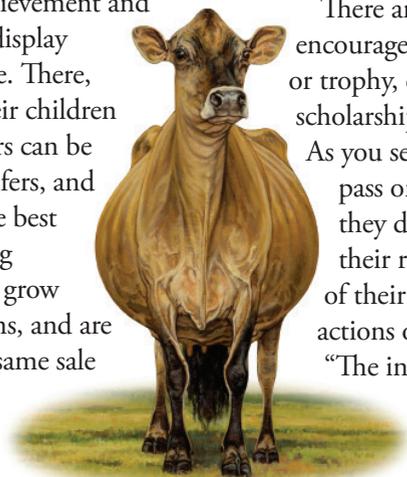
Jersey Youth Academy is funded through a 501(c)(3) educational foundation established from proceeds of BW Academy-ET sold at the 2008 All American, the all-donation National Heifer Sale of 2011 and bolstered by continuing contributions and the Cow Pie Bingo fundraiser.

“It behooves all of us to lend every support and encouragement to the youth of our business.”

There are, however, other forms of “support and encouragement” that linger beyond any ribbon or trophy, certificate of achievement, cash award or scholarship check.

As you see Jersey youth going about their activities, do pass on words of congratulations with a big smile as they demonstrate good sportsmanship, keep up their records, or do any other good job that is part of their development as young Jersey breeders. Such actions on your part will surely inspire, and after all, “The inspired youth of today are tomorrow’s leaders.”

Congratulations Jersey youth!



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