

Three Young Jersey Breeders to be Recognized

The Board of Directors of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) has named three recipients of the Young Jersey Breeder Award for 2021. They are Matthew and Lauren Evangelo, Kingsburg, Calif., Amy Maxwell, Donahue, Iowa, and Alana Peterson, Viroqua, Wis.

The first Young Jersey Breeder Awards were presented in 1976. Since then, more than 280 producers have received this award, including this year's recipients.

The Young Jersey Breeder Award is presented to individuals or couples younger than the age of 40 on January 1 of the year nominated who merit recognition for their expertise in dairy farming, breeding Jersey cattle, participation in AJCA and National All-Jersey Inc. (NAJ) programs, and leadership in Jersey and other dairy and agriculture organizations.

The honorees will be recognized at the Young Jersey Breeders Banquet to be held in conjunction with the AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings in Bettendorf, Iowa, on June 23, 2021.

Matthew and Lauren Evangelo

Matthew and Lauren Evangelo partner with his mother, Teresa, in Bar E Dairy, a mixed herd of 600 Jersey and 400 Holstein cows.

A mutual love of cattle brought Matt and Lauren together for the first time in 2004 at World Dairy Expo. He was competing with the dairy judging team for California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo and she was attending with family and friends. The next year, their paths crossed again with a reversal of roles, with Lauren judging for Cal Poly. Fate brought them

together again when he returned to dairy with his family, and she moved to Hanford for an internship with Farm Credit West.

They married in 2008 and purchased their first big ticket item as newlywed Tiaro Nevada Jazzle with Blake Renner as a heifer calf from the Spring Valley 7th Edition. She was named Honorable Mention Junior Champion at World Dairy Expo in 2009 and placed 8th in the five-year-old class at the show in 2012. She is appraised Excellent-93% and has been a cornerstone of the merchandising program at Bar E Dairy.

Black and whites were the leading ladies in Matt's life initially. He grew up on D & E Dairy, a Registered Holstein farm owned by his parents in Hanford. When he was eight, Jerseys came to the farm as project heifers for him and his brothers. Matt found success in the ring with brown cows and grew the Evangelo Jerseys herd. After he graduated from Cal Poly in 2005, he returned to the dairy full time and evaluated cows part-time for Semex as well. In 2014, his parents helped Matt and Lauren start a second dairy. Three years later, the herds were merged to establish Bar E Dairy.

The Evangelos focus on developing superior genetics, utilizing technology, and providing excellent cow comfort. They installed the SCR activity monitoring system from Allflex in 2019 and have continued to improve cooling equipment to combat temperatures that often surpass 100°F in the summer. In the mating program, priority is placed on bulls that transmit high fat and protein yield and desirable udder traits. All heifers are genotyped. The top end of the herd is mated to gender-sorted genomic bulls from Semex and Select Sires. Animals with lower genetic merit are bred to beef bulls. Matt and Lauren also use high-type bulls on a few fancy pedigree animals for the show market.

Among the bulls that have been sold to A.I. include the breed's former #1 bull for Jersey Udder Index, Evangelo Del Primero, at Accelerated Genetics. He has

Amy Maxwell

Amy Maxwell and her family own and operate Cinnamon Ridge Jerseys, a diversified farming operation, in Donahue, Iowa. The dairy farm on which she grew up was very different than the one she now manages. But it was time in the tie-stall barn working with 40 cows two decades ago that laid the foundation for her success milking 210 cows with robots today. For Amy, success hinges on a strong work ethic and quality care for the cows, be the herd small or large.

Amy has pursued opportunities to learn and network from the onset. She attended the inaugural Jersey Youth Academy in 2009 and worked as an intern at High Lawn Farm, Lee, Mass., in the summer of 2011 as recipient of the Fred Stout Experience Award. She was a member of the dairy judging team for Iowa State University in 2010, where she was exposed to a variety of management styles at farms that hosted team practices. The following year, she earned a degree in agricultural business and economics from Iowa State.

Amy spent the next several months working at other dairies around the country to gain knowledge she would bring to Cinnamon Ridge Jerseys. A six-month internship at Forest Glen Jerseys in Dayton, Ore., brought proficiency in breeding and experience caring for a large organic dairy herd. She was responsible for inseminating the 2,000-cow herd and helped with vaccinations, newborn and postpartum care, and veterinary visits. She also spent time at two dairies that used Lely and DeLaval robots to learn the pros and cons of each manufacturer and determine a best fit for her own situation.

The Maxwells settled on Lely robots because of proximity to the local dealership and compatibility with sand bedding. They began milking 80 cows with two robots in November 2012, then added another two robots in March 2013. They purchased bred heifers from the Cedarcrest Dispersal to grow the herd. With trial and error, they found the current herd size of 210 cows to be ideal for maximizing production per cow.

With the transition made, the goal-oriented Maxwells set their eyes on becoming the top producing herd in the nation. Though the dairy had consistently ranked among similar-sized herds, Amy set forth a strategic plan to lead all herds, regardless



Matt, Lauren and Carson Brooks Evangelo

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Amy Maxwell

of size. The Maxwells broke into the top 10 rankings in the nation in 2016 and topped the list for milk, protein, and cheese yield production in 2019. Cinnamon Ridge Dairy Farm retains this ranking today for actual and m.e. production with an actual average of 25,077 lbs. milk, 1,173 lbs. fat, 931 lbs. protein and a cheese yield of 3,125 lbs.

From an early age, Amy saw the value of investing in elite Registered Jersey genetics and developing them at Cinnamon Ridge. She purchased her first heifer from the Pot O'Gold Sale when she was nine and made several additional purchases over the years. The herd today includes numerous descendants. Among them is Cinnamon Nitro Noble-ET, Excellent-90%, who made the nation's top 305-day milk record for 2020. She traces four generations back to Amy's second Pot O'Gold purchase in 2002. Amy has also marketed to A.I. and other Jersey breeders from her purchases. Three bulls from the "Noble" family are being sampled by Select Sires Inc. Cinnamon Ridge Method Bulgaria, a daughter of another Pot O'Gold purchase, sold to Pine Tree Dairy of Marshallville, Ohio, for \$39,000 in 2016. She has six sons in A.I.

Amy has developed other production and genetic leaders from years of Cinnamon Ridge breeding, including Cinnamon Ridge Plus Partridge, Excellent-91%, winner of the Hilmar Cheese Yield Trophy and the President's Trophy in 2018, and Cinnamon Ridge Rasmus Lily, Very Good-86%, winner of the National Jersey Youth Production Contest in 2011.

Among the attributes that have helped

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Alana Peterson

Alana operates Peterson Jerseys, a 50-cow Registered Jersey dairy in Viroqua with the help of her parents, Dean and Pat. Ownership of the farm has been passed through four generations of the family, with Alana purchasing it from her parents in June 2016.

Like most kids "lucky" enough to grow up on a dairy farm, Alana spent a great deal of time in the barn at a young age. That experience was the springboard for dairy youth activities, pursuit of a dairy science degree and a career decision to return to the family farm.

Alana first showed at the Vernon County Fair when she was five and owned her first Jersey, a 4-H project, at the age of nine. She was making mating decisions for her cattle at 14 and involved in all aspects of the farm as a high schooler. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls with a degree in dairy science management and a minor in coaching then returned to the family farm.

For her to continue dairying, it was clear changes needed to be made to the labor-intensive, tie-stall barn of her predecessors. Alana did her research and settled on a design that was efficient and affordable and would help her meet goal one: cow comfort. In the fall of 2012, construction was begun on a 12-stall stanchion barn with lever locks and six milking units and a 50 x 100-foot barn with a bedded pack and two calving pens. They began shipping Grade-A milk in the spring of 2013. The pack barn is used as a holding pen for milking and housing during the winter.

Cows are rotationally grazed during the summer. They are fed from bunks and a round bale feeder on a cement pad during the winter. Another facility improvement included a switch from H-bunks to bottomless metal feed bunks to reduce waste and aid feed removal. For young stock, a fence line feeder was purchased and stalls in the old barn retrofitted for smaller animals. Corn silage was ensiled in bags to increase quality and reduce spoilage. On her list of future improvements is a cover for the cement pad and a second pad to reduce feed and bedding costs.

The results of the facility changes are healthier, more comfortable cows with higher production and fewer foot issues and a lower

electricity bill. The dairy has earned milk quality awards from Prairie Farms and Swiss Valley.

Another pivotal decision for Alana was to more fully use AJCA programs and services, including REAP, and enroll the herd on official DHI test after a lapse. Among her goals is to develop a stronger market for show and A2/A2 genetics. To accomplish this, she is breeding stature into the genetics for youthful udders that she inherited. With her first herd appraisal in November 2020, this sound genetic base includes 20 Excellents and an appraisal average of 87.2%. Of these, one was appraised Excellent-94 points, three were made Excellent-92 and another three appraised Excellent-91%.

Alana also became involved with the farmland conservation program from the National Resources Conservation Service and took a nutrient management class to make the farm sustainable and efficient.

Alana is active off the farm too. She was elected as a director-at-large for the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association in 2018 and then became president of the club in 2020. She sits on the board of the Vernon County Dairy Youth Fund and chairs the Vernon County Dairy Day. She helped to establish the Cheese of Champs Sale at the Vernon County Fair, which auctions cheese made from milk produced by cows in the junior and open shows to raise funds for youth programs. She also helped to create a virtual speaking contest for youth to learn how to talk to the public about the dairy industry and to recognize public speaking

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Alana Peterson

Evangelo

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impacted herds internationally as well, with daughters tapped as Junior Champion of the Swiss Expo Jersey Show and Grand Champion of the German National Show.

The herd is enrolled on REAP. It ranks among the top 25% in the nation for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +14 (April 2021). With the latest appraisal in April 2021, the herd includes 31 Excellent and 398 Very Good cows. The January 2021 rolling herd average is 19,747 lbs. milk, 958 lbs. fat and 719 lbs. protein on 562 cows. Matt and Lauren believe in investing in the future of agriculture and may be as recognized for activities off the farm as for Evangelo Jerseys. Matt serves on the Kings County DHIA Board and the Kings Fair Dairy Replacement Heifer Committee and is a Region 81 delegate for Land O'Lakes. He has served the California Holstein Association as president, vice president and secretary/treasurer and was one of the state's delegates to the national Holstein convention three times. He is a graduate of the California Dairy Leaders program sponsored by Western United Dairyman.

Lauren has been secretary of the South San Joaquin Holstein Association (SSJHA) since 2006 and was committee chair for the pre-convention tours for the national Holstein association's convention hosted by the state in 2009. She has been a member of the county's June dairy month committee and the dairywomen organization since 2007. Her influence as manager with the loan department at Farm Credit West has garnered financial support for many dairy and youth activities at Cal Poly, the Fresno and Kings County Fairs, and Hanford FFA, among others.

But the couple is most proud of being co-chairs and founding members of the Western Classic Junior Dairy Show. The event was organized by the SSJHA in 2011, when the state of California eliminated funding for the junior show. Matt and Lauren are credited for being the driving force in the formation of The Classic and key to its development. For the ninth show in 2019, nearly 400 entries were shown by 200-plus exhibitors.

For Lauren, the show may be a way for her to pay forward the doors opened for her by Monique and Mike Moretti. Though she did not grow up on a farm, the couple helped her to join 4-H when she was nine and purchase her first calf a year later. Her dairy herd numbered 15 head by the time she was a high school senior and prompted her to study dairy and agriculture at Cal Poly.

The Moretti couple was also indirectly responsible for the development of a

partnership that brought some well-known genetics to Bar E Dairy. Among the other juniors they helped with dairy projects was Carly Olufs. When she showed Carly-O Tequila Alley {4} as a heifer at World Dairy Expo, she was unable to return to the Moretti's organic dairy. She eventually found her way to Budjon Farms of Lomira, Wis. The partnership of Budjon Farms, Peter Vail, F&D Borba and F&C Borba showed her to National Grand Champion laurels in 2015. Recognizing the genetic transmitting ability of her dam, Twisted-K Iatola Apple {3}, Carly asked the Evangelos to partner with her in intro-fertilization to increase progeny. One of her daughters, Carly-O Tequila Afterdark-ET, Excellent-90%, is a farm favorite and in the donor dam program.

Matt and Lauren gave birth to their first child, Carson Brooks, in October 2020.

Maxwell

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Amy attain success is a willingness to try new things and accept the outcome good, bad, or indifferent. She instituted a quarterly meeting for everyone on the team at Cinnamon Ridge to discuss options for improving the business. Anyone and everyone who is involved is encouraged to attend, from veterinarians and nutritionists to bankers and crop advisors.

Amy genotypes the entire herd, uses industry programs to source herd sires and implements JerseyMate to mate females as individuals. The breeding efforts have resulted in a REAP herd ranked among the top 25% in the nation for genetic merit, with a herd average JPI of +19 (April 2021). Cinnamon Ridge Dairy Farm has also earned a reputation for selling quality herd replacements and developed a solid clientele of repeat customers.

Amy is also willing to share knowledge with peers. She has participated in roundtable discussions in the Jersey Journal on genotyping, robotic milkers, and dairying as a millennial. As well, the dairy has assisted in research projects sponsored by the AJCC Research Foundation, the William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute and Cornell University and the University of Missouri.

Among her passions is to encourage youth to become involved with dairy. Amy and her father have helped to expand opportunities for showing and judging dairy cattle at the county fair. By opening the event to all youth (not just 4-Hers), entries have doubled since the pair assumed leadership in 2010. Amy has also helped non-farm kids in St. Louis exhibit 4-H projects at county and state fairs. This mentorship includes a cousin, Jacob Tatko, who spent

summers working at Cinnamon Ridge and saved money to buy a Jersey calf. His first purchase, JX Clemson Lemonhead 330 604 {6}, from the 2016 Pot O'Gold Sale won the ensuing production contest and the 2018 National Jersey Youth Production Contest as well.

The diversified farming enterprise at Cinnamon Ridge also includes production of artisan cheese, Jersey beef, pork, and eggs. These and other goods, like the farm's famous cinnamon rolls, are sold through The Country Cupboard farm store. Cinnamon Ridge also operates an agritourism business that includes tours of the farm.

Cinnamon Ridge is a tour stop for this year's AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings, hosted by Iowa Jersey breeders. The dairy will also host the National Heifer Sale on Friday, June 25.

Peterson

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achievements.

From the beginning, Alana has had a strong connection to the show ring. She born during the Minnesota State Fair week and eventually made a trek with the show string to this fair and several others over the years. The Petersons regularly exhibit at the Wisconsin Spring Spectacular Show, the Wisconsin State Jersey Show, the Wisconsin State Fair, the International Jersey Show and the All American Jersey Show. She has shown the Supreme Champion of the Vernon County Fair three times, topped the Wisconsin Jersey Futurity, and been named the top junior exhibitor in the National Jersey Jug Futurity. In 2019, the state of Wisconsin officially recognized the Peterson family for 75 years of continuous showing at the Vernon County Fair.

Alana was named Wisconsin Junior Jersey Breeder of the Year in 2006 and featured by Dairy Star in the Women in Dairy series in 2018. She has coached basketball and softball and grows giant pumpkins. It is her goal to win the largest-pumpkin class at the Vernon County Fair. She has come close several times with entries that weigh more than 300 lbs.

Editor's Note: Because the AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings were conducted virtually in 2020, recipients of last year's award have been given opportunity to be recognized at another event. Kevin Krejci and Lisa Demmer, Ellsworth, Wis., have opted to receive their award with this year's recipients at the Young Jersey Breeders Banquet. To learn more about them, read the May 2020 issue of the Jersey Journal.

