

Vice President Report for North America – Nov 2023

As this region is constituted by two of the world's major and influential Jersey cattle populations, I have chosen to present this report in the form of two separate submissions from the American Jersey Cattle Association and Jersey Canada.

American Jersey Cattle Association

It has been a trying year for dairies in the United States. Areas that had been dry for some time experienced heavy rainfall early making planting difficult. Other areas experienced severe drought with little to no crops to harvest. The price for cull cattle and markets in general have soared, which makes culling easier.

Milk prices have settled and leveled for the time being. However, with inflation, borrowing money has become more complex because of interest rates.

The American Jersey Cattle Association had another strong year in many areas of participation. Registrations totaled 122,092, the 6th highest historically, a slight drop from the previous year. Last year ranked 1st on REAP herds at 1001 and 1st in number of cows on REAP at 165,099. REAP herds by size 3000 cows and over total 11 making up 1.1% of herds, but 36.2% total cows. This compares to herds with 1-50 cows, total 627 herds, making up 65% of the total herds, but only 6.7 of the total cow numbers.

Production records continue to improve year after year. The new records this year include milk at 20,447, up 126 pounds, fat 1005, up 10 pounds and protein 765, up 11 pounds on 92,400 lactations.

Appraisers were busy again giving scores to 116,576 animals, making it 10 consecutive years over 100,000 cows.

The Jersey Journal saw a huge increase in readership with the online version. Subscribers do get two printed copies per year. However, by contacting the office and for an additional cost, you can get the printed copy each month.

The latest Jersey Youth Academy was comprised of 28 youth, travelling from 15 different states. This is a very well received program for young Jersey enthusiasts.

Although farming is a challenging profession, the Jersey Cow continues to make the future look bright.

Jersey Canada

A continued decline in fluid milk consumption of all types, combined with increasing consumer demand for butterfat, has served to increase Canada's skim-milk surplus. In the P5 milk pool, made up of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, milk boards enacted the final push of a 4-year plan to tackle this structural surplus, lowering the solids-non-fat to butterfat (SNF/BF) non-payment ratio to 2.20. The SNF/BF ratio for Canadian Jerseys on supervised records hovers around 1.90, and this is a major reason we are seeing Jerseys added to existing Holstein herds, where almost 1 in 5 herds (17%) now include Jerseys compared to 14% 10-years ago and 7% in 2003. Clear-eyed dairy producers understand that Jerseys are both beneficial to their own bottom line, and play a positive role in reducing this structural surplus.

Adapting to what seems to be the 'new normal', farmers face very different weather challenges depending on where they are located across this vast country. While much of Canada was experiencing drought conditions, leading to a record-setting year for Canadian wildfires, other farmers, especially in the East where Maritime provinces received double the average rainfall between June and August, struggled to harvest hay and forages. Adding to that stress, the Bank of Canada raised key interest rates 10 times in the last 18 months. This has resulted in increased borrowing costs for farmers and higher prices for feed, fuel and fertilizer, altogether leading to an 18.7% increase in input costs on farms.

In the face of these uncertainties, Jersey Canada's goal remains to increase profitability for our members and Jersey owners, and 2022 saw Jersey Canada's third-highest registration total in six decades. Looking at membership statistics, in the past 15 years, while the number of Canadian dairy farms decreased by 28%, Jersey Canada increased our membership by 21%. Our members recognize the value membership brings, not only through savings on administration and herd book services, but from the added value realized for registered animals, recognition through awards programs and community-building at Jersey Canada events.

Every day, Jersey Canada office staff, field reps and volunteers speak to someone new to Jerseys or interested in the breed. By talking to neighbors and putting pen to paper, dairy producers are coming to the conclusion that Jerseys can save money and make money at the same time. Through marketing, farm-level outreach and industry collaboration, Jersey Canada's vision sole vision remains providing services that encourage the successful advancement of members and the breed.

The Jersey cow is flourishing in North America and continues to supply the world with top quality genetics to further the advancement of the breed across the globe.

Respectfully submitted

Chris Sorenson
WJCB Vice President (North America)

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