

Latin American Region

Report to the World Jersey Cattle Bureau

June 2019

It has been an exiting year! Over the last few years people in the Bureau asked me to consider being a candidate for the Latin American- vice presidency at the end of Mr. Robredo six-year stint. My reply, I am sure you can find a much better candidate, I have 75 years, my education was banking and insurance and the farming and cattle enthusiasm comes from my family origins in dairy and sugarcane in Puerto Rico and Florida. My interest now is producing milk with Jersey cows and I am a slow learner. In addition, I am not very closely involved with those who keep and breed cows for shows.

Anyway here I am and trying to do my job. You cannot imagine the many learning experiences and new friendships I inherited from Agustin's past coverage. He travelled everywhere in and out of Argentina promoting the breed and left us with many friends of the Bureau. I have improved my political and group warming skills. It is a real surprise learning that there are so many different ideas and positions of what should be done to get any task completed. Everyone has a different way of doing it, feels that is the best solution and wants to implement it his or hers way. In the end we can spend too much time negotiating and not executing. Reminds me of the visit we did to the UK a few years ago when they had voted in favour of BREXIT, and recently I learned they are still looking for a solution to implement it.

Well, on to business and my report.

Colombia-

During the Costa Rica conference we had several reunions with the participants evaluating the possibility of maintaining a closer exchange of information to help each association becoming stronger, improve their breed promotion and member services. Colombia assumed the leadership and began working in preparing the activity; and we are now ready and one month away. With the important assistance of Agustin Robredo, Gonzalo Maldonado and the Executive Director Liliana Quevedo Soto, the organizers are very close to having a successful reunion to exchange knowledge and strengthen Jersey breed importance as the best cow for quality milk and production efficiency. The reunion begins in Medellin, Colombia on the 16th of July follows to Bogota where we have a whole day of reunions the 18th, on the 19th technical seminars and 20, 21 participation in the most important breed show and agricultural machinery exposition.

The results of the reunions will be made available after we complete the activity, as well as the information on each country's data which is being collected now. At the moment, we have confirmation from Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Mexico pending, Dominican Republic pending, and of course Guatemala.

Argentina-

This year we confirmed that the importation of Jersey semen continues to grow in Argentina and the breed continues to grow. There continues to be more demand than offer in the market. Economically we are still having difficulties as in many other countries, the price we get for our milk is not enough to cover the cost of production.

We had the closure of more than 400 farms. Due to the fact that Jersey milk gets a 20% bonus we notice a lot of Holstein farms switching to Jersey bulls and begin a conversion to our breed. Argentina had a drop of 10% in the production of milk yet an increase in the importation of Jersey semen. We see an increase in the number of cross breeds. The number of live cattle auctions increased and notice more interest in Jersey animals because of their adaptability to the different areas and better price for the milk. We continue to promote the marketing of Jerseys. The number of dairy shows was reduced because of the cost for the participants.

Guatemala-

Jersey Guatemala is the strongest dairy breed associations in the country with over 90 members and close to 4,000 registered Jerseys. We have an enthusiastic young board of directors which has been introducing new services and means of promoting the breed and the value of the cows. In the last two years they have produced a magazine (four issues per year) as well as a breed promotional film. The first Jersey arrived in 1892 to San Jose Pinula, Guatemala and the breed has never lost in number of associates or cows. You can find the videos searching in You tube for Jersey Guatemala. The number of registrations per year has been between 700 and 800 new animals and about 200 transfers. It is the only association which has the capacity of having its own exposition in addition to participating in the annual Dairy event.

In the last year we have been discussing how to treat registrations from JX bulls. Now if a pure cow is served with a JX4 bull, or higher, the offspring is registered pure. There are some large Jersey herds that are not in the association and we are trying to see how we can bring them back; probably it is a matter of the way the fees are structured.

Observations from the Vice President Latin America

It has been an exiting year and you have incited a lot of additional learning experiences for me, personally, which I have enjoyed a lot! Since philosophy is one of the new required sciences for us in the third generation, and it has been a favorite of mine for a long time, I would like to enrich our dialogue in the Bureau with some thoughts for this year:

- We all love Jerseys! But we do not share the same objectives in what we do with our cows. Some of us like to show them and make money selling prime show genetics, others produce pasture milk and others produce milk with cows in confinement. (the new packed compost barns appear to be the best of both world for cows and producers but we are still experimenting)
- These different purposes move us to design different Jerseys genetically and we can see the results, after years of breeding, that we have variations on the design of cows. In the last few years we have also seen the introduction of JX bulls and uses of crosses in many commercial situations.
- It is important that we, as persons of strong wills and spirits, learn to live with our neighbours and understand that their Jersey is as perfect for them as ours is perfect

for us. Both extremes are Jerseys and we will do a lot more good working together in promoting the Jersey.

- World-wide dairy producers are not receiving a fair price for their milk and we continue to observe the closing of farms. The industry feels the market is only price oriented and milk is a commodity; if this does not change the market will be drinking coloured water with no taste.
- We must brand Jersey milk and promote the market to notice the difference in a glass of Jersey milk or a cereal with full cream homogenized in the bottle. Unless we take this as a common goal we will shrink and the only ones left will be owners of show cows.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

Jacobo L Cabassa
Vice President WJCB