

## California Honors Jersey Breeders

Jersey breeders from the Golden State met for the annual meeting of their state Jersey organization on February 4, 2012, at the Sanctuary Beach Resort in Marina, Calif. Members of the California Jersey Cattle Association attended to business, honored their peers and learned more about managing Jerseys for profit in a series of seminars at the day-long event.

The organization's Senior Breeder Award and Junior Breeder Award were presented to members of the same family—the Van Exel family. Hank Van Exel received the former and his son, Adam, earned the later. The Van Exels operate a 1,700-cow dairy in Lodi and ship milk to the Hilmar Cheese Company. The mixed herd of Holsteins and Jerseys is managed on two separate farms a mile apart. Hank and Adam run the business with help from Hank's wife, Carolyn, and Adam's wife, Lacey, and his children, Madison and Atlee, and his two sisters and their families.

Hank and Carolyn established the dairy 58 years ago with 60 unregistered Holsteins. Jerseys were added in the mid-1980s after Hank judged a local show and purchased the Grand, Reserve and Junior Champions, along with two other members of the herd. The herd has grown in the years since and now includes 283 head of Registered Jersey cows. The 2011 lactation average of the REAP herd is 19,156 lbs. milk, 874 lbs. fat and 692 lbs. protein on 246 lactations. With the October 2011 herd appraisal, the farm is home to 41 Excellent and 201 Very Good cows and has an average appraisal of 83.7%.

Showing has been a favorite family pastime for the Van Exels from the beginning. The early purchases went on to top their classes at World Dairy Expo and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. More recently, the Van Exels bred and exhibited the winner of the 2003 National Jersey Jug Futurity, Excels Success 954, and the



Karessa Mast, left, and 2012 California Jersey Queen Kelli Carstensen, right, present the California Senior Breeder Award to Hank and Carolyn Van Exel.

Reserve Junior Champion of the 2010 All American Jersey Show, Excels Carrier Polly 2109. At the 2011 California Spring Show, they earned the Premier Breeder and Premier Exhibitor banners and also showed the Grand Champion, Excels Elite Ada 1938, and Reserve Junior Champion, GR Excels Barbaro Foxy 2163.

Hank was the official for The All American Jersey Show in 2002 and 2010 and served as the associate judge twice. This past fall, he judged the Central National Jersey Show and Expo Milk in Brazil.

The Distinguished Service Award was given to Karen Casale-Martin, Edy-Star Farm, Waterford. She is the longtime advisor for the junior association and has traveled with youth to shows across the west coast.

### Junior Awards

In the junior program, Kelli Carstensen, Petaluma, was crowned as the 2012 California Jersey Queen. The daughter of Neal and Sally Carstensen is a junior at California Polytechnic State University majoring in dairy science with a minor in agricultural business. She is the current vice president of the California Junior Jersey Cattle Association.

Carstensen placed second in the 2009 National Jersey Youth Achievement Contest. She was a member of the second Jersey Youth Academy and received the



Karen Casale-Martin was honored with the California Distinguished Service Award. She is congratulated by Karessa Mast, left, outgoing queen, and Kelli Carstensen, the state Jersey queen for 2012.

Jack C. Nisbet Memorial Scholarship in 2011. She earned the blue ribbon in senior showmanship at The All American Junior Jersey Show and was named second alternate in the National Jersey Queen Contest in 2011.

She was a member of the Cal Poly dairy judging team that placed second at the Big-E in 2011. As an individual, she placed among the 25 in the contests held at the Big-E and the Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Show.

Carstensen's herd, K-Cee Jerseys, numbers 19 cows and a dozen heifers and includes her first foundation animal, Sweet Laddie, Very Good-83%, who turned 11 years old in September.

Two members of the Sanders family won the senior and intermediate divisions of the youth achievement contest. Natalie Sanders of Hilmar won the senior division. The daughter of Scott and Sharalee Sanders is a sophomore at Modesto Junior College and plans to transfer to Cal Poly in the fall. Natalie established Fire-Lake Jerseys with her aunt, Cathy, in 2009 and now manages the herd with her sister and cousins. The 115-cow herd is run with the Holstein herd owned by the Sanders family.

Natalie is the president of the California Junior Jersey Cattle Association and attended Jersey Youth Academy in 2009 and 2011. She is a member of American

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California Jersey Queens Karessa Mast, left, and Kelli Carstensen, right, honor Adam Van Exel and his wife, Lacey, with the California Junior Breeder Award.



Donnie Sherman presents the Nanette Sherman-Taylor Scholarship to Kasidi Barcelos.



Theresa Sweeney receives the California Jersey Cattle Association Scholarship from President Benny Rector.

## California Meeting

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Rector presented details from the Jersey sustainability study by Jude Capper and Roger Cady, which determined that Jersey cows required 20% less total feedstuffs by weight and 32% less water to produce the same amount of milkfat and protein as Holstein cows. Cari Wolfe, Director Research and Genetic Program Development for the AJCA, explained how Jersey producers could use genotyping in herd management and discussed the Jersey Haplotype 1.