

## Ahlem Farms Partnership and Ed Fisher

The Ahlem Farms Partnership and Ed Fisher will be honored as Master Breeders of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) on July 2, 2009, at the Breeders Recognition Banquet in Syracuse, N.Y.

The Master Breeder award is bestowed annually to a living AJCA member, family, partnership or corporation that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has *bred outstanding animals for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.*

It stated in the first Ahlem Farms Jersey Sale catalog, *"If the 'American Dream' is 'the idea that through hard work, courage and determination one can achieve prosperity,"* the Registered Jersey™ herd at Ahlem Farms represents nothing less than the accomplishment of the American Dream. The partnership of Bill and Carolyn Ahlem, Sabino Ahlem-Herrera and Mr. Ed Fisher, Hilmar, Calif., combined have set the standard for genetics and big visions in large dairy operations.

Since the dairy's inception 42 years ago, the group has achieved a standard of excellence that can serve as a model for other businesses.

As of December 31, 2008, Ahlem Farms Partnership had:

- 3,114 cows that averaged 20,646 lbs. milk, 971 lbs. fat and 738 lbs. protein in 2008, with cheese yield per cow of 2,518 lbs.;
- In March 2009, the 3,462 cows averaged 82% for final score, including 226 Excellents and 2,237 Very Goods, with 841 appraised between 85% and 89%;
- After the April 2009 genetic summary, 108 Ahlem-bred cows rank on the Top 1½% list for Jersey Performance Index™ (JPI); 15 rank among the top 400 cows of the breed, including Ahlem Country Jan 16633, ranking fifth in the nation for JPI at +297; and six heifers bred by Ahlem Farms rank among the Top 500 PA JPI heifers of the breed;
- Ahlem Farms Partnership ranks 69<sup>th</sup> in the breed for JPI (04/09). The herd has an average PTA of +400M and



+97 JPI on 3,499 cows. They are the largest herd ranked and rank second in California;

- 35 bulls have been placed into A.I. service from Ahlem Farms Partnership and bulls have been contracted by every major North American stud. Another 200 bulls are sold annually from the farm for natural service;
- After the April 2009 genetic summary, Ahlem Farms had 27 summarized bulls with an average PTA of +625M, +26F, +20P and +\$206CM. Their average JPI was +107.
- This list includes the #7 sire for JPI, Ahlem Lemvig Abe-ET, who has been in the top 10 of the breed for JPI since his release. The Genetic Diversity sire was syndicated in The

- All American Jersey Sale and ranked #1 on the JPI list after his initial release in active service; and
- 26 sons of "Abe" are currently in A.I. service and 320 daughters of "Abe" are on the Top 1½% list.

One could call the partnership and management team the American Dairy Dream Team, but the people involved are a modest and humble group, who know the hard work and team effort that has gone into building the credibility of Ahlem Farms.

Bill Ahlem Jr.'s dairy career began in 1966, after graduating from Oregon State University. He joined his father, William Sr., on one of the family's two dairies where he milked 120 cows. Within a year, he was running the second dairy of 100 cows. In 1972, he and his brother, Chuck, formed a farm and dairy partnership. In 1978, their brother, Jim, joined the partnership to form Ahlem Enterprises. The partnership later was split into three independent operations.

In 1979, Bill and his wife, Carolyn, hired Mr. Ed Fisher to improve the genetics of the herd. Fisher had just retired from teaching Vocational Agriculture at Hilmar High School and had taught Bill. With Mr. Fisher's influence in genetics, the herd went from mostly grade to a 100% Registered Jersey herd through the Genetic Recovery Program offered by the AJCA. He brought thoughtful sire selection, matings and an exceptional record-keeping system to the large dairy.

In 2002 after his graduation from UC-Davis, Sabino Ahlem-Herrera joined the partnership. As a veterinarian, Sabino brought his expertise in the day-to-day management of herd health, nutrition, and influenced consistent gains in production. In the past 10 years, the farm has increased their actual production from 15,832 lbs. milk and 2,234 lbs. cheese in 1999, to 19,021 lbs. milk (+3,189 lbs.) and 2,518 lbs. cheese (+284 lbs.) in 2008.

Ahlem-bred Registered Jerseys are popular in the sale ring, as they hosted two highly successful sales at the farm. The first Ahlem Farms Jersey Sale (March

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## AJCA Master Breeder

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2006) averaged an impressive \$2,930.61 on 196 lots. The 146 cows that sold averaged \$3,166.44 to pace the sale. In November 2007, they family hosted the second sale setting a new record for one-day sales—\$1,000,000 in sales. It was the first herd promotional sale to exceed the one million dollar mark. The 351 lots sold averaged \$2,940.60. The 237 cows led the sale with an average price of \$3,011.39.

The partnership is a strong supporter of state and national sales, with their consignments commanding top price many times at the Pot O'Gold Sale, All American Jersey Sale and the Pride of the West Sale. In 2005, they gave a Leadership gift in the all-donation National Heifer Sale.

Just last year, Ahlem Jace Charm 15069-ET won the National Youth Production Contest and Pot O'Gold Contest for her owner, Kaila Wussow, Cecil, Wis. The Very Good-88% daughter of Windy Willow Montana Jace produced 33,550 lbs. milk, 1,546 lbs. fat and 1,048 lbs. protein at 2-1. She was purchased by Wussow in the 2005 Pot O'Gold Sale.

The Ahlems are not just known for their outstanding herd of cows. Bill was appointed to the National Dairy Board in 1999 and served as Board chair. He

provided leadership to the national effort to strengthen markets for U. S. dairy products. He has served on the boards of Dairy Management Inc., Western United Dairymen, California and American Farm Bureau Federation, Hilmar United School District, and the Benevolent Ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Bill and Carolyn are among the 12 founders of the Hilmar Cheese Company and Bill is a founding partner of Jerseyland Sires.

The Ahlem Farms Partnership and Mr. Ed Fisher have made a lasting contribution to the dairy industry as leaders off the farm and on the farm. The group has bred thousands of Registered Jerseys that have impacted the breed and are propelling the breed forward in genetic advancement.

### Master Breeders

1944 William MacPherson, Thomasville, Ga.\*  
1945 W. R. Kenan, Jr., Lockport, N.Y.\*  
1946 George W. Sisson, Jr., Potsdam, N.Y.\*  
1947 E. S. Brigham, St. Albans, Vt.\*  
1948 Guy Miller, Modesto, Calif.\*  
1949 Dr. Howard D. Odum, Chapel Hill, N.C.\*  
1950 Judge J. G. Adams, Asheville, N.C.\*  
1951 N. M. Tibbles, Independence, Ore.\*  
1952 Frank W. Barber, Fayetteville, Tenn.\*  
1953 Herman F. Heep, Buda, Texas\*  
1954 Dale Dean, Ridgeway, Mich.\*  
1955 Maurice Pollak, Lincroft, N.J.\*  
1956 J. L. Hutcheson, Jr., Rossville, Ga.\*  
1957 John R. Sibley, Spencer, Mass.\*  
1958 J. Chester Elliff, Tullia, Texas\*  
1959 A. W. Sweet, Sixes, Ore.  
1960 Col. H. G. Wilde, Lenox, Mass.\*  
1961 C. Edward Knolle, Sandia, Texas  
1962 Russel Hoar, Newark, Ohio\*  
1963 William Ross Proctor, Pittstown, N.J.\*

1964 Clifton F. Russell, Rossville, Ga.\*  
1965 Chester Folck, Springfield, Ohio\*  
1966 C. Scott Mayfield, Athens, Tenn.\*  
1967 E. E. Greenough, Merced, Calif.\*  
1968 Henry Uihlein, Lake Placid, N.Y.\*  
1969 Charles S. Kelly, Hudson, Wis.\*  
1970 H. Fowler Hupman, Springfield, Ohio\*  
1971 Milton Humberd, Cleveland, Tenn.\*  
1972 Willis Rupert, New Waterford, Ohio\*  
1973 Earl Hutchinson, Tunbridge, Vt.\*  
1974 Antone J. Regli, Ferrndale, Calif.\*  
1975 Mrs. Diana Ryan, Newport, R.I.\*  
1976 James and Georgia\* Pappas, Modesto, Calif.  
1977 Mrs. H. G. Wilde, Lenox, Mass.\*  
1978 Henry W. Black, West Baldwin, Maine\*  
1979 John Bishop VI, Columbus, N.J.\*  
1980 Mrs. A. G. Rankin\* and Sons, Faunsdale, Ala.  
1981 W. L. Payton, Stephenville, Texas\*  
1982 Curtis Hobson, Athens, Tenn.  
1983 Stanley N. Chittenden, New Lebanon, N.Y.\*  
1984 Walter H. and Joan Brown, Hughson, Calif.  
1985 Newell Mills, Fallon, Nev.  
1986 John R. Owen, Lewisburg, Tenn.  
1987 Robert S. Pike\* and Family, Cornish, Maine  
1988 Ray Chamberlain, Wyoming, N.Y.\*  
1989 Ralph\* and Betty Reichert, Riley, Kans.  
1990 Stanley K. Bansen, Dayton, Ore.\*  
1991 Henry P. Knolle, Sandia, Texas\*  
1992 Phil V. Fanelli, Hilmar, Calif.  
1993 Dr. J. J. Malnati, Newberry, S.C.  
1994 Walter and Sally Goodrich, West Danville, Vt.  
1995 Edward, Harold, and Donald\* Wright, White River Junction, Vt.  
1996 Elmer D. Larson, Roy, Wash.  
1997 Albert Bradford, Turner, Maine  
1998 Robert Stiles Family, Clearbrook, Va.  
1999 Robert and Barbara\* Howard, Tillamook, Ore.  
2000 Charles L. Lutz, Newton, N.C.\*  
2001 Duane Kuhlman, Snohomish, Wash.  
2002 Duane Wickstrom, Hilmar, Calif.  
2003 James Chaney, Bowling Green, Ky.  
2004 Charles J. Steer, Cottage Grove, Tenn.  
2005 William G. Mason Family, Buhl, Idaho\*  
2006 Aaron F. Richards, Farmington, Utah\*  
2007 Robert Bignami, Orland, Calif. and Harlan Askeland\*, Orland, Calif.  
2008 James S. Huffard III, Crockett, Va.  
2009 Ahlem Farms Partnership and Ed Fisher, Hilmar, Calif.

\* deceased