

Wickstrom Honored by California Jersey Breeders

More than 60 Jersey enthusiasts gathered at the visitor's center at the Hilmar Cheese Company in Hilmar, Calif., on February 9, 2019, for the annual meeting of the California Jersey Cattle Association (CJCA). Members held a brief business meeting, honored achievements and heard from industry guests.

Scott Wickstrom, Hilmar, received the Senior Jersey Breeder Award. He operates Wickstrom Jersey Farm Inc. with his father, Duane, and brother, Mike, and Red Top Jerseys with Mike and the Nyman Brothers. The combined dairies milk more than 6,000 cows. Both are enrolled on REAP and rank among the top 25 herds in the country for genetic merit, with herd average JPIs over +80. Both have 2018 m.e. lactation averages over 22,000 lbs. milk, 1,050 lbs. fat and 810 lbs. protein, measures that rank among the top 10 large herds (750 or more cows) for all measures of production. Wickstrom Jersey Farm is also a charter member of Project Equity, contributing to the equitable milk pricing movement for more than four decades.

The dairies regularly consign to leading Jersey sales, including the All American Jersey Sale, the Pot O'Gold Sale and the National Heifer Sale.

Scott sat on the AJCA Board from 2002-2008, chairing the organization's Breed Improvement Committee during his second term. He served the CJCA as president and currently sits on the board. He and Mike received the AJCA Young Jersey Breeder Award in 1988.

Dr. Frank Mitloehner, a professor and air quality extension specialist with the University of California-Davis who is becoming known as the "Green Guru," was the guest speaker. One of the nation's foremost authorities on air emissions in agriculture, Dr. Mitloehner urged dairy producers to share facts about their businesses with the community to counteract arguments from anti-



Scott Wickstrom, center, was named California Senior Breeder. He received the award from his brother and CJCA board member, Mike Wickstrom, and newly-crowned California Jersey Queen Kylie Konyne.



CJCA President Jim Quist and California Jersey Queen Kylie Konyne flank recipients of the California Young Jersey Breeder award, Matt and Lauren Evangelo.

agriculture groups. Dairy producers are ideally positioned to dispel myths because consumers view them as food-growing and cow-care experts.

Dr. Mitloehner encouraged his audience to use information from sources like the environmental study he and his team recently conducted, which shows dairy cattle contribute just 5% of the total greenhouse gases emitted in California versus 50% for transportation a magnitude 10 times higher.

Carol Ahlem, Hilmar, Calif., encouraged members to become involved with another entity that promotes the dairy industry to consumers: the dairy checkoff program. She and husband, Jim, and their family operate three Registered Jersey dairies in the Hilmar area. She currently serves as treasurer for the National Dairy Board and noted that leadership opportunities are readily available.

Representatives from the national Jersey organizations also spoke, including American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) and National All Jersey Inc. (AJCA-NAJ) Executive Secretary Neal Smith and AJCA-NAJ Area Representatives Seth Israelsen and Emma Sills.

Smith talked about changes to the registration requirements for males, which currently stand at Generation Count (GC) 3 or higher with a Breed Base Representation

(BBR) of 87 or higher. Effective November 1, 2019, these minimums increase to GC4 with a BBR of 100. He also reported that the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding will release genomic evaluations for multi-breed animals effective April 2019.

Israelsen and Sills brought the group up-to-speed on year-end benchmarks for the Jersey breed. The AJCA registered 132,166 animals (second high in breed history) from 4,950 different herds in 2018 and sold 550,663 JerseyTags to customers from 48 states and the Dominican Republic. California led the way, with 55,490 registrations.

A record 49,067 females were genotyped in 2018, nearly double the number genotyped the previous year. The formula for Jersey Performance Index will be updated by Dr. Kent Weigel from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to coincide with genetic evaluations and a genetic base change in December 2019.

In a brief business meeting, California breeders approved donating funds to the Western Dairy Classic in Hanford in March and the California State Jersey Show in Turlock on April 18, 2019. The later, held in conjunction with the state Holstein show, will be judged by Mike Duckett of Rudolph, Wis.

The current slate of officers re-elected

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Jim Ahlem presents the California Distinguished Service Award to Denise Skidmore. All photos courtesy Joel Hastings, *DairyBusiness.com*.



Cathy Sanders, center, and some of her friends attending the annual meeting help her celebrate her receipt of the California Sweetheart award.



Outgoing California Jersey Queen Aspen Silva, right, and contestant Elizabeth Neeves, left, congratulate Kylie Konyne for winning this year's queen contest.



CJCA Vice President Brett Barlass gives a \$500 scholarship award to Gabbie Gregorio. Nicole Sanders, not present, also received a scholarship award of \$1,000 from the organization.

California Meeting

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to serve in 2019 included Jim Quist, Fresno, president; Brett Barlass, Hilmar, vice president; Cathy Sanders, Hilmar, secretary; and Kate Garcia, Turlock, treasurer. Jersey breeders re-elected to serve as directors were Gary deGraaf, Pixley, Jonathan Merriam, Hickman, and Cathy Sanders.

Junior club officers re-elected were: Hannah Sanders, Hilmar, president; Madisen Petersen, Hilmar, vice president; Kylie Kony, Escondido, secretary; and Nicole Sanders, Hilmar, treasurer.

Other Award Winners

Matt and Lauren Evangelo, Kingsburg, were honored with the California Young Jersey Breeder award. Both Matt and Lauren were raised on dairy farms and judged for the Cal Poly team before graduation. Today they operate a mixed herd of 630 Jerseys and 600 Holstein in partnership with his mother, Teresa, and his brother, Jason.

The Evangelos are also active off the farm, serving as co-chairs of the Western Dairy Classic. Heading into its eighth year, the event is becoming a must-do for juniors, with 365 head exhibited by 220 juniors in 2018.

Denise Skidmore, Atwater, was present-

ed with the Distinguished Service Award. She has been director of education and public relations at Hilmar Cheese since 2000. She serves on the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy's Sustainability Council and is an adjunct faculty member of California State University-Stanislaus. She is involved with California Women for Agriculture, volunteers for 4-H and FFA, and sits on the Friends of the Merced County Fair Board.

Cathy Sanders received the California Sweetheart award for her contributions to the CJCA.

Kylie Kony was crowned as the new California Jersey Queen and won the intermediate division of the youth achievement contest.

Her sister, Kiara, won the novice division of the youth achievement contest. This sisters also received awards in the youth production contest.

Nicole Sanders was named recipient of the organization's \$1,000 scholarship. Gabbie Gregorio, Acampo, received a \$500 scholarship.

McCalister Russell, Hilmar, won the youth production contest with Andas Plus Legal T33128 {6}. The Very Good-83% daughter of Sweetie Plus Iatolas Bold {5}, GJPI +76, produced a 2-6 record with a dollar value of \$5,630.16. Actual production is 25,340 lbs. milk, 1,398 lbs. fat and 944 lbs. protein on 3x milking.

Other juniors to earn certificates in the production contest were Kennedy Souza, Joshua Sanders, Hannah Sanders and Leah Sanders, all of Hilmar, and Summer Parreira of Tulare.



Juniors on hand to receive awards in the youth achievement and production contests included Hannah Sanders, Summer Parreira, Joshua Sanders, Leah Sanders, Kiara Kony, Kennedy Souza (for Joe Souza) and Kylie Kony.