

“I’m Here to Learn Everything I Can”

These seven words were the motive driving the 28 Jersey youth who comprised Class V of Jersey Youth Academy conducted July 9-14, 2017, in Columbus, Ohio.

The total of what they took home from the invited speakers, farm visits and AJCA-NAJ staff interaction was as broad as could be.

“We were presented such an overwhelming amount of information that week,” relayed Kathryn Bosley, Malone, N.Y. “It was great information and acquired through so many hands-on activities such as the linear type appraisal workshop, the FARM Program training session, and most of all the mock auction.”

“It is definitely the total overall experience that has stayed with me,” said Catherine Savage, Dickerson, Md. “Not only did I learn to read pedigrees to help make smarter purchasing decisions, but I also learned how to use resources provided by the Jersey association such as infoJersey.”

“I am much more comfortable talking about the latest trends within the breed and using my newfound knowledge to educate my peers, and some of my professors, about the true benefits and facts of the Jersey cow,” shared Kaila Wussow, Cecil, Wis.

“Academy is all about making connections and stepping outside of your shell,” said Ellen Harth, Hinckley, Minn. “I used what I learned to help apply to colleges, scholarships, raising my herd, and was even offered an internship in California.”

Skylar Buell, Temperance, Mich., added, “Looking back, there was one message that

seemed to be repeated by most everyone at Academy: ‘If you want to be a part of the Jersey industry, we can find a place for you.’”

The Program

As students arrived on July 9, a questionnaire was completed by each asking what they hoped to gain from the experience. They responded: *What ways can I use the Jersey breed to maximize my success in the dairy industry? How can I utilize Jersey resources? What can I learn about genetics and the reproduction side of the dairy industry? How can I diversify the family business? I really can't say there is one thing, I am just excited to learn everything that I can in the days to come!*

The participants looked to find answers to these questions and by the last day, July 14, they made these comments to AJCA-NAJ staff during their exit interviews:

“I wondered what I would learn but came to make connections. It was nice to meet Jersey people that will be lifetime friends.”

“Overall this was by far best thing the Jersey industry has put together. I've never seen a robotic dairy, and enjoyed all speakers.”

“It was not at all what I expected. I expected more lectures and less fun.”

“Best group trip I've ever been on, eye-opening, lots of behind the scenes. Got to see a lot that many people don't get to see in their lifetime; I feel privileged.”

Industry Messages from the Experts

The roster of invited speakers covered the ever-important topics of industry trends,

dairy cattle genetics, calf care, animal care, and connecting with consumers.

Day one of Academy was to learn the history of the Jersey breed and for each participant to receive the first in-depth exposure to AJCA programs. Presented materials also provided information to help them connect with the consumer and the value of Jersey milk to cheese plants.

Keynote speaker, James Ahlem, Hilmar, Calif., and chairman of the board of Hilmar Cheese Company, shared his personal dairy story and the story of the founding of Hilmar Cheese. His talk of “Looking Back, Looking Ahead” at the Jersey business, struck a chord with many of the students.

“By recounting the events leading up to the founding of Hilmar Cheese, and the success the company has experienced,” said Breanna Bowen, Como, Texas, “Mr. Ahlem really helped me understand more of the dairy industry.”

Katarina Emerich of Mooers, N.Y., took home a new appreciation for Jersey breed history after hearing Neal Smith’s message report on the State of the Jersey Breed. “I really didn’t realize how big the goal of growing the Jersey breed was. It was very thought-provoking to understand where the breed started, the challenges it has faced, and how it has since grown.”

“Making the Consumer Connection” shared by Scott Higgins CEO of the American Dairy Association Mideast, really hit me and caught my attention,” shared Ellen Harth. “His presentation helped me decide



The 28 members of Jersey Youth Academy V are pictured at Bar-Lee Jerseys. Pictured front row, from left: Skylar Buell, Katie Pitchford, Kathryn Bosley, Willow Voegtlen, Jaydyn Isminger, Maggie LaPrise, Katarina Emerich, Samantha Schuessler, Catherine Savage, Kaila Wussow, Erin Leach, Korri Briggs, Ellen Harth, Allison Massey, Haley Christie, back row from left: Elli Hayes, Case Schaap, Carly Olufs, Cort Rowley, Ethan Holland, Sarah Schonauer, Breanna Bowen, Maxwell Chittenden, Wesley Noble, Kylie Lehr, Kalli Corrick, Jarod Herron, and Tucker Peterson.

that I want to major in agriculture communications and marketing when I head to college next year.”

On the afternoon field trip the group ventured to Pearl Valley Cheese in Fresno. The cheese plant is a fourth-generation family business that manufactures award-winning cheeses from approximately 250,000 lbs. (almost 30,000 gallons) of milk daily. President Chuck Ellis and head cheesemaker, David Burch, shared the history of the company and especially how they value Jersey milk to make their cheeses.

For Case Schaap, Clovis, N.M., it was an eye-opening stop as Ellis demonstrated first-hand, the profitability of Jerseys to the operation.

“On average their Jersey milk costs 22.5% more than Holstein milk but you can make 25% more cheese so by using Jersey milk your profit margins are increased significantly,” recounted Schaap. “When accounting for cheese yield, time to make the cheese, and waste disposal associated with cheese making, a cheesemaker’s profit margin is increased by approximately 38% when Jersey milk is used instead of Holstein milk.

“I really appreciated that they shared that with us,” said Schaap.

The next visit was to see J and Rachel Hodge’s dairy, Windy Ridge Jerseys, Norwich, Ohio. The young couple started their dairy with 25 Registered Jerseys more than 10 years ago on a rented farm which they purchased in 2012. Since then they have increased their herd size to 100 milking cows and have begun facility renovations and expansion.

J and Rachel, a practicing veterinarian, spoke candidly about choices they made to start their herd, setting long-term goals and making things work in the short term. While at Windy Ridge, students also completed a short FARM assessment program (looking at cow care and impact on the environment) led by Assistant Manager of National All-Jersey Inc., Drew Duncan.

Robots, Jersey Beef, and Appraisal Training

A day of farm tours, mixed with a touch of Jersey beef research, an agricultural journalist and hands-on training in the AJCA Linear Type Appraisal program made for a road trip to north central and northeastern Ohio for the group.

First stop was Bar-Lee Jerseys, owned by Gary and Amy Nuhfer and their son Jason. For many it was the first time to see robotic milkers in action. In December 2015, the family installed two Lely Astronaut A4 Ro-

As a member of Class I, it was an honor to serve as a chaperone for Class V. Academy was one of the best experiences I participated in as a junior of any organization. It was a one-of-a-kind way to learn more about the dairy industry and Jersey cow while meeting Jersey enthusiasts from across the country. The program helped shape my career path and the remainder of my college days by opening my eyes to the opportunities available. I am still in contact with many of my classmates and talk or work with them on a regular basis. It is amazing that a vast majority of us are working in the dairy industry and with Registered Jerseys.

The members of Class V were intelligent, energetic and diverse and really showcased the future of the industry. This class was truly unique with a wide range of experiences and locations. Some had been raised with Jerseys their whole life while others just owned a few Jerseys, but were hoping to expand their herds in the future. There were prospective veterinarians, geneticists, Jersey breeders and marketers that were driven to achieve their goals. Not only were they high-achievers, they were one of the most polite and considerate group of high school and college students I have ever been around. It was invigorating and encouraging to spend time with these outstanding individuals for just a few days!

Danielle Brown, AJCA-NAJ Area Representative, Member of Class I and Chaperone, Class V

bots. A Lely Juno pushes up the feed every hour and a hi-tech electronic identification collar on each cow monitors activity, rumen movement and more to help with heat detection.

The Nuhfers shared detailed information on their calf-raising program and answered questions about what has worked for them and what hasn’t.

“Both Jason and his mom, Amy, who guided us on this tour allowed us to ask questions to make ourselves more knowledgeable so we could bring back information for our operations,” said Kaila Wussow.

“I enjoyed hearing Amy explain the small details of the calf barn, as I think that is what makes her calf raising program that much more successful,” continued Wussow. “She looked at the little things and they turned out to be the big things when it came to the success of her calves.”

Fellow Wisconsin classmate Samantha Schuessler of Antigo, also enjoyed the stop. “They are really kept up-to-date on the latest technology with their robotic milkers and robotic feed pusher. The amount of care and management they put into their farm was evident by how nice it was and how passionate they are in talking about it.

“Learning how they chose the design of the calf barn was one of my favorite parts,” continued Schuessler. “They put a lot of thought into it and were able to relay the importance of decision-making to us and various factors it takes to run a good dairy.”

Farm and Dairy staff reporter Chris Kick joined the group for lunch to talk about covering the ag business. He shared favorite stories he has worked on and also what is the worst story for him—covering a farm-related death. He stressed the importance of accurate reporting to the group which

included several agricultural communications majors.

Dr. Francis Fluharty, Research Professor at the OARDC in Wooster, introduced a jointly funded research project with the AJCA and NAJ for Jersey beef. The project is evaluating Jersey crossbreeding opportunities for a new, high-value beef product for domestic and export markets. It is in its second phase at the facility. The students were shown purebred Jersey, Angus x Jersey, SimAngus x Jersey and Wagyu x Jersey crosses.

“Visiting OARDC to learn about their beef research program was so interesting. We hear a lot about crossing dairy breeds with each other but never much about crossing beef and dairy,” said Catherine Savage. “The different meats were interesting, especially with the Wagyu, a breed I never heard of before. It was so interesting from a business standpoint as a possible diversification in a business.”

Clover Patch Dairy, Millersburg, Ohio, was the final stop on Tuesday. Alan and Sharon Kozak once again opened their door to the Academy class and talked openly about their struggles and preservation through the years. They shared their start-up with borrowed money, how they survived a devastating Johnhe’s outbreak and making smart business decisions, starting with their choice Jerseys. Senior appraiser Ron Mosser gave an in-depth hands-on experience on the AJCA Linear Type Appraisal program.

“In hearing the Kozaks story, their perseverance through Johnhe’s was truly inspiring,” said Kathryn Bosley. “I also enjoyed the tour of their calf facility, and learning the ins and outs of linear evaluations while evaluating their cows.”

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Animal ID and Dairy Cattle Genetics

On Wednesday morning, classroom sessions centered around the ‘nitty gritty’ of the association’s ID programs. With recent changes to how animals are recorded, it allowed for very open and candid questions to AJCA-NAJ staff.

Erick Metzger, Manager of Herd Services, kicked things off talking about animal identification. Cari Wolfe, Director of Research and Genetic Programs followed with a session on the principles, traits, evaluations, indexes and genomics for Jerseys. AJCA-NAJ staff then took the presented information to have a session on how to read Official Performance Pedigrees. Area Representative Seth Israelsen talked about customer service and his work in an area where Jersey growth is exploding.

The impact of ID programs and genetics was obvious in the exit interviews based on comments such as these:

“Seeing how complex our breed is and the advancements was valuable to me.”

“It was good to see what direction the Jersey breed is going, where it came from and why JX is important.”

“Personally, I was never a fan of the JX and Generation Count, but I learned a lot about the background and it made more sense.”

“The most valuable things were learning BullsEye, JerseyMate and pedigrees and how to compare animals.”

Dr. Joao Durr, Chief Executive Officer, Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, was the invited speaker. He shared the Council’s purpose and how information is delivered to breeders. He also talked about the importance of the accuracy of the information to be able to provide the best data for breeders to make decisions for their herds.

“It was very interesting to see how far the industry has come with breeding cattle for the best possible genetics from Dr. Joao Durr,” said Samantha Schuessler.

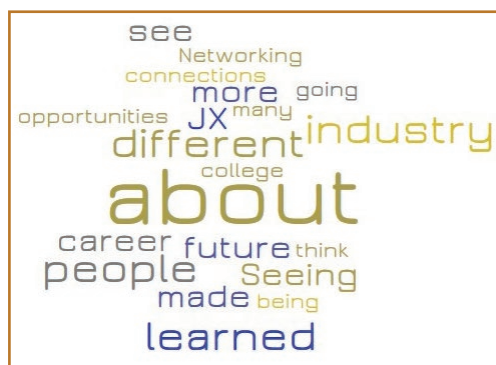
The group also discussed professional development with AJCA staff Danielle Brown, Kaitlyn Hinds, and Cherie Bayer, while Fred Stout Experience winner, Tyler Kirchoerfer, Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Class II Academy member Sydney Endres of Lodi, Wis., discussed their involvement in the youth programs by the Jersey association and the opportunities that have come from their involvement.

Closing out the day, was a visit to Waterman Dairy part of The Ohio State University located in the middle of the 14th largest city in the U.S. The farm transitioned to an all-Jersey herd in order to sustain herd numbers due to limited crop and pasture ground. Farm manager John Lemmermen and herd

manager and nutritionist Rebekah Meller, conducted facility tours and demonstrated how they utilize their farm management software (PC Dart).

Ralph Gill and Katie Esselburn from Land O’Lakes Animal Milk Products were on hand to talk about the best practices in baby calf management, which are used in the calf program at Waterman Dairy.

“Personally, I enjoyed going to Waterman Dairy since I am now a freshman at Ohio State,” said Jarod Herron, Salem, Ohio. “It was nice seeing the farm before arriving this



They say inquiring minds want to know. “About” and “learned” connect the other major terms in this graphic: industry, people, career—and JX. This word cloud came from responses to what they gained. They wanted to know why the AJCA made changes to the recording program in the past year and were anything but reticent in discussing those changes.

fall and being able to see how the management works.”

A.I. Companies and Agri-Tourism

Thursday brought another travel day. First stop was Select Sires Inc., Plain City, Ohio, and a drive through of the Darby Creek Jersey bull facility with Herby Lutz, the 1988 National Jersey Youth Achievement winner and now a Jersey sire analyst for Select Sires. From there the group headed a few miles down the road to visit the Calf Campus of Select Sires with Jill Lokai and her team. At the Kellgren Center, Lutz turned the program over to seven key staff who talked about semen collection and processing, bull care and marketing and gave a tour of the labs and semen facility.

“The visit to Select Sires taught us the many different positions and aspects of the A.I. business involved from veterinary medicine, to sire analysis, to sales,” said Kathryn Bosley. “What resonated most is the variety and multitude of career paths just in A.I.”

New to this year’s schedule was the Ohio State University’s Large Animal Veterinary Clinic in Marysville, Ohio. Dr. Eric Gordon talked about the ambulatory clinic facility and his career path to where he is today.

Young’s Jersey Dairy, Inc., Yellow Springs, was the final stop for the day. Owner Stuart

Young showed life beyond the cows and how agri-tourism has helped them flourish. In 1958, they began selling milk directly to the public from a small room on the end of the milk house. Two years later, they were dipping ice cream in their dairy store. Now the farm includes a petting zoo, full-service restaurant, mini-golf, driving range, batting cages and a store showcasing their ice cream and cheeses. More than a million visitors visit annually. The business employs over 300 full and part time staff, including 14 family members.

“I appreciated how Stuart told us the good, bad, and sometimes ugly part of owning a business and farm,” said Kaila Wussow. “He provided us with great advice on how to market our animals and products they offered, as well provided a new outlook for me about on-farm processing. The dairy industry and world around us is constantly evolving and Young’s Jersey Dairy works to bridge the gap between consumers about how agriculture products are produced.”

Case Schaap added, “Going to Young’s was tremendous. They have taken a totally different approach to the dairy industry and have been incredibly successful. The visit made me realize that to be profitable in the dairy business you do not have to have thousands of cows or even have high-producing cows, you just need to have a market.”

Mock Auction

The one thing that united most, if not all, in this year’s Academy class was stated by Maggie LaPrise, Exeter, R.I., “Buying cows can be so intimidating and the mock auction helped teach us how to make smarter purchases.”

From Monday evening through Thursday afternoon, the mock auction was on everyone’s mind with day-to-day preparation.

Jersey Marketing Service (JMS) Manager Greg Lavan talked Monday evening about how sales are managed. He walked through terms and conditions and provided scenarios of how things can happen and how these terms work to help find a solution when problems arise. The students were broken in to groups and given a sale catalog to begin studying pedigrees and planning a strategy. They were given a budget to work with. Over the next few days, they learned more about how to read an AJCA performance pedigree and what different acronyms meant, as well as gaining a better understanding of the type appraisal scores.

In the evenings, it was common to see groups gather with their catalogs, computers and a variety of questions for staff chaperones as they studied the catalog, talked

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strategies, and learned more about reading pedigrees. The discussions of the type of animals they wanted to buy, how they could merchandise offspring down the road, and comments of why a certain service sire was used were heard.

At Young's Jersey Dairy on Thursday, a week's worth of lessons came together as auctioneer, Todd Woodruff joined the JMS team to cry the sale. His enthusiasm and the interest of the students made for a fast-paced sale (in the midst of a torrential downpour). Bidding erupted and everything was game as groups battled to get the animals they had chosen. High prices even caused teams to join forces in the middle of the sale to partner up and conserve money in their budget. In the end, it was the team of Cort Rowley, Visalia, Calif., Korri Briggs, Campbellsville, Ky., and Kylie Lehr, Canastota, N.Y., that edged out Kalli Corrick, Albany, Ore., Carly Olufs, Petaluma, Calif., and Samantha Schuessler.

Office History and Tools Available

"On the last morning we visited the AJCA headquarters learning about the history of the breed and the association itself," said Schaap. "To me it was especially interesting to see how today's Jersey cow is very similar to the one we had at the beginning of the 20th century through the paintings in the board room. Had we not made our type "improvements" to the breed through the last century, Jerseys would likely be struggling like other breeds are today."

Small groups transitioned through six stations to tour the office and learn more about the services offered. The stations included: Registration, Transfer and infoJersey services; HerdView reporting; JerseyMate, BullsEye, and Green Book; *Jersey Journal* and Jersey Marketing Service; historical displays and memorabilia; and the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Jersey Youth Academy in a Nutshell

This year's class, included rising high school seniors or students enrolled in an accredited two-year or four-year vocational school, college or university; and also, those under the age of 22 who have completed a high school degree or equivalent and are currently employed in dairy herd management. They were selected from a national pool of applicants based on merit, motivation and

preparation for the program as reflected in experiences, accomplishments and their goal statements.

"The young people selected for this class exemplify the many talented, interested Jersey youth across the United States that our organization wants to encourage to pursue careers in the Jersey dairy business," said Chris Sorenson, president of the American Jersey Cattle Association.

Academy was born to provide *an in-depth educational program focused specifically on the Jersey cow and the Jersey business and that, at the same time, challenges its participants to explore the broad range of career opportunities involving Jerseys and the dairy industry.*

Jersey Youth Academy was a fine opportunity to interact with the next generation of Jersey breeders. During the week, I was able to share some of the opportunities and services that USJersey provides. Several of the class members were unfamiliar with our services, and I was able to have personal discussions explaining the need for and benefits of our programs. These educational moments allowed class members to become aware of the scope of our organization and the useful partner USJersey can be to their own operations at home.

Class V members were outstanding, and it was wonderful to get to know them. They made a very bright and delightful group. Since Academy, I have been in contact with many of them regarding questions about the association and offering explanations on different topics. It is great to have new friendships with Jersey enthusiasts that come from all parts of the country

Seth Israelsen, AJCA-NAJ Area Representative, Chaperone, Class V

The endowment of Academy currently sits at \$496,971, with the Class V experience being equivalent to a \$1,800 scholarship for the week. Academy was founded on two important drivers, beginning with solid funding. Initial funding for the program was provided by syndication of BW Academy-ET in the 2008 All American Jersey Sale, followed by the all-donation National Heifer Sale in 2011. In addition to general and memorial contributions received throughout the year, a Cow Pie Bingo fundraiser is held annually.

The second driver is human resources to organize, plan and execute the program. Hundreds of hours are put in by farm hosts, presenters and staff for each class. Presenters travel from across the country and AJCA-NAJ staff are brought in from both the field and office. Not only has it been successful in development for the participants, but also in staff development.

"I had the privilege to be an observer/chaperone for Class V," said Emma Sills, southwest area representative for the AJCA. "The experience helped me transition from a new college graduate to working for the AJCA. It allowed me to learn in a group setting, supplementing my work training.

"Through the program, I found answers alongside the students, and was able to share with them from my own experiences and courses. The hands-on appraisal workshop gave me a glimpse of the training I would later go through with our appraisers, and

it became a useful resource to rely on," continued Sills. "My biggest takeaway was learning to read pedigrees and genomics in the Jersey breed—things I need to be proficient in my job and help customers."

The Impression Left

In the five classes of Academy completed to date, 156 different individuals from 33 states have participated. The relationships and work with these leaders does not end when they leave Columbus, it continues for years to come as they join the home dairy or become a member of the dairy industry.

"I came to Academy unsure of my direction in life, all I knew was I wanted to stay involved with Jerseys," explained Ellen Harth. "After Academy, I was able to decide to attend University of Minnesota to major in agricultural communications and marketing with a minor in animal science."

Skyler Buehl summed up the farm visits.

"No matter how hard you look, you will never find two dairies that are exactly alike, and that's a good thing. We visited five Jersey farms and the number of differences between the dairies was amazing. Some farms utilized a herringbone milking facility while another used robots. One of the farms thrived on being a tourist attraction while another is a bio-secure facility and another is close to having an all A2/A2 herd. These farms showed us trial and error is necessary to be successful. Just because one method worked for the dairy up the road doesn't mean that it will work for you."

"Everything I learned will be something I can apply in my future career, no matter what aspect of the dairy industry I go into," summarized Catherine Savage.

Class VI of Academy will be held in July 2019. Applications will be available September 1, 2018, and must be received in the AJCA office by December 1.

The Jersey Youth Academy is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt private educational foundation under section 501(c)(3). Contributions represent a broad spectrum of Jersey breeder and dairy industry support and can be made at any time by contacting the association office at 614/861-3636.

Editor's note: Reports from previous classes of Jersey Youth Academy are available at on the USJersey website at <http://bit.do/JYA>.