

“Incredible Experience”

There are 3,974 junior members of the American Jersey Cattle Association. They have many talents and abilities, a variety of interests, but one very important thing in common—a passion for the Jersey breed.

When a community has young people of such promise in its midst, committed to the very thing that brought that group of people together in the first place, it's essential to nurture them so that they come back into the fold.

That, in a nutshell, is the ultimate aim of Jersey Youth Academy.

Next year, the fifth Jersey Youth Academy will run July 9 to 14 in Columbus, Ohio.

And like the 128 young people from 32 states selected for the first, second, third and fourth classes of Jersey Youth Academy, those picked for the 2017 class will participate in a Jersey boot camp with as much content relative to their objectives as can be packed into five days.

What are those objectives?

“To meet other youth with the same passion as mine.” “To see what goes on across the world of Jersey.” “To see the national headquarters and meet the people that make our association one of the finest.” “To learn more about the advancements in the breed.” “To make connections with industry professionals.” “To learn about careers and where do I fit into the Jersey industry.” “To learn as much as I can to try and promote the Jersey cow and to give my peers an insight to the true greatness of Jerseys.”

Since 1958, Jersey youth programs have encouraged young people to work with and learn about Registered Jerseys™ by recognizing their accomplishments through national achievement, production and scholarship awards, The All American Junior Jersey Show, and the Pot O'Gold program. Jersey Youth Academy has enlarged the scope of that effort.

“Growing up, I could participate in programs like dairy judging and showing, but nothing like this,” observes Brian Barlass, winner of the 1995 National Jersey Youth Achievement Contest who has twice represented the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders' Association on the Academy Dean's Panel.

“As an adult, this program is one I would pay to attend to learn more about Jerseys. This speaks about the caliber of the speakers and content of the material presented by the national Jersey organizations. Nowhere else will students be

exposed to the breadth of Jersey information that is provided in this conference.”

Jersey Youth Academy doesn't just show its participants the myriad of opportunities with Jersey cattle. It also helps them to understand the long history and recent growth of the Jersey breed.

“We think the next generation needs to know about the decisions that were made that led to the success the Jersey breed is enjoying today,” says AJCA-NAJ Executive Secretary Neal Smith. “Board members and leaders of the Jersey organizations for generations have made tough decisions, they've taken risk for the betterment of the Jersey business. Some of the decisions they made were not popular, even among a majority of the members who were active at the time.

“We owe it to them to see to it that the next generation has a clear understanding of how we got to where we are, and what we're going to have to do—the kind of decisions we're going to have to make—to continue the kind of progress that we've made.

“Through Academy, we achieve a more distinct connection with the next generation and previous generations.”

Youth who will be seniors in high school in the fall of 2017 through those with at least one year remaining in their undergraduate degree program at an accredited vocational school, college or university are eligible to apply. Applicants must be legal residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. A youth can participate in Jersey Youth Academy only one time. The application form is posted now on the USJersey web site (*permalink <http://bit.do/JYA>*).

A maximum of 36 youth will be selected based on merit, motivation and preparation for the program as reflected in the written application and goal statement. All program, housing and transportation costs are paid by the Academy's 501(c)(3) educational foundation. Contributors to the foundation represent a broad spectrum of Jersey breeder and dairy industry support, with the largest contribution to date coming from the all-donation National Heifer Sale in 2011.

Thursday, December 1 is the deadline to apply for the fifth Jersey Youth Academy, offering “an incredible experience to hear from so many distinguished industry leaders and expand our perspectives of the Jersey business.”