

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

# **Academy: Five Days of Everything Jersey**

Now that the third class of Jersey Youth Academy is in the history books, it is clear the concept that was first unveiled at the National Heifer Sale in 2008 has grown into a successful youth development program that is making an impact on Jersey juniors and shaping the future of the Jersey industry.

Thirty-five juniors from 17 states attended the third class of Jersey Youth Academy held July 14-19, 2013, in Columbus, Ohio. Selection for the merit-based program was based on written applications and goal statements submitted by the applicants. Members of this year's class owned anywhere from one to 49 head of Jerseys and ranged from high school juniors to college seniors. Most, but not all, of the 28 college students are majoring in fields associated with agriculture.

With a mission to attract, educate and retain talented young people for careers in the Jersey dairy business, Jersey Youth Academy packed as much Jersey information into the program as possible in those five days. When they headed home, Academy students had heard

from more than a dozen prominent dairy industry speakers, listened to three panel presentations, toured six Registered Jersey dairies and a milk processing plant in Ohio, participated in a mock auction managed by Jersey Marketing Service and visited the headquarters of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA). Free time allowed them to network with their peers



Academy students learn how to measure traits for the AJCA Linear Type Evaluation Program from Elizabeth Moss, far right, an appraiser for the AJCA. The session was part of the program at Rawn Dairy in Lancaster.

and learn more about Jersey operations and the business in general from farm owners, guest speakers and AJCA staff members.

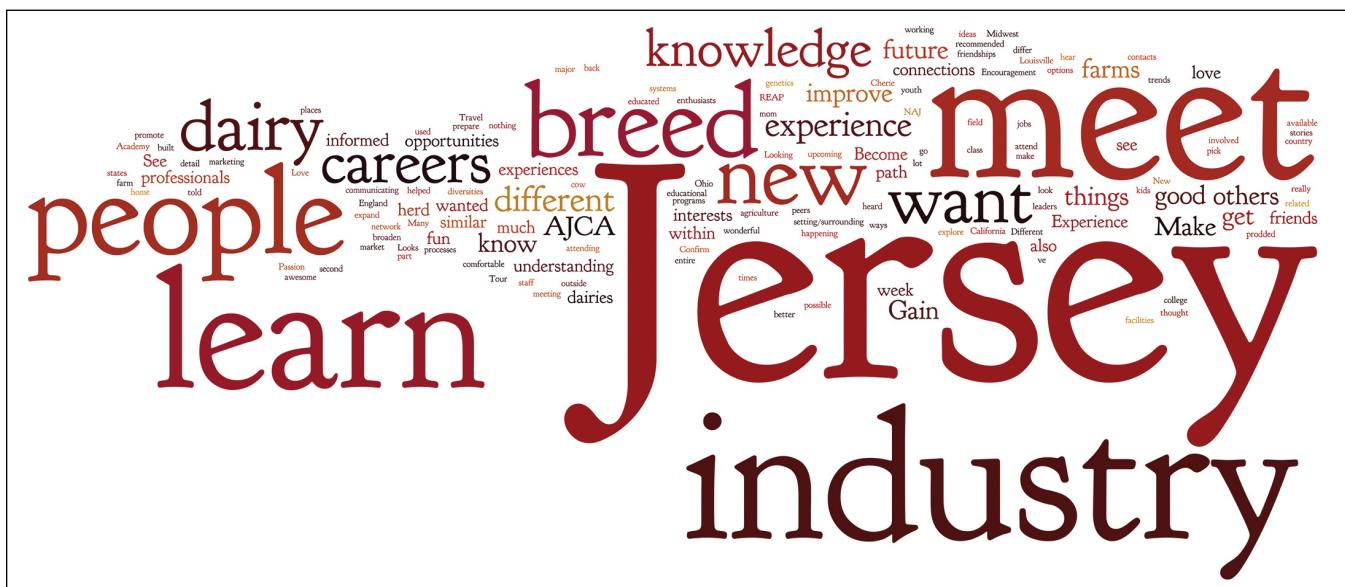
The Academy's curriculum is based on three broad objectives: First, to learn why

and how the Jersey breed has grown and prospered, and what the future holds for the Jersey business; second, to meet leaders from the Jersey community and from across the support industry, to gain their unique insights about the dairy business with a specific focus on the Jersey cow; and, third, to learn about the range of career opportunities that involve the Jersey breed and Jersey products, and begin the journey that will take them to success working in the Jersey dairy business.

Though the programs for the three classes of Jersey Youth Academy have been somewhat different, they are alike in one key way. Jersey Youth Academy, for those who attended as students, as well as those who helped as teachers, has been deemed "the experience of a lifetime."

Presentation Content

The list of guest speakers for the third Jersey Youth Academy could be a "Who's Who" in the dairy industry. The keynote address was given by James S. Huffard III, vice president of National All-Jersey Inc. (NAJ) and recipient of the AJCA's Master Breeder



Academy students completed two evaluations of the program: a pre-conference survey and exit interview. Responses to key questions are summarized in the four word cloud graphics that accompany this article. A word cloud is a method of analyzing the content or responses. Rather than using statistics, it creates a visual map of words, the importance of each word shown by font size. The graph above summarizes the three reasons why participants wanted to attend Jersey Youth Academy. The cloud uses the top 50 words contained in their responses.

Award in 2008 and the National Dairy Shrine's Distinguished Cattle Breeder award in 2012. Invited speakers included Dr. Ronald S. Kensinger, Chair and Professor, Department of Animal Sciences, The Ohio State University; Dr. Francis Fluharty, Research Professor, The Ohio State University; Dr. Jude Capper, Livestock Sustainability Consultant and Affiliate, Montana State University; Michael Brown, Dairy Economist, Glanbia Foods Inc.; and Dr. Ole Meland, Chair, Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding.

Ohio farm tours included Clareshoe Jersey Farm, Salem; Grammer Jersey Farm, Sebring; Rawn Dairy, Lancaster; Shipley Farms, Newark; Waterman Dairy at The Ohio State University, Columbus; and Young's Jersey Dairy, Yellow Springs.

At Grammer Jersey Farm, herd owner Bill Grammer explained how growth of the dairy has been managed. Presentations on calf management were given by Larry Van Roekel and Ralph Gill of Land O'Lakes Animal Milk Products Co., Miranda Simon of Agland Co-op Inc. and Katie Mason of Purina Animal Nutrition LLC. As well, Dr. Todd Plocher, Northeast Ohio Veterinary Associates Inc., spoke about practical animal care and welfare. At Clareshoe Jersey Farm, Dianne Shoemaker, OSU Extension Field Specialist, Dairy Production Economics, and Debra Grammer, Financial Services Officer, Farm Credit Services of Mid-America, spoke about financial planning. At Shipley Jersey Farm, Glenn Fischer, Senior Vice President, Allflex USA Inc., followed up his lecture on animal identification systems with a demonstration on collecting a tissue sample using a tissue sampling unit. Herd owner Stacey Atheron, a member of the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board, brought students up to date on current issues facing the board. At Waterman Dairy, students rotated through four stations—ruminant nutrition, use of herd management software systems, breeding goals and natural resource management—to learn about the dairy's management. Presenters included Dr. Maurice Eastridge, a professor in the Department of Animal Sciences, and herd managers, Reagan Bluel and John Lemmermen. Students learned more about operating a milk-to-processed-cheese business from Stuart Young at Young's Jersey Dairy.

Academy students took a driving tour through the Darby Creek bull facility for Select Sires Inc. and then were welcomed

to the organization's headquarters in Plain City by David Thorbahn, Chief Executive Officer and President. Students learned about the semen collection process and heard from six key staff members. A roundtable on genomics included Chuck Sattler, Vice President, Genetic Programs; Jeff Ziegler, Genomics Program Manager; and Cari Wolfe from the AJCA.

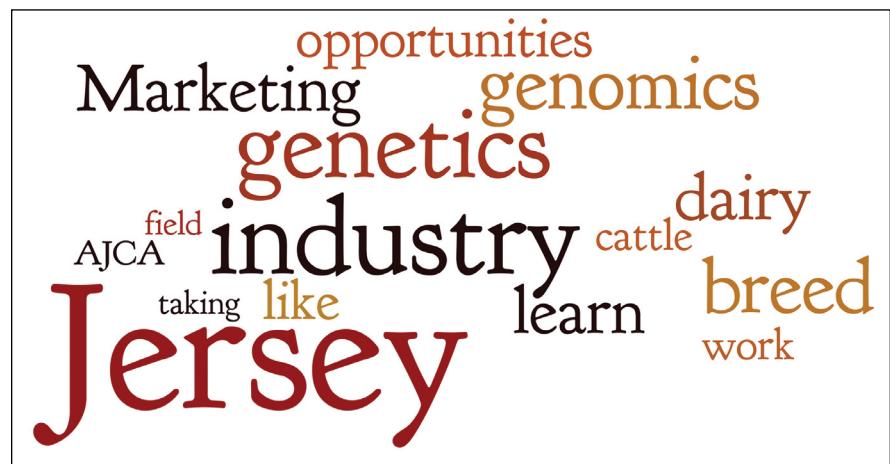
A tour of the processing facility at Reiter Dairy in Springfield was guided by plant manager Eric Steer and the company's quality assurance manager,

first and second Academy classes.

Presentations were also made by AJCANAJ department managers. Topics ranged from the linear type evaluation program to identification and breed improvement programs, genomics and genetic selection, and milk marketing.

## Feedback

There was something for everyone at Jersey Youth Academy. Some of the information could be immediately applied to managing the home dairy; other



The word cloud above summarizes participant responses to two questions: "I want to develop my abilities in ..." and "I would like to have more information about ...". The cloud shows the 15 most frequently-used words in their responses.

Susan Daughenbaugh.

Stan Erwine, Vice President Producer Relations, Dairy Management Inc., and three other staff members led a dairy advocacy workshop designed to build skills for communicating with consumers.

Participating in the dean's panel were Brian Barlass, representing the Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association; Robert Bignami, founding Dean from Brentwood Farms, Orland, Calif.; and Jersey breeder Richard Hughes, Westview Jerseys, Bodega, Calif. A panel discussion on national Jersey youth programs held at Rawn Dairy included Michael Brown, Brian Barlass and several members of the

information will be useful down the road.

"Going on tours and seeing how other people manage their farms was the most useful aspect of Jersey Youth Academy for me," commented Mitchell Endres, Lodi, Wis. "I plan to return home and farm in partnership with my siblings at some point, so it's great to see what works and doesn't work for others.

"I also thought it was helpful to know the AJCA's policies for identification and tags and learn more about genomics," Endres added.

The topic of genomics was popular with many other juniors as well, including

*Pictured on the front cover of this issue: front row, from left: Jessica Smith; Amy Gowell Drogue; Morgan Richard; Amber Gabel; Taylor Leach; Kim Kubiosiak; Meghan Chittenden; Morgan Randall; Miranda Randall; Kaitlyn Riley; and Katie Hutchins. Second row, from left: Amy Mc Birney; Rylin Lindahl; Valery Silva; Meaghan Bolen; Emily Chittenden; Casey Porter; Allison Foster; Andrea Smaciarz; Ashlan Wickstrom; Cassy Krull; Jon Frenchick; Jacob Leum; Olivia Pearson; and Theresa Sweeney. Back row, from left: Sean Brown; James Holton; Gerret Boer; Anneke Moss; Rebekah Gourley; Becky Thomas; Shannon Rodeffer; Janelle Remington; Chase Koon; and Mitchell Endres.*

## Jersey Youth Academy

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Jacob Leum of Viroqua, Wis. "I learned a lot more about genomics and see that it has great potential for my herd and the breed. I am now using more G-code bulls and would like to genotype my females down the road. The presentation on how Jersey Performance Index is calculated was especially useful. I am now more comfortable using it and other genetic measures to mate my herd."

"I have already been able to apply some of the things I learned at Jersey Youth Academy on my family's dairy," remarked Katie Hutchins, Spokane, Wash. "The Land O'Lakes representatives told us that Jersey calves need a full bottle of milk at each feeding. We had been feeding just three-quarters of a bottle but are now feeding a full bottle in hopes that our calves will grow better."

Minnesota junior Jon Frenchick of Paynesville also changed the calf raising protocol at his family farm after he took in the presentation at Grammer Jersey Farm. "We are now offering free choice water at all times, feeding hay to calves when they are a little older and being consistent with weaning at two months."

Information about breed advantages and breed programs was also well-received by many program participants.

"I especially enjoyed learning about the Jersey cow's carbon footprint advantage from Dr. Capper," noted Casey Porter, Watertown, N.Y. "I shared this with my family right away when I got home, along with my friends, many who milk Holsteins. I also feel I am better equipped to answer questions from consumers when I am serving as the county dairy princess."

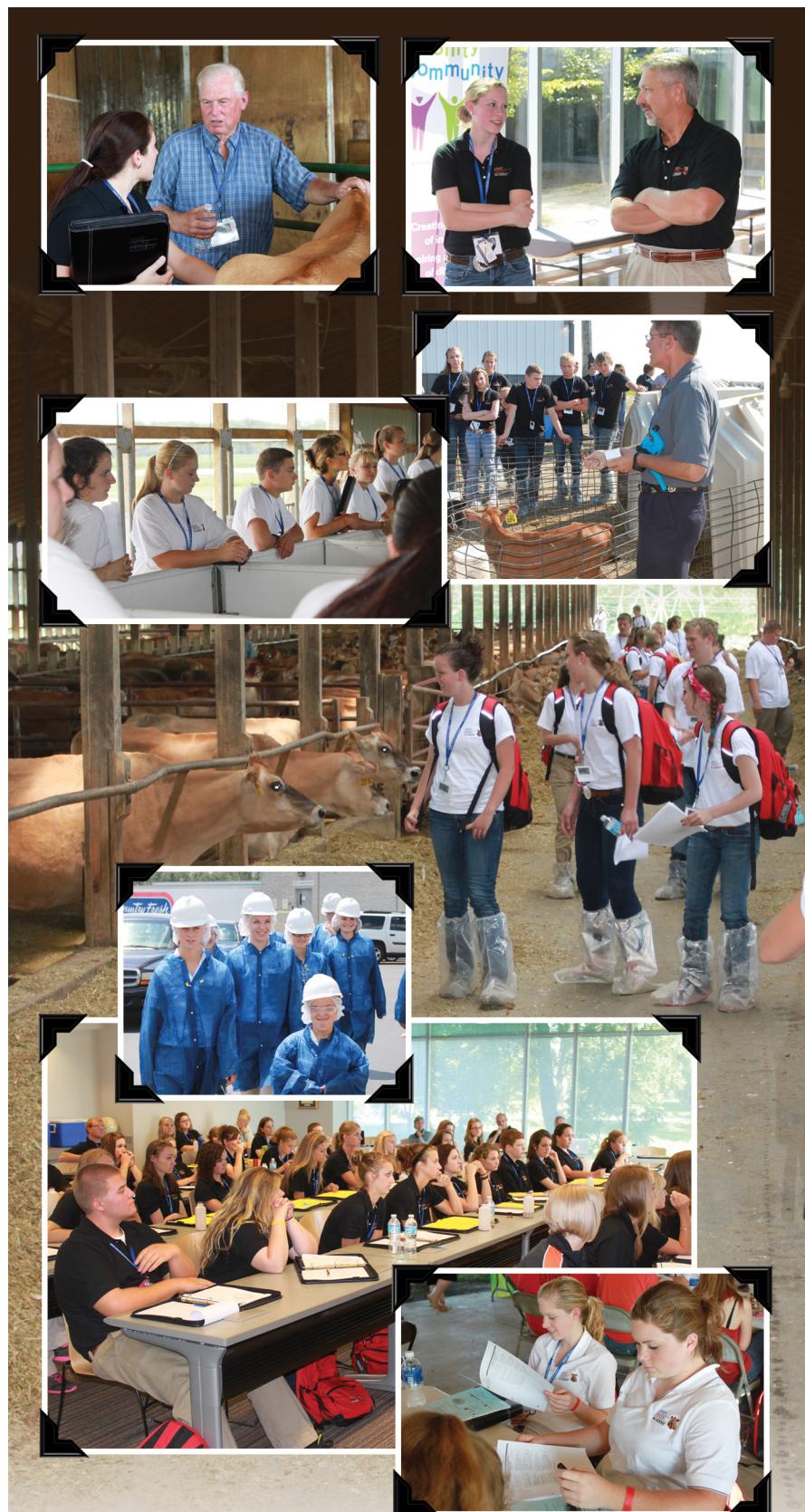
Meagan Chittenden, Schodack Landing, N.Y., also used talking points from Jersey Youth Academy to make a sale at her home farm. "I learned even more about the advantages of the Jersey breed at Academy and talked to my friends at college about it. Several of them who milk Holsteins have even purchased Jerseys from our farm."

"Thank you for sharing some of the history of the Jersey association," commented Amy Gowell Drogue, Derry, N.H. "The history was one of my favorite parts of the trip."

Academy students especially enjoyed class room presentations when they incorporated hands-on activities and information that could be applied immediately.

"I found the dairy advocacy workshop conducted by DMI to be especially useful," said Jessica Smith, Picayune, Miss. "I was able to use the skills I learned to develop

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Academy gave young Jersey breeders opportunity to mingle with industry leaders, such as Academy Dean Richard Hughes of Westview Jerseys, who visits with Olivia Pearson (top left), and AJCA-NAJ Executive Secretary Neal Smith, who talks to Miranda Randall (top right). Farm visits focused on a variety of management topics, including calf raising at Shoemaker Jersey Farm (second row, left), Shipley Jersey Farm (second row, right) and Grammer Jersey Farm (background). Participants learned about cattle merchandising through a mock JMS auction (bottom) and toured processing plants, including Reiter Dairy (middle). From classroom study to tours of small and large farms alike, the week was centered around everything Jersey.

# **Jersey Youth Academy**

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a presentation for my public speaking class at school. I also learned how to counteract misconceptions about farming and animal rights by relaying my day-to-day experiences on the farm through social media and face-to-face communication with consumers.”

## **Networking**

Academics aside, the networking and social opportunities made available to participants through Jersey Youth Academy are equally important.

"The chance for young people to mingle with others with similar interests and learn about the industry, not just from a cow standpoint, but from a personal standpoint, is unmatched," commented Academy Dean Richard Hughes.

Jacob Leum remarked, "Jersey Youth Academy is a totally different package than my other youth experiences through 4-H and FFA. With Academy, we all have the same passion for Jerseys. And since everyone is on the same plane, we have really meaningful discussions. No need to learn whether you grow corn or raise soybeans, rather our discussions might be along the lines, 'What bulls are you using?' or, 'Did you consider using this feed alternative?'"

"Academy is a great way to get a start at networking in the dairy industry and meet some of the people we will eventually be working with one day," remarked Morgan Richard, Elton, La. "As well, Academy

“As well, Academy opened my eyes to career opportunities in the dairy industry. I have applied for internships I didn’t know existed since attending Academy.”

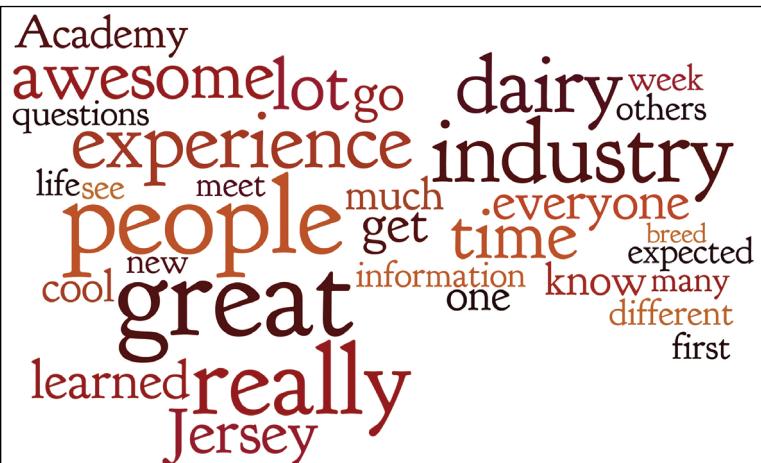
"What an incredible experience to hear from so many distinguished industry leaders and expand our perspectives of the Jersey business. I had seen quite a few of my fellow Academy attendees but never had

the chance to talk with many of them," said Shannon Rodeffer, Snohomish, Wash.

## Making It Happen

All costs for each individual selected to participate in the program were paid from the Academy's endowment fund.

Major funding for the program came



The two word clouds on this page are from exit interviews. The word cloud above shows the top 32 words participants used in responses to the question: "Describe your Academy experience." The direction and strength of their "like" for the program is suggested by the "adjectives," "great," "awesome" and "cool" and the adverb "really."



The word cloud above shows the top responses for the question: "What about your experience this week was most valuable to you?" These 30 words reveal the topics and activities that had the widest impact for participants. Most prominent was the adjective, "different," as in these responses:

*"Most valuable was farm visits and operations. Exposed to different management styles and barns and uniqueness of operations."*

*"Meeting all the different people and seeing how they got involved and made it to this point in their careers."*

*"Dairy farmers are so similar, and so different, at some farms."*

*"Variety of different speakers. So much in the industry that you often do not think about. Lots of different parts that play into the industry that do not thing about when on the farm."*

from the syndication of BW Academy-ET, who sold at The All American Jersey Sale in 2009 to a group of 94 Jersey breeders for \$96,125. The single largest contribution to the program has come from the all-donation National Heifer Sale in 2011. Seventy-one Jersey breeders made Vision Gifts to raise \$278,100 for the program. Individuals and state organizations have contributed gifts

well in excess of \$60,000. The annual Cow Pie Bingos held in conjunction with the AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings have raised \$36,900 for Jersey Youth Academy. Royalties from semen sales of "Academy" continue to contribute to the Jersey Youth Academy fund, as do gifts from individuals.

As word about the program spreads among juniors, infectious enthusiasm will be generated for future classes. The crux of Academy—to encourage, guide and train interested young people for careers in the management on Jersey dairies and the associated support fields—will be realized.

For many juniors who planned a career with Jerseys, their experience with Jersey Youth Academy solidified their choice, including Amy McBirney, Morgan Hill, Calif. "Now, more than ever, I am excited to continue my schooling to become a veterinarian, so I can ultimately work daily with people like the dedicated Jersey farmers we met during Academy."

For others, the Academy experience persuaded them to pursue a career with Jerseys. “Originally I planned to be a culinary arts major,” noted Meagan Chittenden. “Since attending Jersey Youth Academy and hearing the presentation by DMI, I have switched my major to agriculture business.

"Though I was initially nervous about attending Academy, I'm really glad I had opportunity to do so," Chittenden continued. "Whether you plan to pursue a career in agriculture or not, the business tools and skills

"Because there is such a wide variety of information presented, Jersey Youth Academy is a great place to find out what you want to do," said Jacob Leum.

The fourth Academy will be held in July 2015. Applications will be available September 1, 2014, and due December 1.