

## AN EVENT FOR BREEDERS LARGE AND SMALL

“Establishing and operating the All American Jersey Show and Sale” was identified by post-World War II Jersey leaders as one of “The Six Most Important Decisions” made by The American Jersey Cattle Club in the period from 1940 to 1965. The road to the All American has been a long one, tortuous and filled with multiple objectives.

The American Jersey Cattle Association was but three years old when its founders began to explore the idea of creating a national show of Jersey cattle. The minutes of the 1871 Annual Meeting report that,

*On motion it was Resolved: That a committee of four be appointed to consider the propriety of holding, during this year, four or more Local Exhibitions and one National Exhibition of Registered Jersey Stock. This Committee to have power to take such action as they may deem advisable . . .*

There is no further record of work by this committee, a fact of easy explanation. Treasurer Thomas J. Hand had reported to the nine members present at that meeting that “the balance of cash in the Treasury is \$119.86” and the resolution creating the exhibition committee explicitly prohibited it from incurring any expense to the Club.

Finances were still at issue three years later, but the opportunity to stage a Jersey show at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia was too attractive to pass up.

Participation was more than a display of patriotism by The American Jersey Cattle Club. As noted by R. J. Gow in *The Jersey*, “There still existed at that date Jersey herd books claiming to be authoritative other than the Herd Register of the Club.”

Holding out the lure of \$1,000 in prizes to the officers of the Centennial Commission, Samuel J. Sharpless and his committee were able to negotiate one, all-important eligibility requirement:

*No awards will be made to Jerseys unless they are entered in the ‘Herd Register’ of the American Jersey Cattle Club or in that of the Royal Agricultural Society of Jersey.*

As Sharpless’ successor, President J.

Milton Mackie would comment at the April 18, 1877 Annual Meeting, “The Club may certainly be congratulated on the fact that the Centennial Commission published to the world our ‘Herd Register’ as the only standard Jersey Herd Book, excepting that of the Island of Jersey.”

While the exhibition itself disappointed some, “Jerseys were the leading breed on the exhibition grounds—in fact, about equal in number to all other breeds combined—and highly respectable in



The drama that is the All American Show and Sale has been with it from the very beginning, as illustrated in this excerpt from the *Jersey Bulletin* editorial of November 10, 1946:

*Never within our knowledge was there ever such a sentimental, emotional demonstration as that attendant on the sale of Wonderful Dreaming Givia when she broke the new world’s record, just established at \$18,500, by selling for \$21,000. Mr. and Mrs. (Max) Gordon had already won the affection and admiration of the throngs because of their modesty, their evident gratitude, and the wonderful herd they brought to Columbus. A grand championship never had more universal approval than that won by them on Friday with their wonderful cow. And when she soared to a world’s record in the sale tears flowed . . . all through the big, wildly applauding audience. Everyone was glad for this splendid young couple who have labored heroically, lovingly, humbly, with their modestly small herd . . .*

*It would be a remarkable achievement for anyone to breed such an animal and bring it along from a wobbly little calf up to the most sensational cow of the day. The case proves positively that the so-called little breeder has a big place in the breed program.*

quality; so that the impression made upon visitors . . . must have been highly favorable to the breed,” Mackie reported.

And the Club provided the promised \$1,000 in prizes, “offered in a very simple classification as follows: Best female, \$250; second best female, \$100; best male, \$250; second best male, \$100; best herd, \$300 . . .” President Mackie opined that, “Our prizes made the Club favorably known as an association of pecuniary means, and having a disposition to make a liberal and patriotic use of them.” “Liberal” may have understated the situation: \$1,000 represented almost two-thirds of the cash that the Club had on hand—\$1,598.76.

A decade would pass before the Club would again invest in offering prizes for competitive shows. The Annual Meeting of 1887 “authorized and instructed” the awarding of The American Jersey Cattle

Club Prize of \$100 to the exhibitor of the best herd (one bull and four females, owned within the state) at each state fair and the Toronto exhibition. Then in 1889, the membership authorized expenditure of \$1,000 as premiums at shows determined to be “the most national in character,” a difficult task that finally proved insurmountable.

A less difficult criterion for determining which show should get money was to identify the largest shows. In 1890, the Club offered a prize of \$150 for the best group of a bull and four of his get (at least two in milk); and also \$50 for the best cow at the five state fairs whose official catalogues from 1889 showed the largest number of entries. Two shows east of the Alleghenies, and three west of them, were selected.

Over the next several decades, the Club provided special prizes for a few large exhibitions, a pattern of sporadic funding that continued

until the National Dairy Show became firmly established.

The idea for a National Dairy Show was proposed in the *Jersey Bulletin* during 1905 and came to fruition the following year at the coliseum in Chicago. While not an initiative of the AJCC, its champions became officially recognized as the “National Grand Champions” of the Jersey breed. Emanon 52299, imported in dam from Jersey Island and exhibited by Hunter & Smith, Lincoln, Neb., was the first National Grand Champion bull; Rachel Benton 138276, bred in Ohio and also owned by Hunter & Smith, was the first National Grand Champion cow.

Once the National Dairy Show proved that it would be sustainable, the Club appropriated premiums of \$500 for the 1909 show. By 1912, the AJCC had increased its premium support for shows to \$2,500 annually—not only for the National Dairy Show, but also for the International Dairy Show in Milwaukee, and at state and sectional fairs.

Such awards continued to be a hefty draw upon the Club’s financial resources, a fact of constant concern to the Board of Directors.

“In 1912 a Committee on Fairs was appointed,” Gow wrote in the 1936 history book, “and recommended that, it would be better in lieu of money premiums to offer medals for grand championship winners at State fairs when such winners were exhibited by their breeders. In accordance with this recommendation the Club abolished all cash premiums at State fairs and awarded medals for grand-championships at such fairs as might be selected by the Executive Committee, which committee appropriated \$1,600 for special Club prizes, gold, silver and bronze medals, offered at the National Dairy Show, the State Dairy Association Fair (in) Water-

## THE FIRE: FROM COLUMBUS TO LOUISVILLE



Tragedy darkened what started out as one of the most successful All Americans in history. The 1972 All American was brought to an abrupt halt with the cry, “A fire in the barn!” The 58 senior heifer calves had just been checked in to the ring Tuesday, October 10 at the Ohio Exposition Center in Columbus. Emcee Richard Kellogg calmly brought the show to a halt and everyone raced to the barn to release some 1,500 animals from the main dairy barn and two adjacent barns that were quickly engulfed in flames. Only one animal was lost.

The cause? The fire was set by area teenagers to cover up some thefts.

The 1972 All American had the potential to be the largest national Jersey show to date with 502 animals on the grounds. There was a Grand Champion bull that year—Brownys Masterman Jester, but, of course, no Grand Champion female. The odds-on favorites in the barn for that honor were two 4-year-olds, Generators Topsy and Pixys Milestone Jody. Once she was loaded into the trailer, “Jody” never returned to the All American. “Topsy” was the 1973 National Grand Champion.

The North American Dairy Show never quite recovered from the 1972 fire, and in 1977 the All American Jersey Show and Sale was relocated to Louisville, Ky., where it continues to be held in conjunction with the North American International Livestock Exposition.

loo, Iowa; the International Dairy Show (at) Milwaukee, the New England Fair and thirty-one State fairs.”

Then there was the issue of where to invest money to best promote Jerseys—in supporting people who already owned them, or to encourage others to become owners. The issue came to a head in 1922, and the Board recommended that the offering of premiums at fairs and exhibitions be discontinued, and that the funds be used in educational work at the fairs. The members attending the Annual Meeting approved the recommendation “that no premiums be offered at the 1922 fairs, this to include the National Dairy Show, the Eastern States Exposition and the Pacific International Exposition.”

That move was quickly protested, lead-

ing to the appointment of a special Committee on Enlarging Displays of Jerseys. In 1928, the Board of Directors adopted that committee’s recommendation to sponsor “four annual sectional championship shows” in addition to the National Dairy Show. These sectional shows were rotated annually: from Kentucky, Eastern States, the Dairy Cattle Congress and the Pacific International, to the state fairs in Minnesota, Texas, and New York, then later to states like Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, and Illinois.

### Towards The All American

The National Dairy Show was held in 1942, but suspended in 1943, 1944 and 1945. The three-year hiatus allowed time for the Club’s leadership, particularly Executive Secretary J. C. Nisbet, to assess the event’s shortcomings.

The Chicago show, Nisbet wrote on January 10, 1946, offered Jersey breeders “little more if not considerably less than a good state fair—inadequate financing, too great an overhead, costly enter-

tainment, too few exhibitors, small attendance, little attraction for commercial exhibitors.”

As a former Extension man, Nisbet found more to complain about: the “lack of broad educational and industry appeal, (an) admittedly unimportant dairy youth show, (and) lack of exhibits depicting research expansion and approved practices in fields related to dairy cattle breeding.

“Any suggested approach to a ‘National’ must overcome the difficulties experienced in past shows and measure up to the possibilities, opportunities and prestige of America’s greatest agricultural endeavor.”

So, just four short months after the close of World War II on September 2, 1945, Nisbet proposed that a five-breed

“All American Dairy Show and Exposition” be staged in October of 1946. His was a proposal both intricate and ambitious, long on vision and short on details, and it required nearly three pages of print in the *Jersey Bulletin*.

His theme: “Something New and Something More.” That, Nisbet argued, was what would “set it apart from state fairs.”

The All American would be the “capstone of the show year, the last in a sequence of finding the best cattle across the country and then having them compete through local and state events, then selected to represent their state at the All American.

“Hundreds of cattle—outstanding in perfection of type—have remained unnoticed and unattracted in small herds off the beaten paths and back from the concrete highways. These cattle must be found in a nation-wide search put on by the organized breed interests.”

Nisbet envisioned a week of not just competition, but also of education. “The time that an animal is in the ring is not the only opportunity at a show for her making friends and influencing people. A barn-side audience could be built to every bit of the importance of a ringside audience. Fieldmen of the several breeds by conducting carefully planned and timed trips through the barn could feature and spotlight the several winners, outstanding individuals, high record cows, etc. etc. Properly staged type demonstrations, classifications, scoring, etc. etc. might be put on in the barn at publicized hours and by experts on the several subjects.”

It would provide for “capturing and holding the interest of youth in dairy farming. Youth classes with plenty of prize money, judging contests with worthwhile awards, oratorical contests with scholarship possibilities, and exhibits would be only a few of the approaches to sending home several thousand farm youngsters charged with enthusiasm and filled with an inspiration . . .”

The All American was also offered by Nisbet as a place to hold annual meetings of the breed associations, their national sales, and for other organizations, such as the National Dairy Council and the American Dairy Association “to meet the producers that support them.”

And, all of it would be under the control of the purebred producers, but “to make the show a success this group must

recognize the scope and interests of the industry and offer to the program and project such leadership as will appeal to Exhibitors, Ringside, Dairy Farm Youth, Commercial and Educational people working with dairy production in this broad land.”

Nisbet’s proposal failed to attract support from the other breed executives, but that did not deter this early master of spin-doctoring. On February 10, 1946, he wrote, “The Jersey world has been handed its greatest challenge. It is the only breed ready to tackle a national show in 1946. All others turned thumbs down on the proposal at the recent Pure Bred Dairy Cattle Association meeting in Cleveland. Judge (J. G.) Adams, president of The American Jersey Cattle Club, made the dramatic announcement at this meeting that our breed would not only hold another great Sale of Stars but during this same week would stage the All American Jersey Show and Junior Jersey Exposition in Columbus, Ohio.”

A show for juniors would open the All American on October 9, the senior show would follow on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, and then the Sale of Stars would provide the finishing touch on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

“There you have it! Three stellar attractions; any one worth traveling across America to attend. All will be staged in one week and at the very centrally located Ohio state fairgrounds in Columbus. All are closely knit one into the other. All are under the able direction of the dynamic gentleman from Texas, Herman F. Heep, aided and abetted by his committee made up of J. S. Campbell, Jr., W. W. Trout, Ted F. Fansher and John L. Hutcheson, Jr. Mark your calendars, fit your show ring prospects, tell your neighbors!

“It’s 10,000 breeders, 500 Juniors, 1,000 Jerseys all heading for Columbus Oct. 9, 10, 11, 12.”

What Heep and Nisbet got were 3,000 breeders and 500 Jerseys. There were 240 competing in the senior show, 233 in the junior show. The Sale of Stars averaged \$2,379.68 on 48 head, with the National Grand Champion bringing \$21,000.

It was good enough.

The 1946 All American had income of \$34,990.86, and expenses of \$31,785.69. The Sale of Stars commission (20%) accounted for \$22,810 of revenues, with the next largest amount coming from advertising in a souvenir program

(\$2,825.00). More than \$3,700 was paid out in premiums for each of the junior and open shows.

Columbus remained the site for three years, with Hutcheson serving as chair in 1947 and Maurice Pollak as chair in 1948. The 1947 show also was in the black \$3,920.15 (revenues \$32,652.30, expenses \$28,732.15); but the 1948 show was drifted into the red for \$1,674.43.

More important was the drain upon the AJCC staff time. Following the 1948 event, the Board of Directors received a recommendation from Heep, Hutcheson and Pollak to let others handle all entries and work related to running the show plus providing a premium purse of \$10,000. The 1949 show was in Memphis, then it went to Dallas in 1950. During 1951, 1952 and 1953, the National Jersey Show was held at the National Dairy Cattle Congress (Waterloo, Iowa). The International Dairy Show was launched in 1953 in Chicago, and the National Jersey Show went there for the next four years. Neither Waterloo nor Chicago were suitable geographical locations for Jersey exhibitors.

The impetus for re-establishing the All American, and doing so in Columbus, came from Ohio Jersey breeders. Depending upon which source is read, the players are somewhat different. But one name remains in the forefront: A. G. Samuelson of Urbana, Ohio.

Samuelson, along with Chester Folck and Russell White, met with the Board of Directors on March 3, 1957 and left with a clear understanding of the conditions under which an All American would be revived by the Jersey association.

Three conditions stand out. First, planning had to be for the show on a “permanent basis.” Second, the planning committee must have wide representation (i.e., beyond Ohio). Third, “The revival of the show (will be) recommended, only when sufficient funds are on hand to finance it,” \$25,000 being the sum named.

Samuelson accepted the challenge, and within six months reported that “there was \$11,425.05 in the bank with firm pledges (to total) \$17,000. The contributed funds have come from over 50 breeders in 19 different states.” By December, more than \$21,000 was committed to the event, and the Board recommended that the All American begin again in early October of 1958: with two shows, the All American Sale, a new Pot O’Gold Sale and the preview of the Jersey Jug.