

Donald S. and Elsa Sherman

Donald S. and Elsa Sherman of D&E Jerseys, Hilmar, Calif., are the recipients of the Master Breeder Award of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA), which will be presented on Friday, June 25, 2010, during the Jersey Breeders Banquet in Portland, Ore.

The Master Breeder award is bestowed annually to a living AJCA member, family, partnership or corporation that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has bred outstanding animals for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.

This year's Master Breeder has shown a long commitment to the ability to evaluate cattle and breed them to accentuate their strengths and weaknesses through use of various scientific breeding tools in combination with good dairy sense. They are scholars of the breed and have made genetics a passion they enjoy sharing with others.

"The Shermans have worked their entire lives breeding the kind of Jerseys that will improve not only the breed, but also the lives of those who depend on them," said Benny Rector, Hilmar, on behalf of the California Jersey Breeders Association in a nomination letter.

Donald "Donnie" and Elsa Sherman have an extensive and proven history of developing animals that make positive impacts on the Jersey breed. For more than three decades they have supported the Jersey breed and Jersey associations through consignments of their best animals to local, regional and national sales, providing animals from their solid breeding program to Jersey herds throughout the country.

"No matter what sale he consigns to, I know as a buyer that his animal will be one of the best genetically," said David Allen, All-Lynn Jerseys, Reedsburg, Wis.

Not only have Donnie and Elsa bred exceptional individual animals, they have bred two outstanding herds of cattle. Their original herd, started in 1978 after Donnie was discharged from the United States Marine Corps, is located in Hilmar at D&E Jerseys. This herd consists of 620 cows



and replacement heifers and has an AJCA herd PTA average of +304M, +11F, +10P, +85NM\$. The D&E herd also has a JPI of +33, ranking 18th in the country for herds with more than 300 cows.

The second herd owned by the Sherman family is Avi-Lanche Jerseys, Dalhart, Texas. It is a partnership with their daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer and Richard Avila. This larger scale herd consists of 2,400 cows with an equal number of replacements. This herd has an AJCA Herd PTA average of +245M, +6F, +7P, +36NM\$ and a JPI of +17.

Both of the herds are 100% Registered, enrolled on REAP, contribute to Equity and use JerseyTags for identification and Jersey Mate for sire selection options.

Breeding great cows means using the best bulls available. This is evident as in April 2010, two of the cows on the Top 200 list hail from D&E Jerseys. In addition to their nationally recognized herd, seven of the top 15 "G" tested young bulls are a product of D&E dams, something fellow Jersey breeder Herby Lutz, Her-Man Jerseys, Chester, S.C., called "truly a remarkable feat in these fast paced

changing times."

These lists only foreshadow the great work done by the Shermans, including some very influential cow families and bulls. The first animal to show this trend was D&E Duncans Bell, a bull developed from a D&E cow and Highland Magic Duncan, which was a bull that was acquired by Jerseyland Sires largely due to Donnie. D&E Duncans Bell was one of the outstanding bulls of his time to combine type and production traits.

Of all the animals and cow families bred by D&E Jerseys that have shown impact, the most significant might be D&E Abe Violet and her descendants. Dating back half a century, the "Violet" family has been bred by the Shermans for more than 14 generations. "Abe Violet" has a GJPI of +144 and is scored Excellent-90%. These solid genetics were passed on to her three daughters and four sons. Of the four male offspring, three have January 2010 GJPIs averaging +240, and all are either in A.I. or waiting to enter.

D&E Paramount Violet, a daughter of "Abe Violet" now owned by David Allen, currently has 11 sons with GJPI averages of 273 and one daughter with a GJPI of +305, the daughter being a member of the D&E herd. In addition, six of the top 10 GJPI young sires that do not yet have milking daughters are sons of "Paramount Violet."

Donnie has always had an eye for selecting great cattle to breed from, as evidenced by the many families he has purchased. One of the Sherman's earliest acquisitions that allowed for development was Molly Brook General Bella-P, a cow they bought in partnership with Phil Fanelli, Hilmar, Calif. This line was bred forward three generations to put D&E Henry-P into A.I. "Henry-P" is one of the best production-bred bulls in recent history.

The next major impact animal purchased was Clover Farms Berretta Kelsey-ET, an Excellent-92% cow that produced 34 offspring, seven of those being scored Excellent. Among the six sons of "Kelsey" were two well-known bulls: Keeper of D&E and D&E Avery Kody. These two bulls combined have sired a notable 5,030

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