

# John Palmer

John Palmer, Cornish, Maine, will be honored as the 62<sup>nd</sup> recipient of the Distinguished Service Award presented by the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA).

The Distinguished Service Award is presented by the Board of Directors to as many living AJCA members and/or members' families, who, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, have *rendered outstanding and unselfish service for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.*

Formal presentation of the award will be made on June 27 at the Jersey Breeders' Banquet held during the 2012 Annual Meetings of the AJCA and National All-Jersey Inc. (NAJ) in the North Conway, N.H.

As the New England Jersey breeders prepare to welcome fellow Jersey enthusiasts, they are also celebrating the accomplishments of their neighbor, John Palmer of Highland Farms. John will be accepting the award that celebrates his commitment to not only managing a successful herd of Registered Jerseys, but also working hard to make a positive impact on his friends, neighbors and Jersey breeders alike.

"John has been an outstanding leader of the Jersey breed as our New England Representative and a spokesman for the breed at the national and state level," said Nancy Quimby, Brooks, Maine, secretary of the Maine Jersey Cattle Club. "He has devoted his life to promoting agriculture and dairying and he is totally deserving of this honor."

John spent his youth being active in FFA, acting as president of his chapter at Fryeburg Academy. He later attended the University of Maryland, where he was a member of the agricultural fraternity Alpha Gamma Rho and graduated in 1957 with an associate's degree in animal husbandry. That same year, he married his wife, Allaire Pike, and both became integral parts of the Highland Farms operation, which was started in 1886 by Allaire's great-great grandfather. Highland Farms is recognized as the oldest Registered Jersey herd in the country and most cows in the herd today can be traced back to the first three Jerseys purchased at the farms origin.



John spent 41 years managing the herd before becoming a stock-holder in the farm once it was incorporated in 1962. He was part of the team that helped get the REAP herd to the outstanding production levels they are currently enjoying as they milk 250 registered Jerseys which has a 2011 AJCA lactation average of 19,315M, 941F and 667P on 184 lactations. They currently have eight cows that rank on the Top 1.5% GJPI cow list, with another cow on the list for Top 1.5% by traditional JPI list (4/12).

The Palmer and Pike families were the recipients of the 1987 Master Breeder award from the AJCA. Three years later, they were named the 1990 Maine Dairy Farmer of the year.

"John is constantly thinking of ways that he can improve the farming community the farming community either at community, state or national level," wrote Tom Sawyer. "You never know when you might receive a call from him someday with one of his ideas to help improve dairy farming."

In the time that John has been involved at Highland Farms, there have been many exciting feats accomplished on top of the hill that the farm graces. In addition to being a contract advertiser in the *Jersey Journal* and a contributor to *Equity*, Highland has bred and sold many outstanding

animals, including several famous bulls. Highland Magic Duncan and his first son, Highland Duncan Lester are two of the more well known bulls to appear USDA Sire Summary List, which also included four more "Duncan" sons in the 1990s. Highland Farms currently has four sires listed in the Homebred AI Bulls Green Book (4/12).

The excellent work John has completed at the historic farm spans more than just the Highland herd.

"John's Jersey involvement is impressive," wrote Tom Sawyer Jr., President of the New England Jersey Breeders Association (NEJBA), in his nomination essay for John. "He feels that if you can improve and promote the Jersey cow that she will always be able to provide a wonderful life for all Jersey breeders."

He served as a director of the American Jersey Cattle Association from 1989 to 1997, representing the first district and serving as Vice President of the association. He also was a member of the finance committee and still serves as an advisor for the investment committee. John is a member and past president of both the Maine Jersey Cattle Club and the NEJBA.

"He has always been available for advice, suggestions and encouragement to all Maine Jersey Breeders," wrote Albert and Lynette Bradford, Goodnow Jersey Farm, Turner, Maine, in support for their fellow Jersey breeder.

Richard Clauss, Clauss Dairy and former AJCA President of Hilmar, Calif., reflected on the time he spent working with John while serving on the AJCC board and the impact he had doing such. "He has served with quiet dedication to the success of our breed and the Jersey organization."

John has also worked hard to promote the dairy industry as a whole, serving 15 years on the sire committee for Genex. He was also a representative and served on the legislative committee for the milk marketing cooperative, Agri-Mark. He is a member of Farm Bureau and the Dairy Herd Improvement Association, serving both on the local and state levels. John and Allaire both spend considerable amount of time lobbying in the name of dairy farming, land conservation and other agricultural issues.

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## Distinguished Service Award

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"He knows his state and federal legislators and senators on a first name basis and he keeps them informed on agricultural ideas and activities," wrote Sheldon Sawyer of John's policy involvement.

The dairy industry is not the only segment that benefits from this activism though as John has several commitments to his local community. He served the Cornish Planning Board for 15 years, four of those as chairman of the board. This involvement helped establish a town zoning ordinance that encourages an aesthetic and agricultural focused community. John also served as town selectman for seven years, and is very involved in his church where he has been a member for more than 50 years and has served on the Board of Trustees for more than 45 years.

"John Palmer is one of the most sincere and honest men that I have ever met," wrote Harold B. Wright, former AJCC President, White River Junction, Vt. "He is the kind of person anyone would like as a friend or a neighbor."

He was also a supervisor for the York County Maine Soil and Water Conservation District for 18 years, serving as chairman for six of those years. John also served the state Soil and Water Conservation board for four years. In 1984, he received the National Soil Conservation Award on behalf of the work done at Highland Farms. "Because Highland is located on a hilltop, they have carefully managed their farmlands with strip-cropping, no-till planting, terracing, and miles of diversion ditches," shared Sheldon Sawyer of the conservation efforts of John and his family. "They also compost bedding manure and manage a manure pit for liquid manure application

to the cropland."

John, Allarie and their family have won several distinguished awards on behalf of Highland Farm. In 1995, John and Allaire were presented with the National Dairy Shrine's Distinguished Dairy Cattle Award along with Allarie's brother Robert and his wife Laura Pike. John and Allarie's children, the fifth generation of the family to work at Highland Farms, Libby (Bleakney) and Daniel, along with their niece and nephew, David Pike and Lorie Pike, were given the AJCA Young Jersey Breeders Award. Libby and Daniel now manage the herd, while their children, the sixth generation, also have begun to assume active roles on the farm.

Though there are plenty of helping hands at Highland Farms, John continues to help and support the family and crew on top of the picturesque hilltop. He can still be found breeding cows and working beside his family members to promote the Jersey cow, or most importantly, making sure he can keep a smile on the faces surrounding him.

"A lifetime of friendship with this gentle and thoughtful man has shown him to be thoroughly devoted to family, community, the Jersey cow and the AJCA," wrote Peter Young, Nezinscot Jersey Farm, Turner, Maine. "He was an early advocate of component pricing through the Equity program as well as the progressive genetic indexes that turned the Jersey breed toward a new future."

As John helps Highland Farms prepare to be part of the AJCA, National All-Jersey Inc. Annual Meeting tour, which will be paying the historic farm a visit on June 30, he can share his knowledge and good-will with Jersey breeders from throughout the country, capping off the experience of a

Distinguished Service award winner.

## Distinguished Service Awards

1954	W. W. Trout, Springfield, Ohio*
1955	Harold J. Turner, Bethel, Vt.*
1956	Judge Peter J. Shields, Sacramento, Calif.*
1957	R. C. Calloway, Baton Rouge, La.*
1958	Lynn Copeland, Nashville, Tenn.*
1959	Chester Folck, Springfield, Ohio*
1960	Ernest Greenough, Merced, Calif.*
1961	Paul Jackson, Wilmington, Ohio*
1962	Harriet J. Groos, Vancouver, Wash.*
1963	R. K. Stout, Lansing, Mich.*
1964	Herbert G. Myers, Boise, Idaho*
1965	Charles S. Kelly, Hudson, Wis.*
1966	Joseph F. Sawyer, Galt, Calif.*
1967	Henry P. Knolle, Sandia, Texas*
1968	H. I. Sawyer, Hughson, Calif.*
1969	M. L. Baird, Springfield, Ohio*
1970	E. Lea Marsh, Jr., Old Lyme, Conn.*
1971	Stanley N. Chittenden, New Lebanon, N.Y.*
1972	Arthur Dieterich, Sherman, Texas*
1973	Amzi Rankin, Jr., Faunsdale, Ala.*
1974	Capt. T. J. and Elizabeth Bay, Lynden, Wash.*
1975	Mrs. Thomas H. Carruthers, III, Glendale, Ohio*
1975	Paul Sparrow, Athens, Tenn.*
1976	Wyatt A. Williams, Orange, Va.*
1977	Dr. J. H. Arnold, Newnan, Ga.*
1977	Reuben R. Cowles, Statesville, N.C.*
1978	Jean E. Lemmermen, Tiffin, Ohio*
1979	John Weir Jr., Geuda Springs, Kan.
1980	Clyde K. Chappell, Knoxville, Tenn.*
1980	Newell Mills, Fallon, Nev.
1981	Harold Wright, White River Junction, Vt.
1982	C. L. Collins, Jr., Sylacauga, Ala.*
1983	Ray Chamberlain, Wyoming, N.Y.*
1984	Dr. C. A. Ernstrom, Logan, Utah*
1985	J. F. Cavanaugh, Columbus, Ohio*
1986	W. Charles McGinnis, Mountville, S.C.*
1987	G. Joe Lyon, Toledo, Iowa
1988	Dr. John Wilk, Raleigh, N.C.
1989	Robert Lord, Woodstock, Vt.*
1990	Dr. H. Duane Norman, Fulton, Md.
1991	Edwin L. Crotty, Trenton, N.J.
1992	Richard A. Riggs, Evansville, Ind.
1993	Maurice E. Core, Columbus, Ohio
1994	John Giacomini, Eureka, Calif.*
1995	W. R. Lutz, Newton, N.C.
1996	Max Gordon, Winchester, Ind.*
1997	Harold Owens, Frederic, Wis.*
1998	Richard Clauss, Hilmar, Calif.
1999	Elmer D. Larson, Burlington, Wash.*
2000	Dr. J. J. Malnati, Newberry, S.C.*
2001	Harold W. Roller, Weyers Cave, Va.
2002	Ray R. Schooley, Marshfield, Mo.
2003	D.L. Strandberg, D.V.M., Alma Center, Wis.
2004	Neal F. Schirm, Canal Winchester, Ohio*
2005	J. Lawrence Benson, New Lebanon, N.Y.
2006	Ted Luther, Mount Ulla, N.C.
2007	Alvin Moss, Litchfield Park, Ariz.*
2008	David W. Spahr, Findlay, Ohio
2009	Dr. Robert C. and Helene C. Dreisbach, Mercer, Pa.
2010	Paul Chittenden, Schodack Landing, N.Y.
2011	Donald Sherman, Hilmar, Calif.
2012	John Palmer, Cornish, Maine

\* deceased