

First Jersey Grave Marker Unveiled at Select Sires

Mason Boomer Sooner Berretta recently became the first high-components breed sire to be honored with a grave marker at Select Sires, Plain City, Ohio. The marker was unveiled June 28, 2003, during a host-day picnic for breeders attending the AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings.

The dark gray stone, which features an image of "Berretta," was unveiled before Bill Mason, Buhl, Idaho, father of the bull's breeder, David Mason. Mason was presented with a framed, silk scarf that was specially created for "Berretta." A collage that included his nose ring and formal photograph and those of his sire, Soldierboy Boomer Sooner of CJF, also a Select Sires bull, was created for display with the stone.

The honor is well deserved considering the impact "Berretta" has made on Jersey genetics. He changed breeders' mindsets about the balance of protein to fat in Jersey milk and their beliefs about Jersey type. He was the right product for the right time, increasing protein in Jersey milk to fit a component-based pricing system.

"Mason Boomer Sooner Berretta has made a lasting impact on the Jersey breed," said Jeff Ziegler, Dairy Sire Analyst, Select Sires. "His consistency has made him a popular mating choice for dairy producers. Rarely has a sire shown the ability to improve herds in a single generation as drastically as he's done."

"Berretta" daughters have 14 times produced records in excess of 35,000 pounds milk and 10 times produced more than 1,200 pounds protein. One "Berretta" daughter, Golden MBSB of Twin Haven-ET, is the reigning world fat-production champion and the first Jersey to produce more than a ton of protein at 2,421 pounds.

He has sired 32 daughters that are scored Excellent-93% or higher. This group of females average 23,437 pounds milk, 1,059 pounds fat, 873 pounds protein and an impressive 2,763 pounds cheese.

The high-protein bull entered active AI service as the top PTI sire in July 1993 and remained tops through August 1998, longer than any other bull in history. His son, Barbs MBSB Declo, eventually succeeded him as top bull, in November 1998. Of the 18 sire proofs that have been released since November 1998, 14 have been topped by a bull that carries "Berretta" in his pedigree as either sire or maternal grandsire.

Ten years later, "Berretta" continues to impact the breed worldwide and dominate genetic rankings. The current JPI-leading sire, Deboer Jenetta Barber Bill-ET, is a maternal grandson of "Berretta." The top



Mason Boomer Sooner Berretta became the first Jersey to have a memorial in place at Select Sires. From left, General Manager, Dave Thorbahn; Vice President Dairy Sire Procurement, Ron Long; AJCA-NAJ Executive Secretary, Neal Smith; William Mason, father of the breeder of "Berretta;" AJCA President, James Huffard; and Dairy Sire Analyst, Jeff Zeigler.

JPI cow, Berrettas Linette, and two other members of the top 10 listing are sired by "Berretta." Canada's number one LPI sire, Mollybrook Fusion-ET, is a "Berretta" son.

"Berretta" has sired more registered daughters than any other Jersey bull. Today, the mark of 27,061 daughters puts him just beyond that of his sire, "Sooner." As well, "Berretta" has sired 1,454 registered sons, 252 of which are proven sires. Additionally, nearly 75,000 registered animals call "Berretta" grandsire. Nearly 4,500 breeders own an animal sired by "Berretta."

Of special note, without genetic recovery, the opportunity to experience the "Berretta" influence may have been lost. His fifth dam was enrolled as an Original Animal in the Genetic Recovery Program.

Mason Boomer Sooner Berretta is one of just nine bulls to be recognized in a *Jersey Journal* issue that was dedicated to a single bull. See the July 2001 issue for a complete story on "Berretta" and his influence on the Jersey breed.