

## Six Young Jersey Breeders to Be Honored in Asheville

The AJCA Board of Directors has named six recipients of the Young Jersey Breeder Award for 2008. They are Amanda Elmore Baldwin, Statesville, N.C.; Ryan A. and Freynie E. S. Lancaster, Ferndale, Wash.; Brian Nichols, Lyndonville, Vt.; Christy Ratliff, Garnett, Kan.; Brian S. Seacord, Greenwich, N.Y.; and David and Yvonne VanBuskirk, Carleton, Mich.

The first Young Jersey Breeder Awards were presented in 1976. Since then, more than 233 producers have received this award, including this year's recipients.

The Young Jersey Breeder Award is presented to individuals or couples under the age of 40 on January 1 of the year nominated who merit recognition for their expertise in dairy farming, breeding Jersey cattle, participation in American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) and National All-Jersey Inc. (NAJ) programs, and leadership in Jersey and other dairy and agriculture organizations.

The 2008 honorees will receive their awards during the Young Jersey Breeders Banquet on Wednesday, June 25, 2008, in Asheville, N.C.

### Amanda Elmore Baldwin

The story of Amanda Elmore Baldwin's growth with Registered Jerseys parallels that of her family's dairy farm—Dusty Road Jerseys—in Statesville, N.C. The youngest of five children born to Ray and Linda Elmore, Amanda became involved in the business early on when she helped the family to milk a couple of cows in a small shed and carry the milk in buckets to the bulk tank.

As Amanda grew, so did the herd. In the spring of 1990, when it became a five-hour process to milk 50 cows in the shed, the family built a double-five herringbone parlor and 14-year-old Amanda helped to build the facility.

Amanda's enthusiasm for the cows grew over the years as well, sparked in part when she tagged along with her big sister to dairy functions for youth. The groundwork was laid for the career choice she enjoys today—co-management of Dusty Road Jersey Farm.

The herd of 175 milking cows is enrolled on REAP and a member of Dixieland Jersey Sires, Inc. Amanda owns 130 Registered Jerseys and has helped to make steady gains in the production,

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Amanda Elmore Baldwin



Brian Nichols

### Ryan A. and Freynie E. S. Lancaster

Mention the name Family Hill Jerseys and "Circus" likely will come to mind on its heels. The farm in Ferndale, Wash., has developed its most famous resident, Pleasant Nook F Prize Circus, into one of the breed's leading show ladies. Her titles include National Grand Champion in 2003 and 2006, Reserve National Grand Champion in 2005 and three-time Grand Champion of the Western National Jersey Show.

But the Excellent-96% "Circus" is not the only high-visibility cow at Family Hill Jerseys, owned by Ryan and Freynie Lancaster. The barn is full of cows that have been bred in accordance with the Lancaster's philosophy—cows that excel in production and type and are long-lived.

Family Hill Sambo Fern, Excellent-94%, is the 2007 All American Five-Year-Old Cow and her maternal sister, Family Hill Avery Fire, Excellent-93%, is the 2007 Western National Grand Champion. Another maternal sister, Pleasant Nook Berretta Felice, Excellent-95%, won the NASCO International Type and Production Award at The 2003 All American Jersey Show. Her daughter, Family Hill SD Favorite, Excellent-95%, was Reserve Intermediate Champion of The 2004 All American Jersey Show and the 2005 Reserve All American Four-Year-Old Cow. All have records in excess of 19,700 lbs. milk.

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Ryan and Freynie Lancaster  
Logan and Tatum

### Brian Nichols

Though he was presented with other opportunities, Brian Nichols, Lyndonville, Vt., could not ignore a calling he felt as far back as he can remember. In grade school, he started working on farms in his hometown. In the spring of 1988, he earned an associate's degree in dairy farm management from Vermont Technical College. Later that fall, he rented a farm in East Burke and purchased his first Jersey cows.

The untimely death of his father in 1993 forced him to abandon his dream and run the family fuel business. But the desire to milk cows got the best of him and he returned to what was left of his grandparent's land in Lyndonville five years later. He built a new barn at Speedwell Farms, bought a group of Jersey and Brown Swiss heifers and began milking in the fall of 1998.

Six years later, it was clear to him that

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**David and Yvonne VanBuskirk**  
Logan, Jacob and Zakary



**Brian S. Seacord**

### **Christy Ratliff**

Hard-working, competitive and passionate are words that have been used to describe Kansas Jersey breeder, Christy Ratliff, Garnett. The traits have served her well in developing Ratliff Jersey, owned with husband, Ron, into a highly-regarded Registered Jersey herd.

Because the farm is not situated in the heart of the dairy world, Christy has had to work diligently to carve a special niche for the operation, develop a thriving merchandising business and do what she can to bring dairy to the forefront of the Kansas public in a time when the state's dairy industry is on the decline.

The 60-cow herd is enrolled on REAP and has a 2007 AJCA lactation average of 17,582 lbs. milk, 845 lbs. fat and 641 lbs. protein. With the March 2008 appraisal, the herd included 21 Excellent and 25 Very Good cows

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**Ron and Christy Ratliff**

### **Brian S. Seacord**

It may have been his father's gift of a Jersey calf that got Brian S. Seacord hooked on dairying, but it was Brian's dedication and business savvy that brought his father back into the Registered Jersey operation that is now called Seacord Farm.

It all started when Brian was just five and received a Jersey calf from his father, Richard, to show at the county fair. Though the family farm in Greenwich, N.Y., milked Holsteins, his father and uncle had milked a mixed herd of Holsteins and Jerseys until the late 1970s. Richard enjoyed showing the Jerseys so much that he wanted his son to realize the same experiences. Over the years, the father-son duo added to the show string with key foundation purchases.

In 1991, Brian's father sold the cows and began working for a large commercial Holstein operation. Brian wanted to keep his Jersey herd, so housed it at a friend's farm. In the spring of 1995, when he was a sophomore in high school, Brian brought the cows back to the home farm and started milking the herd of 27 Jersey cows.

By 1999, the barn was at capacity and there was opportunity for Richard come back to work on the farm with Brian and his herd of 70 Registered Jersey cows.

Always a business man, Brian has made moves that enable the Seacords to better care for their cattle. In 2001, a heifer barn was built and four years later a neighboring farm was rented. The herd now numbers 150 milking cows. Forty of the older cows and show cows are housed at the home farm and the balance are at the rented facilities. Newborn calves are raised on the home farm. They are moved to a heifer barn until they are bred and

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### **David and Yvonne VanBuskirk**

David VanBuskirk is an eighth generation Jersey breeder who grew up on his family's sesquicentennial farm in Carleton, Mich., and is now farming in partnership with his parents, Jim and Janet. And while some in this position might be content to reap the rewards of those that came before, this is not in character for David, who chose the return as a second career and has put his heart into improving the herd.

David always liked the cattle and even continued working on the farm while he attended Monroe Community College. But, when the accomplished wrestler was offered a position as assistant coach of the high school varsity wrestling team after college, he jumped at the opportunity. Two years later, he was promoted to head coach and was so well-respected by his peers in the district that he was voted Coach of the Year.

But much as he enjoyed coaching the young men, the job took too much time from his first love—JVB Red Hot Jerseys. So, after nine years of coaching, he returned to the family farm. In 2001, he married Yvonne and the two are raising their sons, Logan, Jacob and Zakary, on the farm that has been in his family since 1835.

David puts as much in the farm as he did in coaching and is equally successful. He is involved in all aspects of herd management, from breeding and embryo transfer decisions to feeding and milking. With heavy dairy-related commitments from his parents off the farm, much of the daily work lies in his realm of responsibility.

He is always looking for a new or more profitable way of dairying. In 2006, the family installed a new Dairy Master swing-10 milking parlor to make it easier and quicker to milk 100 cows.

The 100-cow herd is enrolled on REAP and had a September 2007 rolling herd average of 16,122 lbs. milk, 741 lbs. fat and 609 lbs. protein on 112 lactations. This past December, 105 cows were appraised, with 21 Excellents and 77 Very Goods and an average appraisal of Very Good-85%. JVB Red Hot Jerseys also is a contract advertiser in the *Jersey Journal* and member of Liberty Jersey Sires Inc.

In 2001, the VanBuskirks brought Sunny Day Bold Belinda-ET, Excellent-94%, to the farm in southeast Michigan and soon began to capitalize on the purchase. Demand for genetics from the granddaughter of Sunny Day Yankee Becky has been strong. A choice sired by Sunset Canyon

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## Baldwin

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type and genetics of the herd. The rolling herd average for December 2007 stood at 13,720 lbs. milk, 591 lbs. fat and 489 lbs. protein on 175 cows. With the September 2007 appraisal, the farm is home to 12 Excellent and 135 Very Good cows.

To further develop the farm's merchandising program, Amanda attended an A.I. school in 2000 and gained the skills necessary to breed animals artificially on the farm. She uses JerseyMate to mate the herd and plans to incorporate sexed semen in the breeding program in the future.

Amanda and her parents have sold replacement heifers to dairy producers in California, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas and internationally to El Salvador and Puerto Rico. The family also raises Registered Jersey bulls that it merchandises domestically and internationally.

As a youth, Amanda was a member of the 4-H team that represented the state in dairy judging competitions at World Dairy Expo and the Pennsylvania All American in 1992. As high individual and a member of the North Iredell High School FFA Dairy Judging Team that placed first at the state level, she competed in the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky., the following year.

Amanda was the 1993 North Carolina Jersey Queen and earned her American FFA Degree in 1995.

With an eye for good cattle, Amanda has also had success in selecting top quality show prospects. She and her family have exhibited cattle at local, regional and state shows and garnered their share of blue and purple ribbons. At the 2005 North Carolina State Fair Junior Show, animals bred by Dusty Road Jerseys placed first in the junior heifer calf, junior two-year-old and five-year-old classes. Elmore's Promise Magnum Peggy, Excellent-91%, is a two-time Grand Champion at the Iredell County Fair with more than 17,400 lbs. milk.

Amanda has also been involved off the farm. She is a director for the North Carolina Jersey Breeders Association and is active in church and community.

Though Amanda admits that it is a challenge to maintain a profitable smaller-sized dairy, it has its rewards. Her goal is to continue the family's tradition of milking Registered Jersey cattle at Dusty Road Farm and breed quality replacement heifers and bulls for merchandising.

## Lancaster

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Longevity is a key to developing cow families at Family Hill. Belvidere Saint Hibiscus, Excellent-93%, was the farm's first cow to win the Leading Living Lifetime Production Contest in 2001 (milk and protein). She stayed in the herd until she was 18 years-of-age. Her daughter, Duncan Hibrite of Family Hill, Excellent-93%, won the milk, fat and protein divisions of the contest in 2006 and the milk division in 2005. Like her dam, she is still in the herd at 18 years-of-age.

Family Hill Jerseys milks 68 Excellent and 47 Very Good cows and has an average appraisal of Very Good-89% with the December 2007 appraisal. The REAP herd has a 2007 AJCA lactation average of 17,578 lbs. milk, 831 lbs. fat and 633 lbs. protein on 86 lactations. Family Hill Jerseys is a contract advertiser with the *Jersey Journal*.

Name recognition in the show and production arenas has enabled Family Hill Jerseys to capitalize on merchandising opportunities. The Lancasters have parted with some good ones to ensure buyer satisfaction. The past three years, they have consigned a top-six seller at The All American Jersey Sale—all daughters of "Circus." In 2005, Family Hill Connection Charlotte-ET sold for \$16,500 (high-selling female) and Family Hill Jade Carolina-ET sold for \$10,000 (third-high female). A year later, Family Hill Amedeo Colbi crossed the auction block for \$11,500 and tied as the high-selling female. This past fall, a first-choice sold for \$10,500, the sixth high price for females.

Family Hill Jerseys has placed several bulls in A.I. organizations and is beginning to market its own bulls. Proven sires include Family Hill Avery Signature, JPI -8, and Family Hill Ringmaster, JPI +48.

Ryan and Freynie are active off the farm as well. Ryan was a member of The All American Sale Committee in 2006 and 2007. He was the associate judge for The 2007 All American Junior Jersey Show and the official for the 2006 Maryland State Fair Jersey Show.

Eventually, Ryan and Freynie would like to move off the home farm and establish their own farm. Wherever they are, they are certain they will find success with the Jersey cow.

## Nichols

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the Jerseys were more profitable than the Brown Swiss. They were hardier, faster-maturing and bred back easier, so he sold the Swiss herd.

The Speedwell Jersey herd has a 2007 AJCA lactation average of 18,770 lbs. milk, 865 lbs. fat and 688 lbs. protein on 28 lactations. The herd is enrolled on REAP and a member of New England Jersey Sires Inc. Brian breeds cattle using the Jersey Mtn prefix and is proud to have bred the farm's two highest-appraised cows: Jersey Mtn Flyer Q-Tip, Excellent-90%, and Jersey Mtn Willy Bubblegum, Excellent-90%.

Cows are housed in a 35-cow comfort stall barn and 20-stall free stall barn. The farm is situated on 75 acres, with 35 acres set aside for corn silage production and the balance for pasture, sugaring and timber.

With limited availability of land and little desire for extra debt, Brian's goal for the farm is to remain profitable by diversifying the operation. Last year, Speedwell Farms started a roadside farm stand that sells Jersey beef, pork, eggs and vegetables direct to consumers. Just 10 miles outside of St. Johnsbury in northeast Vermont, demand for locally grown food is strong and will enable the farm to remain profitable at its present size.

Brian currently sits on the boards of the Vermont Milk Company, founded in September 2006, and the Caledonia County Fair. He previously was a director

## Nichols

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for the Independent Dairyman's Association. He is a member of both the Vermont Jersey Breeders Association and the New England Jersey Breeders Association.

Brian operates Speedwell Farms with his children, MacKenzie, Rylie, Dylanie and Kirbie, and his companion, Kim Gammell and her two children, Corey and Erin. The family is active in 4-H and showing Registered Jerseys at local fairs.

## **Ratliff**

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with an average appraisal of Very Good-89%. In her 25 years of work with Jersey cattle, Christy has bred more than 95 cows that have been appraised Excellent-90% or higher.

Among Christy's greatest passions is showing. Her dream is to breed a cow that earns Supreme Champion honors at World Dairy Expo and National Grand Champion laurels at The All American Jersey Show. In her march toward this goal, she was named Premier Breeder of The All American Jersey Show in 2007 and won the same prestigious banner at the Central National Jersey Show in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

In 2006, the Ratliffs exhibited the Reserve Winner of the National Jersey Jug Futurity, Ratliff D Dean Allie-ET, Excellent-93%. Christy returned to the green shavings the following year with the winner of the glamorous class, Ratliff Sambo Martina, Excellent-91%. "Martina" also was named Supreme Futurity Winner of World Dairy Expo in 2007. Christy is a two-time winner of ladies showmanship at the show in Louisville, Ky.

At the farm in east-central Kansas, the high-profile cows are housed in 18 tie-stalls and eight box stalls and the balance of the herd is housed in loose housing. In cold weather, cows are housed in a small lean-to shed; in the summer they are kept in the barn with fans and put out to pasture at night.

Ratliff Jerseys employs an intense flush program in which donor dams are flushed on a weekly basis in the spring, fall and winter. A majority of the embryos are implanted into recipients from the couple's small beef herd. The practice allows the Ratliffs to grow the Jersey herd without giving up the genetics from the current herd.

These bonus calves have been the heart of a merchandising program that has proven very successful in recent years. Twice, Ratliff Jerseys has consigned the top seller at the Top of the World Sale held in conjunction with World Dairy Expo. The couple consigned Ratliff Counciller Jamie to the 2005 sale and Ratliff Sambo Elise to the 2006 sale. Wade Kessenich, De Forest, Wis., was so pleased with his purchase of "Jamie" that he purchased "Elise" in partnership with his sister, Natalie, the following year.

Ratliff Jerseys consigned the high-selling choice at The 2004 All American Jersey Sale. From the group, Cassy Krull, Lake Mills, Wis., chose Ratliff F Prize Kay-ET, who was named Reserve Junior All American Summer Yearling Heifer in 2006 and placed fifth in the junior two-year-old class at The All American Junior Jersey Show in 2007.

Christy works as hard off the farm as she does on it. She currently is president of the Kansas Jersey Cattle Association and sits on the board of the Anderson County Fair.

She has also served on the boards of the Kansas Dairy Association and the Kansas Dairy Commission and on committees for the National Jersey Jug Futurity and The All American Show.

Christy has set high goals for her cows and herself and gives 110% no matter what the task at hand presents.

## **Seacord**

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confirmed pregnant. They are then transferred to the rented facilities where they are freshened and join the milking string.

Seacord Farm milks 150 Registered Jerseys and has a 2007 AJCA lactation average of 17,858 lbs. milk, 850 lbs. fat and 655 lbs. protein. With the latest herd appraisal in October 2007, the farm is home to 29 Excellent and 103 Very Good cows. The herd is enrolled on REAP and a member of New England Jersey Sires, Inc.

## **Seacord**

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With expansion complete and Jersey reproductive efficiency in place, the Seacords are able to merchandise heavily from the herd. For the past several years, Seacord Farm has consigned to the New England Spring Sale and the New York Fall Sale. Longer term, the Seacords plan to lease the farm through 2015 and sell 200 head of milking cows and bred heifers. They will then rebuild on a smaller herd with 30 cows, 10 bred heifers and 60 young stock.

Still in the heart of the young man is the hobby of showing. In 2003, Brian showed Seacord Farm Expo Elaine, Excellent-95%, at The All American Jersey Show, where she placed fifth in the competitive aged cow class and was its best bred and owned animal. In 2006, Seacord Farm Vindication Eve, Very Good-88%, stood first in the junior yearling class at the New York State Fair and returned to the show this past summer as the top junior two-year-old.

Brian has also worked for Jersey Marketing Service, helping to care for and prepare animals for sales and truck animals across the country. The practice has allowed him to travel extensively, see quality cattle and occasionally make a fine foundation purchase.

## **VanBuskirk**

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Maximus-ET, JPI +216, was the fifth high-seller of the all-donation National Heifer Sale in 2005 and brought \$7,700 for the AJCC Research Fund. A year later, another daughter, JVB Red Hot Saber Bebe crossed the auction block for \$6,600 and was the high seller of the 49th edition of the sale.

"Belina" herself has proven the cow family transmits as she ranks fourth on the National Class Leader List for milk production among junior two-year-olds and ninth for cheese yield among cows 5-9 years-of-age.

One of the rewards of dairying and a favorite pastime for the VanBuskirks is exhibiting their Registered Jerseys at local, state and national shows. Recently, JVB Red Hot By Whomly, Excellent-91%, was Supreme Champion of the 2007 Michigan State Fair.

David gives 4-Hers the chance to experience the rewards of showing through a two-month program that makes JVB Red Hot Jerseys available for the county fair. Coaching skills apparent, David helps juniors select a heifer and then learn how to feed, groom, clip and show her at the fair.

It is a goal of David to continue to breed strong, profitable cows at JVB Red Hot Jerseys. He is a willing worker, always ready to lend a hand and do the job well, even when it is behind the scenes.