

Luttropp Family Named Distinguished Cattle Breeder

The Jerry and Phyllis Luttropp family has been named 2023 Distinguished Dairy Cattle Breeder by National Dairy Shrine. The award is given to recognize a progressive dairy breeder who excels in managing their dairy herd based on sound genetic and business principles.

The Luttropps have been operating Lost-Elm Farm in Berlin, Wis., since 1972, when Jerry returned home after serving his country in the Vietnam War. A sergeant in the Army and recipient of the Bronze Star, he and Phyllis founded the dairy herd with Ayrshire heifers purchased from his father and Holstein cows from her father.

They grew the milking string to 70 Holsteins and then added and focused on two other breeds over the next five decades. Brown Swiss came to the farm as 4-H projects for the Luttropp children—Jeff, Jason, and Jodi—and sparked a transition to an all-Brown Swiss herd that became one of the breed's best. The first Jersey came in 2000, a Christmas present for Jason. The Brown Swiss herd was dispersed in 2010, a move that ushered in a transition to Jerseys and the purchase of several key foundation animals.

Jason returned home to Lost Elm in 1996 after attending the Farm Short Course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and working at two other dairies. Today, Jason owns the Jersey herd, which is enrolled on REAP and has a lactation average of 22,468 lbs. milk, 1,098 lbs. fat and 841 lbs. protein on 54 lactations. The measures for milk and protein rank sixth in the nation among herds with 40-79 cows. The herd average final score from the March 2023 appraisal is 90.8% and includes 34 Excellent and 13 Very Good cows (none lower).

The Luttropps built their legacy by connecting with other successful and established herds and making key, strategic purchases as the genetic base of the herd. Their early leap into embryo

transfer and sexed semen enabled them to grow the best-of-their-best and build a successful marketing program. Over the years, they have sent 48 bulls in three breeds to A.I. sampling programs and marketed females through Great



Jerry and Phyllis Luttropp

Northern Land and Cattle Company and Jersey Marketing Service, a handful of reduction sales, and elite consignment sales. Females are also sold in small groups locally and as 4-H projects.

Because each breed has unique needs and opportunities, the Luttropps have shifted their breeding philosophy over the years to accommodate demand. Initially, they focused on developing elite genetics. Now, they are more concerned about advancing show ring type and longevity. Regardless of breed, a continual effort across the decades has been building solid cow families. The Luttropps have owned 106 Excellent Jersey cows, 54 Excellent Brown Swiss cows and 28 Excellent Holstein cows. Many members of the Jersey herd are backed by 10 or more generations of Excellent dams.

Show ring success includes eight Premier Breeder banners, multiple Premier Exhibitor banners, hardware for a variety of champions, and All

American laurels. In 2016, Lost Elm Tequila Petunia was Junior Champion of the All American Jersey Show and the International Jersey Show. In 2019, Hi Poits-Concept Spunky Morgan (6), Excellent-96%, a purchase from the 2018 Minnesota Spring Special Sale, was Grand Champion at the Wisconsin Spring Dairy Showcase Jersey Show. More recently, Lost-Elm Colton Saturn was Honorable Mention Grand Champion of the 2021 Wisconsin Summer Jersey Show and second five-year-old and best bred and owned at the International Jersey Show.

In the sale arena, Lost-Brooke Choice Love Struck was the fourth high selling female of the 2020 All American Jersey Sale. Owned in partnership with Crestbrooke, she sold for \$11,200 to Misty Meadow Dairy of Tillamook, Ore.

Back at home were several other standouts that paid the bills with the milk check—another priority at Lost Elm Farm. In December 2017, K&K Impact Olga, Excellent-90%, became the second Jersey in U.S. history to complete a record over 50,000 lbs. milk and 1,700 lbs. protein. She completed a 365-day record of 52,080 lbs. milk, 1,964 lbs. fat, 1,788 lbs. protein, and 5,622 lbs. cheese yield at 5-0 and graced the cover of the March 2018 issue of the Jersey Journal. Her dam was one of eight foundation purchases from the K&K Jerseys Complete Dispersal in 2011.

In the spotlight this year are a pair of matriarchs that rank among the top 10 in the American Jersey Cattle Association's (AJCA) lifetime production contest: Lost Elm Action Erotica-Twin, Excellent-92%, with 225,650 lbs. milk, 12,438 lbs. fat and 9,176 lbs. protein in 3,502 days and Lost Elm Action Millie-ET, Excellent-92%, with 228,780 lbs. milk, 11,970 lbs. fat and 8,665 lbs. protein in 3,301 days. Both hail from deep cow families. "Erotica's" dam was purchased as an embryo out of Hollylane Rene Esmerelda in the Top of the World Sale

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in 2002. “Millie’s” dam, Underground Imperial Mayme-ET, Excellent-92%, was purchased privately in 2006.

Further back, a notable Holstein is Lost-Elm Rockets Bingo, dam of a pair of sons in A.I. The Brown Swiss matriarch, Lost Elm Prelude Pixy-ET, made the breed’s top milk, fat and protein record in 2008 and is still the reigning milk champion, with 65,430 lbs. milk in 365 days.

Noted Kristin Paul, director of field services for the AJCA, “While the cows are great, the best part of working with Lost-Elm is the people. I have always appreciated the honesty and integrity of their family. Jerry and Jason are thorough, accurate, and fair in everything they do. They are diligent and work hard to achieve and surpass their goals but are also very humble in the process.”

Kevin Jorgensen, senior Holstein sire analyst for Select Sires, adds, “Some of the best breeders take one breed and make that their life’s work. But there are few that can excel at multiple breeds and be at the top of them all. That would describe the Luttrops at Lost-Elm.”

Passion for the dairy industry and Bucky Badger is evident in the educational paths chosen by the Luttropp children. All studied at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Jeff and Jason attended the Farm and Industry Short Course and Jodi studied dairy science and life science communications.

The Luttrops are also active in service to the dairy industry, locally and globally. Jerry is a lifetime 4-H leader and coached the Berlin FFA dairy judging team to a win in the national dairy competition. He has served on the sale committee for the Wisconsin Holstein Association and sat on the board of the Wisconsin Brown Swiss Association. He and Phyllis have served on the town of Aurora board for many years. Phyllis has also volunteered at the Berlin hospital.

The Luttrops were recognized at the Dairy Shrine’s annual awards banquet in October held in Madison, Wis., in conjunction with World Dairy Expo. Their portrait will be displayed in the National Dairy Shrine’s Dairy Hall of Fame and Museum in Fort Atkinson, Wis.