

A Positive Influence — Aaron Horst

The Jersey cow along with its many breeders and the American Jersey Cattle Association's programs have become an increasingly positive part of my life as I reflect on where they have helped me get to today. I have learned everything from the art and science of dairying, to the business of merchandising, and now seeing the tremendous impact of surrounding myself with great people.

Hello, I am Aaron Horst, son of Kevin and Linda Horst. Our family farm, Mi-Rose Jerseys, is located in Chambersburg, (south central Pennsylvania) and is operated by my parents. I have three younger siblings who are all active in 4-H and working with Jerseys. My brother Logan is a sophomore at Penn State and placed 10th in this year's achievement contest. Rachel, the oldest of my two sisters, and will be a sophomore in high school. Hannah will be entering eighth grade.

I grew up with a 60-cow tie-stall herd of Holsteins in Shippensburg, Pa., that my father shared in a partnership. We purchased four Jerseys in the summer of 1993 and enjoyed working with them from the beginning. The winter of 1995-1996, marked our move out on our own to a farm where we milked about 40 head in a tie-stall setup. Jerseys were still a minority in our herd until we purchased two groups of cows from nearby friends, Doug and the late Lester Martin of Pleasant Valley Jerseys in Chambersburg. Once the cows adjusted and got going, it was only a matter of time until they started to take over the herd by breeding back quickly and outlasting our Holsteins.

In May 2000, a nearby farm with the capacity for more cows became available and we moved our herd across the road to where we currently reside. We milk 65 Jerseys and 15 Holsteins in a double-9 flat stanchion parlor and house cows in an 80-cow freestall barn, or on pasture when possible.

Developing high-type cattle has always been our farm's goal and has led to many rewards during my youth career. A few key animals stand out in my mind that I have worked with so far. I had two Jersey projects my first year in 4-H. One was a summer yearling "Regal" daughter out of an Excellent Favorite Saint on the farm. The other was a December "Lester" calf out of a "Berretta" that we bought at our county calf sale from Pleasant Valley Jerseys.

Pleasant Valley Lester Rosa was always temperamental, but had a strong fall showing as she won her class at Harrisburg and won both shows at Louisville, where she received the PA Protein award for her class—something you don't see much in heifer classes. Paul Stiles, Waverly Farm, Clear Brook, Va., purchased her and she became an Excellent cow and produced offspring that are making a name for themselves.

Mi-Rose Regal Frisco eventually scored Excellent and was Grand Champion in the youth show at Harrisburg in 2000. She became my foundation cow and has to date Excellent daughters by "Blackstar" and "Centurion" and an Excellent-93% "Pitino." Her "Grove" son that we used naturally on the farm sired a senior two-year-old that scored Very Good-88% that lactation and was Intermediate Champion of the 2001 Ohio Spring Expo. Her

"Blackstar" daughter was my first homebred All American when she won the Intermediate Calf class at the 2002 All American. She was sold after that, but won her class at Madison the following year.

I enjoy breeding for the ideal cow, but high classification scores and winning shows isn't the end of my goals. I enjoy the challenge of maintaining and improving those aspects of our Jersey program while striving to increase milk production and get the most of each. My father, brother, and I bounce ideas off each other constantly about matings, feeding, and everything else. I've been fortunate to live in a strong Jersey area where I can learn from neighbors and share a fairly common breeding goal.

My first year in 4-H, I decided I wanted to attend dairy judging practices. I went every summer and became more involved when I joined FFA. I had a coach that came from a dairy background and who was determined to maximize our team's potential. Our team placed first at the 2004 National FFA Dairy Judging contest where I was high individual. We raised money to attend an international judging contest in Europe, and it was a trip

that I still value very much today. In 2005, I began my freshman year at Virginia Tech but was able to compete with the Pennsylvania 4-H team and achieved high individual at both Harrisburg and Madison. I continued by judging two years in college and was a member of the third place team at the 2007 National Collegiate contest.

I look forward to my senior year at Virginia Tech where I major in Dairy Science and minor in Agricultural Business. I have served as treasurer and first vice-president of our dairy club and have had a significant role in coordinating and selecting for our Showcase Sale. I participate in all intramurals possible (including bowling) and will serve as this year's editor of the Milky Way.

Through the strong encouragement of professors and advisors at college, I pursued and obtained an internship each of my three summers during college. My first was obviously the most Jersey-oriented as I was named recipient of the Fred Stout Experience and served as an intern for Jersey Marketing Service. I got to travel and more importantly, got a perspective on how breeders across the country farm and how they breed their cows. Last summer, I worked with ABS Global as their East Coast Progeny Promotions intern, and I came back with ABS and worked as a sales and service intern in 2008.

For a career, I believe working in the A.I. industry fits my talents and what I enjoy. I also plan to continue breeding and marketing the best Jersey cow I can.

Thank you to my family, particularly my parents, for making the sacrifices at home while I showed, judged, and attend college. Everything has been very rewarding. Also, thanks to everyone who supports Jersey Youth Programs and gives me and so many others the opportunities to succeed with our breed.

