

Craig Rhein

Craig Rhein, Pine Grove, Pa., is the 67th recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of 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 their opinion, 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.

Craig Rhein has accepted each and every call to serve the national Jersey organizations, summed Herby D. Lutz, Chester, S.C., in a letter of recommendation. "He has been a true supporter of all things Jersey, tirelessly working for the betterment of the cow and her owners."

Rhein owns and operates Meadow View Jerseys with his brother, Terry, and mother, Dawn. The Rheins milk 126 cows and raise replacements on a farm that was initially purchased by Craig's grandfather, Uriah, around 1915. The Rheins also farm 300 acres of owned and 400 acres of rented land, growing all the feed needs for the herd and selling excess as cash crops.

Craig has been managing and breeding cattle longer than most his age. When he was 14 years-of-age, he took a week off school to attend an artificial insemination program, so he could assume ownership of the breeding program at Meadow View. Seven years later, when his father, Emmitt, became ill, Craig shouldered many of the herd management duties and was at the helm when he passed away three years later in 1981.

Born with Jersey blood and equipped with leadership skills, it was natural for Craig to begin serving the industry he knew inherently. The *Jersey Journal* article that introduced him as a recipient of the AJCC Young Jersey Breeder Award in 1994 was aptly entitled, "Pennsylvania Leader Craig Rhein."

Rhein's service resume to the Jersey industry includes AJCA Director from the Third District for two terms beginning in 2003 and member of the organization's Type Advisory Committee from 2009-2014. He is a former president and director of the Pennsylvania Jersey Cattle Association and



past president and director of Liberty Jersey Sires Inc.

Rhein's most significant service contributions, however, are tied to the sale ring, where his passion for the Jersey cow, work ethic and leadership skills have come together to advance the Jersey breed.

Rhein got his feet wet with sales in the mid-1970s as a member of the crew for the Pennsylvania State Jersey Sale. He joined the sale committee in 1978 and was then elected chair in 1981, a position he held for 10 years.

In 1985, when Pennsylvania hosted the AJCA-NAJ Annual Meetings in Lancaster, Craig stepped up to the plate to co-chair the National Heifer Sale with fellow Pennsylvania breeder Donald Kootz of Fredonia.

When his home state volunteered to host the annual meetings of the national Jersey organizations in 2005, Rhein again signed up to chair the National Heifer Sale. But, this sale he had his hands full as this sale was a little different than the 47 that had preceded it. Each heifer consigned was an outright gift, with 10% contributed to Jersey youth funds and the balance to the AJCC Research Foundation.

Getting people to part with something and not pocket a dime was difficult enough. Getting them to do so with

their very best—a requirement to raise the funds that were expected for this cause—seemed downright impossible. Craig embraced the challenge. He talked the talk and walked the walk with an early pledge from the top of his herd, a granddaughter of world fat champion, Golden MBSB of Twin Haven. He challenged other Jersey breeders across the country to do the same. He wasn't afraid to call people and ask for their best, to support a cause he believed in.

By January 2005, a full five months from the event, nearly 40 heifers had been pledged. On June 25, 2005, history was made at the Washington County Fairgrounds as 95 lots were auctioned for a record gross of \$309,900 and an average of \$3,262.11. An additional \$100,000 was raised in cash donations and the sale of Jersey collectibles and memorabilia, bringing the total of the day to \$412,000.

Fittingly, it was the heifer consigned by Rhein, MVF Paramount Golda 1218-ET, that topped the sale, purchased as choice of all heifers in the barn that day, by the Golden River Syndicate of Seymour, Wis., for \$14,100.

"When Pennsylvania was gearing up for the 2017 meetings of the national Jersey organizations, it was no surprise that one of the first calls I received was from Craig, volunteering to chair the National Heifer Sale," said David Norman, Liberty, Pa., who co-chairs this year's AJCA-NAJ meetings with his wife, Aggie.

Craig also chaired the 2007 All American Jersey Sale, which stands as the high-grossing sale of the series, with a gross of \$579,625 and an average of \$5,317.66 on the sale of 109 lots. Two years later, he served as general chair of The All American.

Rhein and his family have worked with Jersey Marketing Service (JMS) to host several Registered Jersey sales at the farm as well. In August 1999, the family hosted the first Summer Splash at Meadow View to capitalize on a two-month lull in Jersey auctions. The high seller, MVF Barber Sooner J 484, sold for \$16,000 to Kulp Genetics, Manheim, Pa., pacing the sale to an average of \$2,311.21 on 56 lots. Subsequent editions of the invitational sale were held at the farm over the next four

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years as well.

Rhein worked with JMS again in 2013 in a production sale to downsize the Meadow View herd. With a standing-room-only crowd, 235 lots crossed the auction block for an average of \$1,320.21 and a gross of \$310,250. The high seller, MVF Jupiter Gem 2066, sold for \$10,900 to Sexing Technologies, San Antonio, Texas.

The following year, Rhein collaborated with JMS once again to host the Mid-Atlantic Fall Classic at Meadow View farm in September.

“Craig saw the need for a large volume sale in the northeast, contacted JMS and organized an event that has been very successful,” noted Norman. “He offers his facilities, supplies feed and does a lot of the work himself, making it a low-cost, low-commission sale for consignors.”

Over the past three years, more than 830 lots of Registered Jerseys have been sold through the venue, with gross receipts over \$1.3 million.

The passion that drives his service to the brown cow, is the same passion that powers his success in breeding Registered Jerseys using the MVF prefix.

“Craig is a true breeder who has developed several deep cow families and helped direct the progress of the breed with his passion for profitable genetics that people respect and value,” wrote Lutz.

“I recall many conversations with Craig when he would ask, ‘Where does the Jersey cow need to be improved and how do we make her more marketable to producers owning other breeds,’” wrote Angie D. Coburn, vice president of DHI operations, AgSource Cooperative Services/CRI. “Whether one agrees with his response or not, these conversations are always thought-provoking, sometimes challenging and always entertaining.”

Rhein has supported Jersey sales on the buying end too, with a mindset of finding solidly-bred genetics that can be developed and merchandised. The farm’s purchase from the 1982 Pennsylvania State Jersey Sale, Ogston Greats Desire, is the third dam of MVF Bold Venture Daniel, GJPI +1, the breed’s former #1 milk bull, with more than 8,600 daughters in his proof. The high seller of the 2001 National Heifer Sale, MVF Bold Daniel Sooner J 769-ET, is a “Bold” daughter out of Elmview Sooner J, a purchase from the 1991 Top of the Harvest Sale, another sale sponsored by the Pennsylvania Jersey Cattle Association.

His keen eye for foundation-type genetics also yielded cows like Ferreira Daniel Golda-ET, dam of the previously mentioned 2005 National Heifer Sale consignment;

Wilderness Jace Lotto, dam of the popular sire MVF Jevon Lotto-ET, GJPI +72; and Wolf River Daniel Marigold-ET, fourth dam of the high seller of the 2011 Pot O’Gold Sale, MVF Lotto Marigold 1784, a “Lotto” daughter purchased by Doré Baker of Wyoming, N.Y. for \$11,000.

Meadow View Farm has supported breed improvement programs for nearly as long Jerseys have been milked. The herd was the first in Schuylkill County to enroll on official DHI test in 1933 and has contributed to Project Equity for more than three decades. Meadow View Farm is the second longest-running supplier of milk for Guers Dairy, a fluid milk company in Pottsdam, N.Y., that exhibited the champion chocolate milk at World Dairy Expo in 2008.

Jerseys first came to the place in the 1920s at the urging of Craig’s uncle, Merrit, who spoke of their “better feed conversion” benefits to Uriah. The Meadow View herd has a 2016 lactation average of 21,253 lbs. milk, 929 lbs. fat and 729 lbs. protein and ranks among the top 25% for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +50. More than 40% of the milking string is genotyped.

Cows are milked in a double-10, rapid-exit parlor and housed in a freestall barn on the original 85-acre farm. Newborn and bottle calves are raised in individual pens in a calf barn on the original farm as well. Heifers are raised in facilities on another 150-acre tract of land purchased in 1956. A 50-acre acquisition in 1978 joined the two parcels. An additional 100 acres have been purchased over the past 40 years.

For his efforts to guide, direct, promote, inspire and lead the Jersey association to the pinnacle of envy for all other cattle associations, Craig Rhein is more than deserving of the AJCA Distinguished Service Award, noted Lutz.

Coburn summed it another way, “It is ultimately his selfless passion that leads me to endorse Craig Rhein for this award. When a person achieves success without recognition as a goal, it is fitting that we provide tribute to his accomplishments.”

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, Ill., 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*
2013	James Ahlem, Hilmar, Calif.
2014	Glen and Marilyn Easter, Laurens, S.C.
2015	George and Shirley Barlass, Janesville, Wis.
2016	Charles D. “Chuck” Ahlem, Hilmar, Calif.
2017	Craig Rhein, Pine Grove, Pa.

* deceased

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