

Jersey: Always In Her Heart — *Renée Norman*

The Jersey cow has been a significant part in my life – leading me towards a career, bringing me recognition, fulfilling my dreams, and setting goals for my future. Through my Jersey experiences, I have gained many life skills: learning patience on the end of a stubborn Jersey calf’s halter, facing disappointment, and acquiring business skills through merchandising and showing cattle. I have also met many wonderful people, through 4-H and Jersey activities, and had lots of fun along the way.

Hello, I am Renée Norman, the daughter of David and Aggie Norman. Our family farm, Normandell Jerseys is located in north central Pennsylvania in a town called Liberty. It is owned and operated by my father, David and uncle, Ernest. My two older siblings, Mark and Emily, were active in 4-H, Pennsylvania Jersey Achievement winners, and showed in the National Junior Jersey Show. Today, Mark is a music teacher and Emily is a registered nurse.

My heritage with the Jersey cow began a century ago with my great-grandfather, Albert. The Normandell farm dates back to 1904 when Albert bought the farm and the first Jerseys, allowing the first Norman Brothers partnership to begin with my grandpa, Howard, and great-uncle, Claud. In the early 1980s the current partnership was created.

Growing up we milked in a 54-cow tie-stall barn. Six years ago, we expanded by building a parlor and free-stall operation to house the 110 milking head. It was in these two different atmospheres that I developed my passion for the Jersey breed while learning to care for our animals, read production records and pedigrees, train my show animals to lead, and countless other skills.

One of my earliest memories is from when I was just three-years-old and I put my claim on my first cow. Since my older cousins and siblings all had their own animals, I felt it was time for me to have mine. I remember sitting by her stall, petting her, talking with her, and sneaking her a little extra grain. It just happened that her name was “Renée” and since we shared the common name I believed that she was mine. Renée was sold and I was heartbroken, but I soon found a replacement and called her “Renée,” though her name was Colleen. Both of these cows were very gentle and loved my attention.

I began showing at the county fair at the age of six. Somehow this little girl convinced or rather begged her parents to allow her to show a calf like the rest of the children on our farm. I loved having the responsibility of having my own calf and I had a reason to help at the fair.

I was turning eight and eligible to join 4-H when the farm purchased my first heifer at the Pennsylvania Pot of Gold Sale. “Karmel Kreme” was too big for me to show that first year and I remember the early spring day that my Dad, Uncle Ernest, and I walked around the barn and picked out the intermediate calf sired by Highland Duncan Lester. The calf was a descendent of my Dad’s favorite show cow and I named the calf “Charm,” the same

name as my father’s original cow. She became my first Junior Champion, first Grand Champion, first Excellent-90% cow, first foundation cow, and at 13-years-old, my longest-lived cow.

My most elite foundation family began with Normandell Klassic Adel, Very Good-88%. “Adel” has produced over 25 offspring and is the dam of Normandell Fanclub April. Together this dam and daughter pair has had several listings among the top 300 cows in



Renée Norman the 2006 National Jersey Youth Achievement Winner takes a moment out of her busy schedule to reflect on her Jersey accomplishments with Normandell Fanclub April, Excellent-91%. “April” ranks among the Top 1½% list and has an average fat test of 6.2% on three lactations.

the breed and the Top 1½% List with three additional offspring that have followed in these lists. “April” is appraised Excellent 91% and has received Grand Champion honors, two bull contracts, and made outstanding production records.

I have truly been blessed by my Jersey herd and currently own 30 Registered Jerseys. Of these 30 animals, 27 are bred and owned, six are scored Excellent, 19 are scored Very Good, and five cows are listed on the Top 1½% List.

The many youth activities of the Pennsylvania and American Jersey Cattle Associations (AJCA) have offered me experiences, knowledge, and recognition. I have had success in the Pennsylvania Pot of Gold and Youth Production

Contests, received the Pennsylvania Junior and Senior Achievement Award, and was crowned Pennsylvania Jersey Queen.

On the national level, I have participated in many AJCA youth events. In 1995, my team placed third in the Mock Auction and I was on the winning Jersey Quiz Bowl team in California. I also showed in the National Junior Jersey Show with Normandell Mason Dulcimer in 2003 and 2005 and placed ninth in the National Pot O’Gold Sale with Wilderness Barkly Ardor last year.

While my journey with the Jersey breed has been exciting and challenging, it is not finished, it is just beginning. My experiences have led me to study Animal Sciences at Penn State University, where I have been very active in the dairy science club. I have served as Editor of the *Dairyman*, chaired the 2006 OsteoChallenge, and was elected to the American Dairy Science Association-Student Affiliate Division officer team two consecutive years. I have had the opportunity to travel with our club to Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Colorado, and New Zealand to observe dairy practices and Jersey farms. The past two summers, I have completed internships with Select Sires, Inc., as the Corporate Communications Intern and with AgChoice Farm Credit in my local region. I will graduate next May and am looking forward to finding a career in the dairy industry to gain experience, and then I plan to return home to our family farm.

I would like to express thanks to all that have helped me become who I am and achieve what I have. Thank you to all Jersey breeders and more specifically the Pennsylvania Jersey breeders for their continued support in the Jersey youth programs. Also, thank you to each member of my family for their leadership, nourishment, and love. And finally to the individuals who are the true reason I have had the opportunity to write this story—my parents, Grandpa Norman, and Uncle Ernest. It is with your help that I truly appreciate the Jersey cow and our family farm.