

Don and Desi Josi

Don and Desi Josi, Tillamook, Ore., have been named 77th recipients of the Master Breeder Award of the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA).

The Master Breeder Award is bestowed annually to a living AJCA member, family, partnership or corporation that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has bred outstanding animals for many years and thereby made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.

Don and Desi Josi have been breeding Registered Jerseys at Wilsonview Dairy in Tillamook for more than four decades. Visitors worldwide have been wowed by the depth of this herd, developed with the unwavering belief that quality milk in quantity pays the bills.

Starting with a nucleus of inherited cattle and a few key purchases, Don and Desi have built the herd with genetic selection that borders on obsession, uncompromised cow and calf care and effective use of herd management tools, new and tried—and-true alike.

“The herd and animals that have flown from the Wilsonview coop have Master Breeder written all over them,” said Russell G. Gammon, Jersey Program Manager for Semex, who has worked with the Josis for more than 30 years to secure sires for various A.I. organizations. For Jersey aficionados, a pasture walk at Wilsonview is like being a kid in a candy store, noted Gammon. They are not just productive cows, but also a delight for the eyes.

Among the long-time users of Wilsonview genetics is Robert Moss, Desert Park Jerseys, Jefferson, Ore., who walks the pastures at the farm every chance he gets and leaves glad for having done so. “I remember helping Dad pick a bull to mate my only cow when I was around 15. We decided on Wilsonview Khan Morgan-ET. That was the first of many times I would choose a bull with the Wilsonview prefix as a mating sire for my favorite and best cows.”

This influential Jersey sire, commonly known as “Mor,” is one of 45-plus bulls to

be placed in A.I. by the Josis over the years. From the most prominent cow family at Wilsonview, he traces to Quicksilver Many Merrit, with well over 400 direct descendants spanning 15 generations of grazers at the farm in Tillamook. If descendants of females sold to other breeders are included in this count, offspring from “Merrit” number more than 2,300 animals.



Moss is one of the “other breeders” who jumped at the chance to add a female from the “M” cow family to the herd at Desert Park. Purchased as a heifer calf in 2009, Wilsonview Jimmie Maley, Very Good-86%, had four progeny by natural birth and gave more than 20,000 lbs. milk in her second lactation. A daughter, DP Premier Mannor 1374, is helping Moss establish his career as a genetic supplier too, with two sons in A.I.

To date, more than 275 bulls from the “M” family have been registered with the AJCA. Along with “Mor” are Wilsonview Legend Merit, Wilsonview Avery Max-ET and the breed’s former #1 Active A.I. bull, Wilsonview Jevon Magnum-ET. Some 20 genetic evaluations since he last topped the list in August 2013, “Magnum” still ranks on the list with a GJPI of +84 and continues to be used by breeders looking to improve fat yield. Among the 7,109 daughters in his proof is Highview Magnum 4114, winner of the 2016 President’s Trophy with 1,784 lbs. protein.

Longevity is another hallmark of Wilsonview-bred bulls. Welcome View Morgan Vesta, an Excellent-91% “Mor” daughter, ranked second for fat and protein in the most recent AJCA Leading Living Lifetime Production Contest with 255,576 lbs. milk 14,738 lbs. fat and 10,124 lbs. protein in 3,815 days. Valtallina Marino Fancy, SUP-EX 90-4E (CAN), daughter of another “M” family bull, Wilsonview Brook Marino, topped the fat division of the 2009 lifetime production contest in Canada and wound up her career with more than 11,860 lbs. fat in 12 lactations.

Another family of impact developed by Don and Desi is the “S” cow family, which traces to Coehlos Sooner Sadie, purchased from the Pride of the West Sale in 1991. With close to 800 direct offspring, this cow family is another leading genetic transmitter. Her lineage can be traced as far back as 1887.

Standouts from the “S” family are Wilsonview Al Sahara, the breed’s former #1 genotyped female, and JX Wilsonview Soprano {4}, a former top-10 Active A.I. sire. A pair that made headlines at the 2012 All American Jersey Sale are Wilsonview Z Shoshonie-ET, purchased by River Valley Farm, Tremont, Ill., for \$19,500 (second high female) and JX Wilsonview Syrious {4}-ET, a young bull syndicated in cooperation with Semex. More recently, JX Wilsonview Vice Skylit {6}-ET sold to Jerseyland Sires, Turlock, Calif., in the 2018 sale as the sixth high-selling female. Her full brother, Wilsonview Skyman {6}-ET, ranks on the current list of G-code bulls with a GJPI of +107.

With farming in his blood, it was a natural choice for Don to return home to dairy with his father and brother in 1975 after he earned his animal science degree from Oregon State University. This trio was following in the footsteps of the family patriarch, Alfred, an indentured servant who emigrated from Switzerland in 1912 and began leasing the original farmstead in

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1918. When Don joined the operation, the farm consisted of 60 acres and a 65-cow herd of Guernseys, Holsteins and Jerseys.

In the fall of 1977, Don made a pair of pivotal decisions in a short, two-week period that would positively impact the rest of his life. First, he purchased "Merrit," from the Western National Jersey Sale with Desi. Twelve days later, he married his sweetheart to establish a partnership that would successfully raise three children and establish a Jersey operation that now includes the youngest of the bunch, Derrick and his wife, Kaycee, recipients of this year's AJCA Young Jersey Breeder Award.

The herd makeup and business structure of Wilsonview Dairy has changed over the years, depending on the parties involved. The dairy was incorporated in 1982. When Don and Desi bought out his brother and sister-in-law, Bill and Linda, in 2008, the Guernseys left. When son, D. J., struck out on his own a few years later, the Holsteins left.

Today, the herd is fully-Jersey and the farm encompasses 450 acres. Wilsonview Dairy has a 2019 lactation average (m.e.) of 19,916 lbs. milk, 919 lbs. fat and 693 lbs. protein on 464 cows. It ranks #14 in the nation for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +38 (April 2020). Don and Desi have been using AJCA performance programs since the 1970s, enrolling the herd on REAP in 1996. Wilsonview Dairy is a contract advertiser with the *Jersey Journal* and maintains a website on JerseySites.

The family has extensively renovated the farm over the past 15 years to improve manure management, reduce labor and move milking facilities out of the flood plain. Heifers are raised in a calf barn built in 2010, initially in individual pens and then group pens. Cows are milked in a double-12 herringbone parlor. All feed but alfalfa is grown on the farm. Crops are custom planted and harvested to enable the Josis to put up higher-quality feed and spend more time managing cows.

Though the Josis have used programs and technologies available to virtually every dairy farmer, the tenacity with which they use sound fundamental practices is admirable, noted Richard "Dick" Smith, a Jersey sire analyst with ABS Global and recipient of the 2014 AJCA-NAJ Award for Meritorious Service.

"The Josi commitment to registration, performance testing and appraisal is not a casual thing," Smith commented. Calves are registered within days of birth and almost always genotyped. Cows have been on official test from the onset, are appraised on schedule and managed effectively, giving

them opportunity to express true performance over the long haul.

The process to choose service sires for these ladies is sacred. Bulls are initially screened with BullsEye, then further scrutinized for pedigree merit by the team. "This intense and precise sire selection is key to the growing impact of Wilsonview genetics," Smith noted. "Don is 'The Mad Mater' and there is absolutely no doubt he is making wise decisions."

Don and Desi have acted on the belief that reliable sire summaries come from loads of performance data and accurate parentage identification. For four decades they have put their money where their mouth is by contributing information from their herd to the U.S. genetic evaluation system. And because they use these tools themselves, they want a young bull's poorest-performing daughters to contribute as much to his proof as his highest-performing daughters.

This stance proved the genetic worth of one of their own. Though "Magnum's" early genomic evaluations were good, they did not fetch him superstar status as a G-code bull. It was only when daughters began contributing information to his proof that he shot to the top of the charts, validating his transmitting ability.

"From the perspective of an A.I. sire analyst, all of these intensely managed processes have no impact on other herds unless and until there is a successful marketing program," Smith remarked. "At Wilsonview, marketing is not bragging. Rather, it is prompt, cordial and accurate communication to meet the needs of potential customers. Desi Josi operates one of the best 'customer service departments' I have ever had pleasure with which to be involved."

This integrity is appreciated by other Jersey breeders as well. In their letter of recommendation, Tom and Jennie Seals, Legendairy Farms LLC, Beaver, Ore., wrote, "Don and Desi are two of the hardest-working and most honest people we know. They volunteer their time freely to their community and can always be counted on to go the extra mile when needed."

Don and Desi have been 4-H leaders for 42 years and make Jersey heifers available for youth from across Oregon to show every summer. Don has also traveled across the U.S. and internationally to judge dairy cattle shows.

The Josi family is also very involved with the creamery to which they have been selling their milk for more than a century—Tillamook County Creamery, producer of award-winning cheese and other dairy products. Don was a director for many years, an act of service now done by Derrick.

Though they may be winding down their career, something tells me that "the best is yet to be" for the Josi family and the Wilsonview herd, Gammon noted. With two rising generations of family bolstering their already hyper-successful efforts, Don and Desi have set the stage to realize their finest hours as Jersey breeders.

Don and Desi and Derrick and Kaycee will be officially recognized at an upcoming event due to cancellation of this year's recognition banquets held with the annual meetings of the national Jersey organizations, previously scheduled for this summer in Portland, Ore. Oregon Jersey breeders will now host the 2022 AJCA-National All-Jersey Inc. Annual Meetings in Portland.

Master Breeders

1944	William MacPherson, Thomasville, Ga.*
1945	W. R. Kenan, Jr., Lockport, N.Y.*
1946	George W. Sisson, Jr., Potsdam, N.Y.*
1947	E. S. Brigham, St. Albans, Vt.*
1948	Guy Miller, Modesto, Calif.*
1949	Dr. Howard D. Odum, Chapel Hill, N.C.*
1950	Judge J. G. Adams, Asheville, N.C.*
1951	N. M. Tibbles, Independence, Ore.*
1952	Frank W. Barber, Fayetteville, Tenn.*
1953	Herman F. Heep, Buda, Texas*
1954	Dale Dean, Ridgeway, Mich.*
1955	Maurice Pollak, Lincroft, N.J.*
1956	J. L. Hutcheson, Jr., Rossville, Ga.*
1957	John R. Sibley, Spencer, Mass.*
1958	J. Chester Elliff, Tulia, Texas*
1959	A. W. Sweet, Sixes, Ore.*
1960	Col. H. G. Wilde, Lenox, Mass.*
1961	C. Edward Knolle, Sandia, Texas*
1962	Russel Hoar, Newark, Ohio*
1963	William Ross Proctor, Pittstown, N.J.*
1964	Clifton F. Russell, Rossville, Ga.*
1965	Chester Folck, Springfield, Ohio*
1966	C. Scott Mayfield, Athens, Tenn.*
1967	E. E. Greenough, Merced, Calif.*
1968	Henry Uihlein, Lake Placid, N.Y.*
1969	Charles S. Kelly, Hudson, Wis.*
1970	H. Fowler Hupman, Springfield, Ohio*
1971	Milton Humbird, Cleveland, Tenn.*
1972	Willis Rupert, New Waterford, Ohio*
1973	Earl Hutchinson, Tunbridge, Vt.*
1974	Antone J. Regli, Ferndale, Calif.*
1975	Mrs. Diana Ryan, Newport, R.I.*
1976	James and Georgia Pappas, Modesto, Calif.*
1977	Mrs. H. G. Wilde, Lenox, Mass.*
1978	Henry W. Black, West Baldwin, Maine*
1979	John Bishop VI, Columbus, N.J.*
1980	Mrs. A. G. Rankin* and Sons, Faunsdale, Ala.
1981	W. L. Payton, Stephenville, Texas*
1982	Curtis Hobson, Athens, Tenn.*
1983	Stanley N. Chittenden, New Lebanon, N.Y.*
1984	Walter H.* and Joan Brown, Hughson, Calif.
1985	Newell Mills, Fallon, Nev.*
1986	John R. Owen, Lewisburg, Tenn.*
1987	Robert S. Pike* and Family, Cornish, Maine
1988	Ray Chamberlain, Wyoming, N.Y.*
1989	Ralph* and Betty Reichert, Riley, Kans.
1990	Stanley K. Bansen, Dayton, Ore.*
1991	Henry P. Knolle, Sandia, Texas*
1992	Phil V. Fanelli, Hilmar, Calif.*
1993	Dr. J. J. Malnati, Newberry, S.C.*
1994	Walter* and Sally Goodrich, West Danville, Vt.
1995	Edward*, Harold, and Donald* Wright, White River Junction, Vt.
1996	Elmer D. Larson, Roy, Wash.*
1997	Albert Bradford, Turner, Maine*
1998	Robert Stiles Family, Clear Brook, Va.
1999	Robert and Barbara Howard, Tillamook, Ore.*
2000	Charles L. Lutz, Newton, N.C.*
2001	Duane Kuhlman, Snohomish, Wash.
2002	Duane Wickstrom, Hilmar, Calif.
2003	James Chaney, Bowling Green, Ky.*
2004	Charles J. Steer, Cottage Grove, Tenn.
2005	William G. Mason Family, Buhl, Idaho*
2006	Aaron F. Richards, Farmington, Utah*
2007	Robert Bignami, Orland, Calif. and Harlan Askeland*, Orland, Calif.
2008	James S. Huffard III, Crockett, Va.
2009	Ahlem Farms Partnership and Ed Fisher*, Hilmar, Calif.
2010	Donald* and Elsa Sherman, Hilmar, Calif.
2011	Dan Bansen, Dayton, Ore.
2012	Dutch Hollow Farms, Schodack Landing, N.Y.
2013	Bearl and Joanne Seals, Cloverdale, Ore.

2014 Silver Spring Farm, Syracuse, N.Y.
2015 Lyon Jerseys LLC, Toledo, Iowa
2016 Eric Leonard Silva, Beaver, Ore.
2017 David Allen, Reedsburg, Wis.
2018 Ron and Christy Ratliff, Garnett, Kan.
2019 Wilfred, Walter, and Roger Owens, Frederic, Wis.
2020 Don and Desi Josi, Tillamook, Ore.
** deceased*