2015 Great Australian Challenge
GRAND CHAMPION

Loxleigh Badger Iris 4 EX94

bred by Geoff and Natalie Akers
Loxleigh Jerseys
Tallygaroopna, Vic.
For great fertility!

SIRING OUTSTANDING UDDERS AND IMPROVING DAUGHTER FERTILITY

DETOUR 7JE05022 River Valley CDixie Detour
NITRO X CRITC-P X RESTORE
- NITRO SON FROM THE HEART OF RIVER VALLEY
- IMPRESSIVE SHALLOW UDDERS WITH HIGH MILK
- IMPROVES DAUGHTER FERTILITY

APOLLO 7JE01404 Heartland Pharaoh Apollo-ET
PHAROAH X ABE X ACTION
- IMPROVES COMPONENTS & DAUGHTER FERTILITY
- BIG FRAMED COWS WITH STRENGTH
- WELL ATTACHED SHALLOW UDDERS

Apollo’s dam: Heartland Abe Avalanche, EX 91

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Our front cover shows the the 2015 Great Australian Jersey Challenge grand champion, Loxleigh Badger Iris 4. Following the announcement of the results of the 2015 challenge in May this year, the winners are expected to attract international attention with the rising world profile of Jersey Australia's innovative on-farm competition.

The 2015 grand champion Loxleigh Badger Iris 4 is a seven-year-old born in autumn 2009. She is classified at Excellent 94. She was bred by Geoff and Natalie Akers at their Loxleigh Jerseys stud at Tallygaroopna near Shepparton in northern Victoria.

See the full round-up from the Challenge on page 8...

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From the Front Desk...

This is my second column for the Jersey Journal and I’m having a ball.

Each time your General Manager understands one element of the business another one becomes uncovered; Jersey Australia is more complex than I first imagined.

You have a very committed, hard working team at Jersey Australia. The business was without a General Manager for three months (December-March) and then another key member of staff moved onto new pastures in April meaning we are still one staff member down. Many members will have worked with Christina over the phone on Classification, Genomics and some registration work. We wish her well in her new marketing and sales job.

The team are doing their best to reduce the backlog and we have brought in two part-time / temporary staff to keep our service standards acceptable until a new staff member is recruited.

Since the last column I and sixty others were at the Jersey Australia conference, gala dinner and AGM in South Australia. The program is reported elsewhere in the Journal but for me the highlights were meeting so many committed members and the “mateship”. If you’ve never been to one put it on your bucket list – they’re excellent!

I also have been the Jersey Tasmania AGM in Ulverstone and their Chairman, Max McCormack gave a distinguished service award to Peter McCullogh. As I am writing this I’m hearing some terrible stories from N.W Tasmania of flooded farms and drowned stock. Two members I know are affected are Anne and Geoff Heazlewood whose farm skirts the banks of the Mersey River. Our thoughts are with them and others in a similar situation.

Later in the year I will be off to Numurkah for the AGM there and then to Brisbane in August for EKKA the Agriculture Show in S Queensland.

The main work in the office at the moment is registering 1500 heifers (approx) that are off to China and organising Classification tours across five states.

At the last Board meeting we welcome two new Board members, Jane Sykes from Tasmania and Alan Carson from Western Victoria. At the AGM we said goodbye to Rohan Sprint who has been our most recent Treasurer. He received a Distinguished Service Award for his contribution to the breed.

We will be running our photo competition in the Spring and now might be a good time to plan that perfect photo or take one on a crisp winter’s morning to enter with later when the competition opens.
JERSEY-FED pork was an example of value-adding witnessed by delegates to the Jersey Australia annual conference, hosted by South Australia branch last month.

Conference attendees visited Michael Wohlstadt’s Barossa Heritage jerseys and pork. The 20 cow-herd provides milk for artisan butter and buttermilk, with the skim milk going to the farm’s pigs. Traditional breeds such as Tamworths and Saddlebacks offer pork and bacon fit for the table of the SA governor.

The theme of the Nuriootpa conference – the 75th anniversary event – was adding value, explained Jersey Australia general manager Mike Weise.

“The idea was to bring new concepts to our members – different ways of boosting margin returns from their businesses,” he said.

Among the other farm visits was a stop-off at Gully Gardens, which processes its dried fruit into high-value confectionery. Another visit saw how Nitschke’s, the local chaff mill, had diversified into a freight company, garnering opportunities for transporting back loads.

A highlight of the farm tours was a visit to the Kernich farm featuring Carcoola Jerseys. The family has established a successful home-bottling businesses, marketed as Jersey Fresh milk products. “We looked at their Jersey milk production and pasteuriser/bottling plant,” said Mr Weise. “They have done very well creating a milk supply and sales system.” (see page 24 for the full story).

continued on page 6...

SA conference highlights value-added opportunities

BUSHLEA IRWIN CIRCUS – Ticks all the boxes

- Production - 26 litres - 1st test top milk heifer
- Classification - 88pts (max)
- Showring - 1st Jnr 2 Gippsland Fair
- Temperament and milking speed 10/10
- Reproduction - daughter by Visionman
- Genomics - Contract mated to Notepad (Semex)
- Pedigree depth -
  dam: Bushlea Action Circus EX90
  2nd dam: Pleasant Nook Prize Circus EX97
  3rd dam: Family Hill Brook Citrus EX91

Keith & Pat Kuhne (03) 5664 2235 – bushlea@active8.net.au
Wayne & Lisa Kuhne 0438 088 660 – bushleafarms@bigpond.com

Follow BUSHLEA FARMS on facebook
The tour also included a visit to the Roseworthy Veterinary College, Andrew and Angela Koch’s Ashtaney Jerseys at Moculta and the Krieg family farm, where the milk is used from the Skyvale Jerseys to rear premium-quality calves for Newkree farm-direct veal.

The conference also included the awards night dinner which saw Peter Ness receiving life membership for his outstanding service to the breed. Former President dTrevoeur Sunders described how Peter had provided unstinting and tireless support for Jersey Australia and the breed across our Continent and Internationally.

A distinguished service award was presented to former Jersey Australia director and Treasurer Rohan Sprunt.

Three sets of awards were presented during the evening, a set of Member Awards, the Annual Production Awards and culminating in the crowning the grand champion of the Great Australian Challenge: Loxleigh Bader Iris 4 owner by the Akers family from Tallygaroopna in Northern Victoria.

Other winners were:

2 YEAR OLD

Winner – Rivendell Celebrity Robina
 – S & H Menzies

Reserve – Dornoch Astound 440
 – D & I Parish
3 YEAR OLD

Winner – Mikandan Vanahlems Ilagay 2184
 – T & B Edwards

Reserve – Ingalala Vanahlem Romance 806 – Johnston Bros
4 YEAR OLD

Winner – Mikandan Tbones Marie 2175
 – T & B Edwards

Reserve – Fairdale Adriannas Maximum Maggie 786 – S & R Mathers

5 YEAR OLD

Winner – Loxleigh Resurrection Peace
 – Akers Family

Reserve – Rivendell Sambo Halle
 – S & H Menzies

MATURE

Winner – Loxleigh Badger Iris 4
 – Akers Family

Reserve – Brunchilli JS Eileen
 – S & S Paulger

Production awards were presented as well as certificates for members using use six or more Jersey Australia services (to be listed in the next Journal.

Production awards are given to producers who herd test and can verify their herd averages for Butterfat and Protein. Bronze winners need to produce over 420 kg of fat and protein, Silver over 460 kg, Gold over 500kg and Platinum over 540kG.

The winners were:

Bronze

• Producing 450kg per cow
C & J Dowell, Inverell Jerseys

Silver

• Producing 491kg per cow
HJ & A Brown, Merindah Stud

• Producing 479kg per cow
PC & WJ Ness, Nyowee Stud

• Producing 497kg per cow
T & A Bradley, Majestic Stud

• Producing 469kg per cow
Philmair Dairy Company, Miami Stud

Gold (> 500KG)

• Producing per cow 515kg
Cochrane family, Craiglea Stud

• Producing 526kg per cow
Nicholson family, Jugiong Stud

Platinum (> 540kg)

• Producing 602kg per cow
J & M Cockerel, Warrain Stud

• Producing 592kg per cow
D & I Fry, Katandra Stud

• Producing 578kg per cow
D & J Grevett, Yandavale Stud

• Producing 653kg per cow
Brookbora Jerseys, Brookbora Stud

• Producing 594kg per cow
B, J, R & L Smethurst, Lerida Park Stud

• Producing 604kg per cow
P & A Lenehan, Murray Brook Stud

• Producing 560kg per cow
B & L Rushton, Benlock Stud

• Producing 560kg per cow
G & R Sprunt, Kaarmona Stud

Jeff Kernich from the host Jersey Club of South Australia accepted a certificate of thanks on behalf of the organising branch that put in a massive effort to deliver such an informative and entertaining conference. Jersey General Manager, Mike Weise, confirmed the hosts pulled out all the stops and the 60 participants left Nuriootpa with new ideas, new opportunities for the breed’s phenomenal potential and new friends.

We look forward to 2017 in Ballina for the next Jersey Conference and the 2016/17 AGM.

The site also has a PDF file of the Managing Rural Stress Booklet which has had over 6300 hard copies requested and distributed.

Also included is an easily reusable template for you to add local services to build a local resource list with other national links; they’re all checked and tested.
The Goulburn Murray Jersey Breeders Club would like to congratulate the Akers Family on winning the 2015 Great Australian Challenge.

**FIVE-YEAR-OLD – SOUTHERN REGION**

Loxleigh Resurrection
Peace
– Akers Family

**« MATURE – SOUTHERN REGION & OVERALL CHAMPION**

Loxleigh Badger Iris 4
– Akers Family
JUDGES were unanimous in their selection of Loxleigh Bader Iris 4 as the grand champion of the 2015 Great Australian Challenge.

“She had that real wow factor about her,” says one of the judges, leading Tasmanian Jersey breeder Geoff Heazlewood.

The Great Australian Challenge (GAC) judges review videos showing the winners in the Great Northern and Great Southern challenges on their home farms.

The judges say that the 2015 grand champion Loxleigh Bader Iris 4 is a big capacious cow with a very well attached udder both front and back.

“When she turned around and walked towards you, it was the width through the front end of the cow – through the chest and heart room – that really made her stand out,” Geoff says.

“In all the judges eyes she was a clear winner, and a very very good cow.”

The 2015 GAC results were announced at the Jersey Australia 2016 Annual General Meeting held in May this year at Nuriootpa in South Australia.

The 2015 grand champion Loxleigh Badger Iris 4 is a seven-year-old born in autumn 2009. She is classified at Excellent 94.

She was bred by Geoff and Natalie Akers at their Loxleigh Jerseys stud at Tallygaroopna near Shepparton in northern Victoria.

Her sire was Beulah Taranak Badger, whose ancestors include Royals Green Elmo, Lightwood Bambi, Tinopai Waiuku, Royals Green Ella 76, Comfort Royal Alf ET and Lightwood Dorcas 2nd Sup 92.

The 2015 champion’s dam was Loxleigh Estimate Iris STP9 92. Her sire was Cairnbrae Stars Esteem. His dam was Cairnbrae Alfs Estelle EX93 STP 7 and his sire Bie Biestar.

In 2007, Estimate Iris was runner up in the Great Southern Challenge three-year-old class.

Estimate Iris’s dam was Loxleigh Astound Iris 5TH Exc7 93 who in 2007 was third in the mature cow class of the Great Southern Challenge. Breeders say Astound Iris 5TH has produced many quality daughters at Loxleigh.

The 2015 grand champion Badger Iris 4 was at the age of 36 months producing 6422 litres in a 305-day lactation at four per cent fat and four per cent protein.

In her current lactation at 89 months, Badger Iris 4 is on track to produce 9500 litres with 350 kg protein and 400 kg fat and a PI of 133 in 305 days.

On her last test at 7.5 months pregnant, she produced 29.5 litres. Badger Iris 4 is due to calve to Vanahlem in mid August.

She already has one son registered with Jersey Australia, Loxleigh Galaxies Ivan 5826, who was born in September last year.

The Akers family also bred Loxleigh Resurrection Peace, the winner of the five-year-old-class of the 2015 GAC.

The judges of the 2015 GAC were Geoff Heazlewood, Les Bennett of Macona in north-western Victoria, and Brian Wilson from the Shirllinn stud at Tamworth in NSW which bred this year’s International Dairy Week grand champion.

Geoff Heazlewood was the breeder of the winner of the first Great Australian Challenge in 2013. He says the standard of the 2015 competition was “equally as good or probably a little bit better” than previous years.

Geoff says it’s an advantage for Jersey breeders that the GAC brings together the winners of local on-farm challenges from far north Queensland through to Tasmania after they progress through regional judging.

“Noexcept for this competition, a lot of those cows wouldn’t get to compete against one another,” he says. “For instance, I’m from Tasmania, and there’s...
no way that I could send a cow to a show to compete against a cow from northern Queensland. The distance is just too great.”

GAC attracts world interest

Jersey Australia is to continue the evolution of the successful competition, and Geoff thanks the sponsor Semex Australia. The opening of the 2016 Great Northern and Great Southern Challenges is to be announced in August. Winners are to be announced at the 2017 Jersey Australia Annual General Meeting.

Semex Australia Jersey specialist Alex Matthews says the company is proud to continue its sponsorship of the Great Northern, Great Southern and Great Australian challenges.

“We are proud to help promote and recognise Australia’s great Jersey cows,” says Alex, who is also Semex Australia’s area manager for west and east Gippsland and the NSW far south coast.

She says breeders and owners who participate in the challenges gain national and international recognition through social media and presentation videos on the internet.

Lists of winners and place getters in the 2015 Great Southern and Great Northern Challenges are published on the Semex Australia internet pages. They can be found with an internet search for “Jersey Australia Great Australian Challenge”, or through the news drop-down on the page at Semex.com.au.

Internet videos of the 2015 Great Australian Challenge winners can be viewed on the “semexaustralia1” YouTube channel.

Geoff says there has been international interest in semen from a bull cow out of his 2013 winner. This would not have happened without the GAC, as his winner has never been to a show.

He says the challenge is a cost-effective way to overcome Australia’s tyranny of distance. It would cost a Tasmanian breeder more than $3000 to show a cow in Victoria. The GAC can allow breeders to compete at this level without that cost, or the demands on their time.

“These days with the size of herds and so on, not everybody can afford to go to the major shows, or even their local shows,” Geoff says. “We are all milking a lot of cows, and doing a lot of things. This competition has always been about seeing cows at home in their own environment, as they are.”

Geoff agrees that there are advantages for everyone who competes, from the club level up.

“We are all passionate about our own cows, and we all tend to think we’ve all got the best cows in Australia,” he says. So the challenges allow breeders to benchmark their cows at a club level “to see how you compare locally”, and then to perhaps to go on to the regional and national levels.

“You start off at the bottom of the pyramid and you try to get to the top,” he says.

Geoff expects that the announcement of the 2016 GAC winners will be a highlight of Jersey Australia’s 2017 Annual General Meeting to be held at Ballina in northern NSW.

He says the announcement of the 2015 winners stopped the traffic at this year’s AGM. “There were text messages and things flying around flat out in the three minutes after the winners were announced,” he says. “It’s become a big thing, and hopefully it will continue.”

Geoff says the on-farm challenge format was developed in the late 1990s based on ideas brought back from New Zealand by Gippsland breeders Barry Monson and Ivan Grant. At first the challenge had two classes – two-year-old and mature cow. When it developed into five classes, it became known as the Great Southern Challenge. Then the northern states started to run a Great Northern Challenge, and in 2013 the winners of the two regional competitions were pitted against each other in the Great Australian Challenge.

Geoff says the winner of the GAC ends up being the best of about 5000 of Australia’s Jerseys, “which is no mean feat”.

Semex Australia national sales manager Vaughn Johnston, winning breeder Geoff Akers and Jersey Australia board member Lisa Broad at the Great Australian Challenge presentation.

2015 Great Australian Challenge classes:

TWO-YEAR-OLD
Winner – Northern
Rivendell Celebrity Robina – S&H Menzies
Reserve – Southern
Dornoch Astound 440 – D&L Parish.

THREE-YEAR-OLD
Winner – Southern
Ingalala Vanahlem Romance 806 – Johnston Bros.
Reserve – Northern
Mikandan Tbones Marie 2175 – T&B Edwards

FOUR-YEAR-OLD
Winner – Southern
Fairdale Adriannas Maximum Maggie 786 – S&R Mathers.
Reserve – Northern
Mikandan Tbones Marie 2175 – T&B Edwards

FIVE-YEAR-OLD
Winner – Southern
Loxleigh Resurrection Peace – Akers Family

MATURE
Winner – Southern
Loxleigh Badger Iris 4 – Akers Family
Reserve – Northern
Brunchilli JS Eileen – S&S Paulger.
Peter Dowel says city people who like to ‘keep up with Joneses’ should instead be trying to keep up with Jersey breeders who are ‘ahead of the rest’.

GIPPSLAND breeder Peter Dowel believes the quality of Jersey milk can help Australian family farms resist the pressure to get bigger.

Peter milks 130 Jerseys on 84ha at Crossover, 14kms north of Warragul in Central Gippsland, 70 minutes east of Melbourne.

He produces milk with 5.4 per cent butter fat and 4.0 per cent protein for local boutique dairy processors.

Peter became a farmer so he could be his own boss. He resists the pressure to get bigger, saying a larger farm could be like being taken over by a supermarket.

He says he has been able to keep his farm small with the payments for Jersey components. “You need the quality to get the money into gear,” he says.

Peter does all the work on the farm by himself and knows each of his cows by name.

He describes himself as a “single labour unit”.

But he does not talk about his Jerseys that way.

“I try to treat my cows like my own family, rather than as machines, just in and out,” he says.

“I speak to most of the cows by their name, and give them a pat.

“I can see a cow at the back of the yard, and I’ll call her by her name and she comes in.”

The farm does not have organic certification, but Peter minimises artificial inputs.

He even brings in Jersey bulls so his cows don’t have to undergo artificial insemination.

“I try to keep it as a family unit – my cows are my children,” he says.

Peter’s farm is on undulating country with one third red volcanic soils, one third dark grey volcanic, and one third lighter-grey sedimentary.

It has a spring-fed dam to water stock, which was overflowing even during the recent drought.

The farm has about six hectares of natural bushland, which attracts wildlife and shelters the Jerseys from winter wind and summer sun.

Peter grows perennial rye grass with red and white clover, oversown with summer crops like chicory. This year, he made 350 rolls of silage and 80 rolls of hay.

He has no irrigation, and closely monitors every millimeter of rainfall. He says Crossover tends to get more rain than his brother at Korumburra.

Peter designs his herd’s nutrition. “I find brewers grain is a very healthy food, and it prevents a lot of sickness,” he says. He also feeds pellets.

He likes to have six months between vet visits, and keep his cows as fit as he keeps himself.

Legendairy runner turns to dance

Peter inherited a predilection for running from his father Wal, who in 1948 won the Corangamite Mile.

Peter himself won the Wonthaggi Coalminers Mile in 1992, and has participated in many middle-distance events and fun runs.

He was two years ago featured as a ‘Legendairy’ runner by the Dairy Australia marketing and communications initiative which showcases Australian dairy farmers and their contributions to their communities.

Until this year, Peter was also a football boundary umpire.

But he has now turned his focus from sport to ballroom dancing in Springvale and Hawthorn.

“It’s only about an hour’s drive each way,” he says. “As long as I’m home by midnight, I can still get up at four o’clock in the morning.

“To maintain that at the age of 61, you have to stay healthy,” he says. “If I can keep my cows the same – keep them healthy – what you feed your cows, you return in production.”

Jerseys have been in the Dowel family since Peter’s grandfather Henry set up the Inverell Jersey Stud at Korumburra in the 1920s. Peter grew up there after his father Wal inherited the property.

After school, Peter went to Melbourne “to see how the other half lived”. He worked at test driving and detailing Datsun cars right in the centre of the city for 12 months, but soon moved back to the farm.

“It’s a family life,” he says. “It’s the satisfaction that you can be involved in so many different jobs in the one day. You are your own boss to a certain extent.”

“As a Jersey breeder, we are ahead of the rest.

“People from Melbourne are always looking over the fence to keep up with the Joneses.

“But as Jersey breeders, we are the Joneses.”

Peter leased a farm at Leongatha for five years from 1980, then bought a property near Korumburra where he farmed for five years until a marriage break up.

Eighteen years ago, he moved to Crossover where he kept 15 of the black and whites that were on the farm to go with the 100 Jerseys he brought in.

He says black and whites are decent
cows, but he soon sold most of them when he had the chance to buy 15 well-bred Jerseys with good type from Tatura.

“T’ve tried other cows, but the Jersey surpasses any other breed because we get paid on fat and protein,” Peter says. “They are a lot more placid. If a Jersey happens to go down with milk fever, she’s got plenty of fighting spirit to pull through it, to get back onto her feet. Also, a Jersey cow has a lot easier calving.”

However, he’s still got one pure-bred Holstein, and one Jersey cross.

“When you look in the paddock, they are always together, even though they are not a mother and daughter,” he says. He’s trained the Holstein to act like a Jersey: “She comes in as the second cow on the second side of the shed pull. She stands at the gate, she waits for a pat — you call her by name and she comes in.”

Breeding for capacity and strength

Peter breeds Jerseys for body capacity and strength. “Jerseys are on the improve,” he says. “Thirty or forty years ago, Jerseys did get very small because they were going for the short square head. However, he’s still got one pure-bred Holstein, and one Jersey cross.

“Jerseys are on the improve,” he says. “Thirty or forty years ago, Jerseys did get very small because they were going for the short square head. But then the Americans came in and put length into the head.”

One of his cows – Molly 18 – is now 14, and Peter thinks she is the only cow with horns left in Gippsland. “She’s got three fantastic daughters in the herd, and you can follow the family through like that,” he says.

Peter likes to let his herd run with bulls out of cows which are classified at 92 or 94 points, or have been show-ring champions. He buys bulls from Jim Carson, the Colac breeder who was featured in the recent Australian Jersey Journal article about the Colac Jersey Cattle Club.

For the first half of the season, Peter runs his cows with one of Jim’s bulls who was bred out of a Melbourne show winner. Peter then gives his herd a 10-day break, and then puts in a different bull.

He says the breed will be OK as long as it can maintain the long head, which also gives a long length from head to pin. “A Jersey cow will only graze for 13 hours a day,” he says. “If she’s got a wide muzzle and can eat twice as much as a narrow-muzzle cow, then she can fill up her body capacity.” Peter likes bigger Jerseys, and doesn’t think they will get too big.

His own farm is compact with a central dairy, but he says most of today’s farms need larger cows to cope with longer walking distances. He likes longevity in his cows, enabling heifer sales to extend his business.

One of his cows – Molly 18 – is now 14, and Peter thinks she is the only cow with horns left in Gippsland.

“Her body capacity is concerned about the sale of dairy land to overseas buyers. But his main worry is that dairy farmers will end up working for supermarket chains.

He hopes the market will pay a premium for quality milk from small farms to allow him to avoid that. He wants the market to treat him as well as he treats his cows.

This year, 49 of his 130 cows were due to calve in the final three weeks of March. A further 39 were to calve in April, when he was also to start with his two-year-old heifers.

Peter says herd heath depends on the temperament of the bull.

“I’ll continue buying bulls off Jim, because I’ve found that the nature of his bulls is very quiet,” Peter says. “They don’t push the cows around or anything like that.”

Peter would be interested in producing pure Jersey milk. “It’s a very good health food,” he says. But he wouldn’t launch his own brand. “Being a single labour unit, I don’t have time to adventure in to solid issues,” he says.

He is also attracted to organic farming. “I’m trying to go towards the organic side,” he says. “I won’t say I’m all organic, but I’m trying.”

Looking to the future of dairying, Peter is concerned about the sale of dairy land to overseas buyers.

But his main worry is that dairy farmers will end up working for supermarket chains. He hopes the market will pay a premium for quality milk from small farms to allow him to avoid that.

He wants the market to treat him as well as he treats his cows.

New members are always welcome
I’d like to go to Holland one day, wooden shoe?

By Beth Scott

NEVER in my dreams did I think that I would have the opportunity to study Animal Genetics at a world leading university. On the 12th of May I was accepted into a Master’s in Animal Science – Animal Breeding and Genetics at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. In August, I said goodbye to my beloved calves and went back to University a sneaky 16,590km from home.

The Master’s Course

My two-year master’s course consists of both coursework and research. By June this year, I will have completed the coursework component of my studies, where I have undertaken subjects heavily focused on genetics, genetic analysis and statistics in animal breeding. The knowledge gained will be the backbone for my second year, where I will conduct minor and major theses. My minor thesis will be with the Dutch CRV research team to gain experience within a breeding company. I will be conducting an analysis that investigates the first oestrus after calving and its genetic relationship health and oestrus traits.

My major thesis and what I am most excited about, will be back in Australia working with Jersey data collected by breeders this year. It is estimated that 5-10% of Jersey calves die either at birth or due to failure to thrive. The aim of my research is to examine the genetic basis of calf vitality in Jerseys to determine if genetic selection is a potential solution to reduce the incidences of calf mortality.

Jersey Australia is keen to uncover if Jersey calves from some bulls perform better than others and if some breeds outperform others – do they have less mortality? less morbidity? and more vitality? However, to date, there has been very little research on this topic in Australia.

Jersey Australia has joined forces with Agriculture Victoria to improve our knowledge about calf vitality and is part sponsoring Masters student, Beth Scott to study at one of the premier agricultural universities in Europe, Wageningen and focus on Calf Vitality. Below is a story about her study to date and some pictures of her Dutch experience.

Calf vitality is an area of growing importance for dairy farmers with mortality in the first month of life being unofficially reported to be increasing. Our intention is to assemble enough data to monitor calf survival (Jersey Australia) and to do a provisional analysis of genetic variation in traits associated with calf vitality, but, to do this we need to get data from as many Australian dairy farms as possible and are looking for your help in recording data for research purposes! If you take part you will go into the draw to win $200 of Jersey Australia services.

To find out how to get involved look at http://jersey.com.au/calf-vitality-trial/ which includes an information sheet, a letter of invitation, the application form plus the calf survey sheets.
The University
At university it is quite common for international students to group together with people from their country. Prior to February this year, I was the solo flag bearer which made this a bit challenging. Also, as a result of the few to no Australians, the accent is not common and no one could understand me.

The Dutch Experience
October 2015: Two months in and the days of daily rain have gone and have been replaced by a crisp autumn, where the leaves turn auburn and fall from the trees. Morning frost sets in creating some of the coldest mornings I have ever lived through. Combining morning frosts, excessive leaf falls and my basic bike riding skills ends my peaceful ride to university; slipping and landing like a pancake in the middle of an intersection.

March 2016: I was naïve enough to think that October was cold! After 8 months here I can now say I have a full appreciation for days where the temperature is above zero. In addition, I can now understand basic Dutch, this is a great help when grocery shopping and in my hockey team. Gone are the days of buying margarine instead of butter and my teammates ‘mistranslating’ the coach resulting in me doing unrequired push-ups for their amusement.

For me, one of the biggest points of difference is the agriculture, particularly water. It’s everywhere and they never seem to be short of it! Canals typically double up as fences and maize silage is grown anywhere they can plant it. Tractors are commonly used for nearly everything, from mowing the nature strips with a frontend loader mower attachment, salting the roads or being hooked up to a trailer and doubling up as a tip truck. It is also not uncommon to see them driving through the village (town) or past the university. Peak hour (and the only traffic in town) typically occurs weekdays between 8:10-8:30 and is a result of the 1000+ students and their bikes leaving my housing complex to get to university for an 8:30 start. This I believe is the Dutch equivalent to a bikie gang where police commonly have to enforce bike riders for corner cutting and excessive peddling (which I learnt the hard way).

The degree can be quite demanding at times but it is an unforgettable experience which I hope can be of value to the Australia Jerseys and the dairy industry. I would like thank everyone that helped me get here, particularly to my funders; Jersey Australia, Dairy Futures CRC and ADHIS, Jennie Pryce and the ongoing support from my family.

By the Rhine River.
A national project benchmarking survival rates among Jersey calves needs data from breeders. And Jersey Australia is supporting this important research by offering an incentive. Breeders who submit data on calf vitality between now and October will be entered into a draw for $400 worth of Jersey Australia services.

Calf vitality research needs data

“We have chosen to show our commitment to this research in a very practical way,” said Jersey Australia general manager, Mike Weise. “But in reality, everyone who assists in this project will – ultimately – be a winner.”

The research into calf vitality is looking into an area of growing importance for dairy farmers.

Lead researcher, Dr Jennie Pryce from Agriculture Victoria said: “Figures on calf mortality in the first month of life are being unofficially reported to be increasing. However, to date, there has been very little research on this topic in Australia. Our intention is to assemble enough data to monitor calf survival and to do a provisional analysis of genetic variation in traits associated with calf vitality.

“But, to do this we need to get data from many Australian dairy farms and are looking for help in recording data for research purposes.”

The information sought from breeders includes dam and sire ID, date of calving and date of death, as well as the fate of the calf. Some breeders may choose to score each animal’s calving ease, its size and vigour at birth as well as colostrum intake details. They could also detail its treatment during rearing and any reasons for treatments or death.

Mr Weise said: “Most of this information is already compiled on most well-run dairy farms. The survey has
been designed to fit easily into existing calf management practices."

The project is a collaboration between Agriculture Victoria, part of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) and Jersey Australia with the support of Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme.

The research will be led by Dr Price and Dr Mary Abdelsayed at the DEDJTR office in La Trobe University, Bundoora. Assisting them will be Gippsland-born Beth Scott who will analyse the data as part of her Master's programme at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, (see her report in this Journal next to Windmill picture).

Dr Price explained: “Beth’s studies are supported by the Australian dairy industry and her training is important for developing future Australian geneticists. Beth will be based in Australia from late Spring 2016 and she will summarise the data collected and evaluate the suitability of the data for genetic analysis.”

Survey forms are available from Jersey Australia by email jersey@jersey.com.au or phone (03) 9370 9105.

Breeder are asked to supply the following:

• Completed data release authority form and survey detailing the vitality of every National Agricultural Statistical Information System (NASIS)-sired calf born on your farm between now and 1 October, 2016.
• Accurately note the NASIS sire identification. This is essential for your data to be included in the genetic analysis.
• To be included in the study all heifer calves must be registered with Jersey Australia or your Data Processing Centre.
• The calf identification (calf ID) should be the national ID or registration number for heifers, or ‘bobby’ for calves that die or are not kept on farm.

At the end of every month please return the forms to Jersey Australia, which will be responsible for collating the data in electronic format. Return by email – jersey@jersey.com.au or fax to 03 9018 4391.

Mr Weise said: “Calf-rearing is an intensive part of the farm cycle. We commit considerable time and resources to the grow-out the next generation of animals, so it makes sense to have a deep and extensive understanding of the Jersey vitality baseline.”

**Jerseys and Colostrum**

Breed affects colostrum quality. Jerseys have the highest levels of protective antibodies (IgG) because of lower volume. Pooling colostrum is not recommended unless it is all of high quality and then only pool “like with like” breed.

There are a variety of factors that may influence the protective capacity of colostrum.

**Length of the dry period** – Dry periods less than five weeks are likely to decrease colostrum quality.

Delaying milking after calving – The quality of the colostrum decreases the longer it is held in the udder.

**Volume of colostrum at first milking** – Some farmers believe that high volumes of colostrum at first milking (i.e. more than 8.5 litres) mean that the quality is poor. This might not be the case; check quality before discarding.

**Age of dam** – Older cows generally have better quality colostrum (due to greater exposure to disease) but some heifers do too; test the quality before discarding.

**Mastitis/High cell counts in dam** – Test and check IgG levels of colostrum from cows with mastitis or those with high cell counts as it can be good quality. Mastitis does not appear to alter colostrum quality. Colostrum that is stringy, flaky or bloody should not be used.

**Leaky cows** – Cows that leak prior to calving usually have less IgG in their colostrum.

**Early calvers** – Cows that calve early (induced or naturally) generally have lower antibody levels.

Basic hygiene is an important strategy for reducing the risk of collected colostrum becoming contaminated.

• Collect colostrum cleanly to ensure that it is not contaminated with cow manure.
• Use clean buckets and feeding equipment.
• Keep colostrum chilled in the refrigerator or freeze.

A comprehensive guide to rearing healthy calves is available free online from Dairy Australia.


Among the topics covered are determining colostrum quality, understanding calf milk replacers, designing a calf housing system, and ways to minimise BJD risks.
Coraki Jersey breeders make the best tasting milk in Australia

Robyn Mathers make the best tasting milk in Australia.

Robyn just needs to taste the milk to know that’s true, but their milk processor Norco Co-operative now has a Dairy Industry Association of Australia gold medal to prove it.

The Norco Pure Jersey Milk was named the best Pasteurised (Homogenised) Milk at the recent 2016 Australian dairy product competition. Based on taste, appearance and texture. Pure Jersey was the highest scoring product among 33 entries from across Australia.

The Mathers’ Fairdale Jerseys from near Lismore in northern New South Wales is the sole supplier of milk for the product and as a fourth generation Jersey breeder Robyn is confident the best is yet to come.

Robyn purchased the farm 26 years ago, following in the footsteps of her parents and continuing a tradition forged by her great-grandfather Watson Hewett in the 1800s.

“My great-grandfather imported cattle from the Jersey Islands to Sydney and then drove them up here,” Robyn said.

“He wouldn’t have been the original one to do it, but he was one of the first.”

Robyn completed her dairy apprenticeship with her parents but always dreamed of having her own property.

“I’m the fourth generation and my son Brian is now the fifth,” she said. “All the farms have been within a 50km radius.”

When she purchased the farm in 1990, Robyn brought in a number of cattle breeds but quickly realised Jerseys were the best and filtered out the others.

“I like the jerseys because they’re the most profitable,” Robyn said. “Our herd testing always showed Jerseys were on top.”

The award to Norco is the culmination of a fruitful partnership between farmer and processor.

“Norco takes our milk and just bottles it without taking anything out and sells it as Pure Jersey. It’s a natural product produced on the farm and bottled; not diluted and with nothing added to it. All they do is pasteurise and homogenise it.”

And the best thing about it is “the taste.”

“Absolutely we drink it. We always like our milk,” Robyn said. “If we go away and buy other milk you can taste the difference and it’s just not as nice.”

The Mathers family isn’t alone in enjoying the taste and Robyn believes the creamier taste could expand far and wide. “They’re selling heaps in up-market coffee shops in Sydney,” she said. “It’s very popular, especially with people from overseas who are used to their milk being much creamier.”

Robyn said she planned to increase production to meet that growing demand.

“We’re aiming to increase to about 2.5 million litres this year and hoping to get 450-500 milkers, up from around 400,” she said.

The farm had reached three million litres a few years ago but went down in numbers while changing processors and before Brian returned to the land.

“It’s good to have Brian continuing the tradition; it makes it worthwhile,” Robyn said.

The farm’s breeding program is now almost 100 per cent artificial insemination and the pure Jersey results continue to impress.

One of their cows recently won the four-year-old section of the Great Northern Challenge.

Although southern states are reeling from lower prices for their milk, Robyn said the industry is going well in northern NSW.

“Dairy is pretty good at the moment,” she said. “We’re mainly domestic and don’t export a lot so we’re largely protected from the international market.”

However, the farm isn’t protected from the elements. “It’s much drier than normal,” Robyn said. “We’re looking for a bit of rain now. We haven’t had a lot in the past 12 months but it’s usually come just when it’s needed.”

The Mathers aim for as much home-grown feed as possible. “We’ve got good pastures and feed them a partial mixed ration, hay, molasses and grain in the dairy,” Robyn said.

“We’ve had to add a bit of corn silage this year to what they’re not getting in the paddock because it has been a bit dry.”

“We’ve got to plant all our feed and it dies usually in summer because it’s so hot. We’ve still got 28 degree days at the end of May.”

Along with the profitability advantage of Jersey and their creamy and nutrient-dense milk, Robyn likes their placid nature.

“The Jerseys are all like pets,” she said. “You walk in the yard amongst them all and never have the fear that they’re going to kick you.”

Norco milk supply manager Jeff Collingwood said the product was developed in response to consumer demand.

“The opportunity arose because consumers in our heartland did not have a product like this available to them,” he said.

However, the core challenge was finding a 100 per cent Jersey farm as they are rare in New South Wales and Queensland.

“Fortunately, we had a farm in our Co-operative which is 100 per cent Jersey and could provide the volume of milk required to support the product.”

“The key difference between Norco Pure Jersey and other Norco milk brands is that it is made from 100 per cent Jersey milk; this results in a milk that is far creamier and has more depth of flavour.”

The formula is working well.

“We’ve received a lot of very positive feedback for Norco Pure Jersey, particularly from baristas who have tried it and have found that it creates a superior coffee than what they have been able to achieve with other milk products.” Jeff Collingwood said.

Jersey Australia is planning to hold its 2017 national conference at Ballina, New South Wales from Tuesday May to Thursday May 23-25 followed by Pat McDonald’s Jersey sale at Murwillumbah on Friday May 26.

Along with the AGM it is anticipated that the conference will include visits to an ice cream factory, butter factory and sugar mill as well as some farm visits.
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Jerseys thrive in NSW
North Coast Beautizone

THE roads to the Dorrigo plateau today wind through the geology and lush red soils left by the eruptions of the Ebor volcano 18 million years ago.

These give the area of the plateau and the valleys of the Nambucca, Urunga and Bellinger and Orara rivers the spectacular scenery which have led it to be called ‘the Beautizone’.

The region inland from Coffs Harbour 500km north of Sydney has moist subtropical weather, a little warmer than the conditions around nearby Port Macquarie, which has been famously described as the best climate on earth.

But where the Beautizone’s escarpments rise behind the coast, areas like Dorrigo also have the highest rainfall in NSW, about 2000mm a year.

A dairy industry grew up in the region in the 20th century. But there was never agreement about a general name for the area north of the Hastings valley, and south of the Clarence River.

Before the spectacular growth of Coffs Harbour in recent decades, Coffs jostled for prominence with towns like Nambucca Heads, Macksville, Urunga, Bellingen and Dorrigo.

So when the Jersey breeders from the area decided in the late 1960s that they needed a local forum and a showcase for their best cows, they didn’t want to name their group after any one town.

Their first meeting was held in the Urunga RSL Club meeting room on July 23, 1968 at a time when the Beautizone name was being adopted by local sporting and tourism organisations.

So the meeting decided to form the Beautizone Jersey Cattle Club.

The club’s current vice president, Dorrigo breeder Wayne Burley, says the club brought Jersey breeders together.

“Unless breeders were affiliated with their local show society, they had no united group,” he says.

“One of the key objectives once the club was formed was to conduct a spring Jersey fair competition.

“Jersey fairs were very popular at this time.

“None of the local shows at that stage were spring shows — Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Macksville were conducted in the autumn, and Dorrigo was on the Australia Day weekend in January.

“So just three months after this initial meeting, the first Beautizone Fair was conducted in October ‘68.

“This was at Bellingen. The judge was John Kirton. The champion cow Kelvin Park Amours Salina was owned by John Francis of Ondiong Jersey Stud, Dorrigo.

“There were 38 members of the club in the first year, and 50 including associates in the second year.”

Beautizone founders remember first meeting

Foundation member Tim Bake still attends BJCC meetings. He says that in the late 1960s, there were plenty of keen Jersey breeders in the area.

They wanted to form a club to support each other and discuss issues including breeding with different bulls. He remembers the enthusiasm at the Jersey fairs of the 1970s. Tim was BJCC treasurer for 27 years. He now lives in Dorrigo.

Another BJCC founder member Matt Singleton is a third-generation dairy farmer who was born near Coffs Harbour in 1929 when Coffs was a small town with a busy port.

Matt grew up on a farm at Crossmaglen with 100 cows. These were Illawarras until Matt’s father (also named Matt) came back from the war and introduced grade Jerseys in 1947. The younger Matt had a milk run in Coffs Harbour until his father died in 1954 and he took over the farm.

He remembers the meeting which decided to form the Beautizone Jersey Cattle Club (BJCC) in 1968. The club started with 20 to 30 members, who had bi-monthly meetings and calf days. Matt says the BJCC supported all the local shows, where the Jersey was the main breed on display.

“There were a hell of a lot of good cows then,” Matt recalls.
The first president was Robert Hunter, a Jersey breeder from the Upper Orara, a river which flows north from the Dorrigo plateau to join the Clarence River west of Grafton.

Other foundation members included Norm Burley and Maurie Connell who have family in the club today.

Matt was elected to the NSW parliament as the Country Party member for Coffs Harbour in 1971. He became the member for Clarence after a redistribution in 1981.

Matt remembers when the BJCC was agitating for the introduction of milk-quality payments in the late 1980s. In 1987, the club had made provision for funds to pay for university testing of the components in milk.

But Matt says this testing did not have to be carried out. When the NSW Government heard about moves including the Beautizone plan, it gazetted the introduction of quality payments for milk. “That was a turning point for the Jersey breed in NSW,” Matt remembers.

The Singleton family began farming at Finley in the Murray Valley in southern NSW in 1994, and Matt and his wife moved there in 2004. His son and grandson still run 300 Jerseys and 500 other cows on a farm that is a long way from the 100-cow farm on the NSW coast that Matt took over from his father.

**Beautizone alternates Jersey Fair locations**

The 1970s were a strong period for the BJCC, when its Jersey Fairs attracted large numbers.

“In the beginning, the fair was conducted at alternate venues – Bellingen, Macksville, Coffs Harbour and Dorrigo were all used,” current BJCC vice president Wayne Burley says.

“Some of the classes of the schedule were unique at that time – cow and daughter, two progeny, and the veteran cow class over 10 years.”

“Eventually, Bellingen was selected at the central location, and used for all the later Jersey fairs.”

From its early years, the Beautizone club awarded rosettes instead of ribbons. It paid a travel subsidy of eight cents per animal per kilometer to encourage exhibitors.

Wayne says there was strong sponsorship from local businesses. “The picnic lunch with Heather Connell and later Franca Singleton at the helm was a standard part of the day,” he says.

But the prominence of the fair began to decline in the 1980s with the inception of a spring show at Bellingen. The Jersey fair became part of the Bellingen show in 1989.

The Beautizone club also conducted a number of Jersey sales in the 1970s and 1980s. Wayne says these were “well organised and well patronised” and “emanated from strong enthusiasm within the club”.

But the club also had another showcase – a calf day held each year at the Bellingen Showground from 1985.

In later years, every entrant received a ribbon. These were treasured by youngsters who were leading Jerseys in show rings for the first time.

The calf day was merged with the region’s Pro Ag field days in 1995. Wayne says that although the number of entries in the event declined from their peak of 110, it always received excellent sponsorship, recognition and promotion. The last few events had 50 head on display.

The Beautizone club began organising its On Farm Challenge in 1998, when 12 studs entered. The club now has more than 100 entries in this each year.

“As we have now become part of the Great Northern Challenge, this has widened our profile,” Wayne says. “I’m sure the On Farm Challenge will continue to keep the club strong.”

The club organised its first Beautizone Christmas Party in 1998, and this became an annual event.

In 2002, the Beautizone hosted a View from the Top state sale. Forty head were sold at an average price of just under $3000.

In 2008, the club had a ceremony marking its first 40 years. It was attended by many people and families who had been connected with the club since its inception.

“In breeding terms, these families are second and third generation VHWs – very hard workers,” Wayne said at the ceremony.

“This feature has kept the club strong, when perhaps it could have faltered. It’s been a great 40 years, and may this continue into the future.”

**Community joins new Beautizone event**

The Beautizone club now meets about four times a year in Dorrigo, which has become a focal point for the region’s Jersey farmers.

The current BJCC president is Natalie Booker. Wayne is the vice president. Rowena Walker has been the secretary for twenty years, and her daughter Renee Connell is the treasurer. Mark Griffiths is publicity officer.

Recent members Rod Thomas and family joined the club in 2014, and they inspired the organisation of the club’s inaugural All Breeds Dairy Heifer Show held in November 2015.

The event brought together four breeds – Holstein, Ayrshire, Guernsey and Jersey. The 90 heifers came from up to 250 kilometres away.

The club says the day was well organized, and the public responded with high attendance and positive comments. It is expected to become an important feature for the club and the community, with children not from farms also invited to attend and dress up to lead calves.
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(photo: Bradley Cullen)

dtr: Kayvee Heatherbelle 40 owned by Ian Anderson, Nar Nar Goon, Vic. (photo: Bradley Cullen)

DAM: Ahlem Renegade Buttons 38500 VG-89 (photo: Frank Robinson)

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dtr: Kayvee Heatherbelle 40 owned by Ian Anderson, Nar Nar Goon, Vic. (photo: Bradley Cullen)

DAM: Ahlem Renegade Buttons 38500 VG-89 (photo: Frank Robinson)
EVENyone thought Tasmania’s Peter McCulloch was silly when he went off to a sale to buy some Jersey heifers.

Nearly 50 years later he’s still proving the sceptics wrong.

The Craiglawn stud he started with his late wife Anne in 1967 went on to become one of the state’s most respected and successful.

It has also turned into a three-generation success story.

His cows have won championships at agricultural shows across Tasmania and continue to be good producers. Now Peter has been awarded a Jersey Australia Tasmanian branch distinguished service award to recognise his commitment to the breed.

The shift to Jerseys happened when Peter and Anne purchased Marjon Fairy’s Pride 2nd, Marjon Golden Primrose, and Corinna Elizabeth at a sale nearby at Somerset.

“I said I’m going to the sale to buy some Jersey calves; they said I was silly,” he recalled.

He bought a heifer called Marjon Primrose and paid $200, a fair bit of money in those days.

“They had a look at her and nothing much was said,” Peter admitted. “I said I was going to show her and I got hooed on that but I took her to the local show and got first prize. From then on I had the family behind me.”

At the time Peter and Anne were paying off the farm which was mainly based on a Friesian herd.

After six months of comparing the two breeds it became obvious which way they should go. “The Jersey heifers were doing better than the Friesians,” Peter said.

“Theyir butterfat and protein were better. I’ve always liked that about them.”

The ideal cow for Peter is one that is good to show and also a good producer. Over time Craiglawn has done well in both fields.

“We won champion titles at virtually all the shows,” Peter said. “We won at Hobart and we won grand champion seven years in a row at Launceston.

“We were pretty lucky really.”

Many would say it was more than just luck.

“Picking the right bulls is a key to it,” Peter said.

One bull proved to be a particularly good choice.

“The old fella I bought my first heifer from rang up one day and said he had a good bull calf for me,” Peter recalled. “He said he don’t think he would be any good for breeding but he would make a terrific show bull.”

This turned out to be true from the start but a chance escape proved the bull had more strings to its bow than show success.

“I started showing him – he won Hobart three times, plus Launceston, Burnie and other places. He was a good bull,” Peter said.

“When he was a two-year-old he broke out one night and got four cows in calf and we got three heifers out of him. They were our top heifers. He left some good cattle.”

Their most famous cow Craiglawn Fairy’s Maree won many championships including all-breed and state jersey titles.

She was three times the Jersey champion of champions, the most prestigious award in the state for show cows.

“She was a good production cow and a good show cow,” Peter said.

“If you haven’t got the type and haven’t got the vessel you haven’t got a good cow.”

Fellow Tasmanian breeder Geoff Heazlewood said the distinguished service award recognised Peter’s contribution to Jerseys over more than 45 years, especially through the show ring.

“Their promotion was particularly strong at agricultural shows, especially the two Royal Shows at Launceston and Hobart. They would go to shows in non-traditional dairy areas when a lot of other breeders don’t go to them.”

“He’s shown at most Tasmanian shows continuously since the late 60s.”

He also met Prince Charles in 1974 and 1977 at the Royal Hobart Show when he was awarded Champion Bull.

And it wasn’t only good quality cows that made their mark.

“Anne would cook fresh scones at the show for all the exhibitors, particularly when we were there for three or four days,” Geoff said. “We were always very well fed. Anne would do the scones and Peter would do the jam.”

Apart from his successful Jersey stud, Peter had a brief connection with a large flock of geese that Geoff says remains legendary to this day.

“Peter had a lot of geese on his farm at one stage, probably about 300 of them, which was a bit of a problem so he decided he needed to get rid of a few.

“He found a buyer about four hours away who needed half a dozen, so he loaded up the cattle truck and set off on the road trip. He had about 150 geese in the back of the truck. Every farm dam he saw he thought would probably benefit from having an introduction of geese. The last bloke got the last half dozen left in the truck.

“There are still enquiries to this day about where these geese happened to come from. This was at least 20 years ago: the descendants are still scattered around.”

The award was presented by Jersey Society Tasmanian president Donna Evans who said Peter was well respected in Jersey circles.

“We wanted to make sure he was recognised as a very active member in Tasmania,” she said.

“We don’t present many distinguished service awards. It’s the first during my seven or eight years in the society.”

Peter admits it was “a bit of a shock,” but he was happy to accept the honour.

Peter spent one term on the committee and he’s also happy that Judy is now following in his footsteps as a committee member.

At 72 he is semi-retired but still helps with milking and odd jobs around the farm.

Judy and her husband Brian run the property with their daughter Samantha who has taken over the breeding program on the farm. His grandson Nathan has also helped on the farm.

And the good news is that the Jersey success continues. “In December last year my granddaughter took six Jerseys to Stanley Show and took out all the Jersey section and then won 10 classes out of 14 in the interbreeds with the main one Grand Champion Cow of the Show and reserve Grand Champion Cow. This year their cows have won grand champion titles at the Wynyard shows.”

Peter McCulloch receiving his distinguished service award from Tasmanian president, Donna Evans.
Congratulations to our members recently recognised at the Jersey Australia AGM for their herd production.

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**GOLD AWARD**
Jugiong Jerseys – Nicholson Family – 526kg
Craigielea Jerseys – B, K & A Cochrane – 515kg

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Kernich family farm ‘Jersey Fresh’

Visitors to this year’s conference saw the power of value-add when they visited the Kernich family farm in the western Barossa.

They saw how a herd of only 90 milkers on 184 acres (75ha) is the basis of a family business employing four family members across two generations.

Jeff and Erica Kernich founded Jersey Fresh in 2004, installing a pasteuriser/bottling plant in a shipping container alongside their dairy. They started producing farm-label non-homogenised white milk and cream from their daily yield of about 1400 litres.

Demand has been growing – especially since the backlash against supermarket-branded milk. One of the Kernich daughters working in the business is Amy McDonald. She said: “Our sales have definitely increased; the white milk went a bit crazy at one stage. We were processing only four days a week, but that’s gone to five days a week to keep up with demand. We’ve noticed a lot more people getting on board, but we aware that there will be a spike and it will plateau out.”

There is a strong streak of realism in the Kernich family – now into its fifth generation on the land and the fourth generation behind the Carcoola Jersey stud.

Post-deregulation, the Kernichs decided to create a market for their milk before making more milk. Amy explained: “We put money into the factory rather into the dairy. We needed to know we were going to make more money out of the milk before we put money into the dairy.”

So the tiny four-a-side herringbone stayed – although there are plans to upgrade it – and the shipping container/bottling plant is still in use.

“I think people attending the conference were surprised at how small the operation was,” said Amy.

The other surprise – especially for the eastern seaboard visitors - was the two-acre feedlot used as the farm’s main feed platform.

The area only averages 22-inch (559mm) annual rainfall. “It’s better for us to lock up the cows and utilise the land for growing feed more effectively,” said Amy. “It is mostly planted to barley and annual ryegrass. We got four cuts of ryegrass silage last year.” Effluent and run off is stored and used as irrigation to help establish the ryegrass in early summer.

The Kernichs grow additional feed, such as oats and vetch on a share farm totalling about 100 acres (40ha) in the nearby hills and they agist their heifers off-farm in winter. The total herd, including dry cows and calves, totals about 200.

“You can’t think it’s all about the breeding because it’s really about the milk. At the end of the day if you’re not selling milk you can’t sell semen. We have to be realistic,” said Amy. “And what we’re trying to get out, as the message, is that there’s ways to value-add.”

They have earned customer fans by selling at farmers markets, local supermarkets and stores in Kapunda, Clare, Auburn and Adelaide.

“But I tell people it’s not for everyone. And it’s not a quick fix and you’ve got to be a bit passionate about it and have a bit of energy,” said Amy. “I hope the conference visitors took away the message that anything is possible if you’ve got a passion for your cows.”

Genetics Australia Board announces additional $500,000 of Shareholder Rebates

The Genetics Australia Board of Directors met today to discuss how the Co-operative can help Australia’s dairy farmers through the current challenging time in the industry.

“With 6 of the 7 Board members being dairy farmers, we know first-hand what our members and fellow farmers are currently going through”, said Genetics Australia’s Chairman Trevor Henry.

“The Board discussed the impact it will have on many farming families and we wanted to do our bit to ensure farmers kept a level of investment in breeding programs, both in the short and longer term”

Effective from the 1st of June, Genetics Australia will make available in excess of $500,000 of additional rebates to shareholders. “While it may be not the best time financially for the co-operative to be giving money back to shareholders, we feel it is simply the right thing to do. In essence, this is why we as a co-operative exist”, said Trevor. “Our business is going to do it tough for the foreseeable future as well, but as a co-operative our responsibility is to our Shareholder members”.

Genetics Australia’s General Manager, Anthony Shelly said he and the rest of the Genetics Australia team were fully supportive of the Board decision.

“While this is going to cause us some financial pain in the short term, it’s nothing compared to what our shareholders and other dairy farmers in general are going through”. We have a very strong asset base which will allow us to ride this through and it’s only right that we try and help out where we can”. he said.

The rebates come in the form of an extension of the $5.00, 1:1 Progeny Test & Genetic Check rebate until the 31st May 2017 or a $2.50 per straw rebate on Genetics Australia Premium Proven Sires and FutureGen Genomic sires. The rebate does not apply to imported product or progeny test semen.

To be eligible, farmers simply need to be a paid up Genetics Australia shareholder, and commit to purchase 80% of the herd size in semen. The details of the offer will be sent to all dairy farmers in the coming days.

Mr Shelly said by offering additional rebates farmers could still continue to breed their cows to Australia’s top rated bulls and not compromise in their herd improvement investment by using low rated. He said all farmers were encouraged to consult with their usual Genetics Australia breeding advisor who had been instructed to meet the breeding needs on all farms as cost effectively as possible.

If farmers were not a current shareholder farmers are invited to become a Genetics Australia shareholder. Australia’s only artificial breeding co-operative by calling Freecall 1800 039 047.

Mr Henry said he encouraged all dairy farmers to take advantage of this additional rebate offer to reduce the semen expenditure so as to ensure the heifers milking in the future are able to contribute to the bottom line when milk prices are more favourable.

Genetics Australia was established in 1958 and is Australia’s leading supplier of top rated genetics. After the April 2016 ABV release 4 of the top 5 Proven Holstein bulls on BPI as well as 7 of the top 10 young genomic bulls are from the Cooperative.
**Member Profile**

**DORNOCH JERSEYS**

Brothers Paul and David Parish and wife Lyn, and their daughters Samantha, Elizabeth, Wendy, Jodie and Kasey.

**HISTORY:**

- "Dornoch" Gaelic translation meaning "rolling hills" was originally named in the early 1980’s by David and Paul's parents, Ernie and Jean. The stud name remained inactive until recently where we are in the process of registering all dairy stock.
- Milking up to 600 jersey cows which have been predominantly A.I. bred.
- Very much a family orientated operation that has expanded over the years.
- The milking area covers 200 Ha with 40 Ha and 100 Ha respectively for dry stock and heifer replacements.
- We also carry 350 Angus beef cows and calves and 120 highly fertile 1st X ewes and 200 plus lambs on adjoining land.

**GOALS:**

- To continue to improve the standard of the herd using corrective mating A.I sires.
- Maintain high production figures across all ages.
- Implement a greater number of A2 and poll sires.
- Provide a sustainable business for the family to continue.

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- 2014 HICO ON FARM CHALLENGE
  2nd in 2 year old class with Dornoch 4454
  Best udder in 2 year old class with Dornoch 4454.
- 2015 COLAC AND DISTRICT JERSEY CLUB ON FARM
  CHALLENGE
  1st in Junior 2 year old class with Dornoch Astound 4640.
  1st in Senior 2 year old class with Dornoch 4552.
  1st in 5 year old class with Dornoch 4138.
- 2015 GREAT SOUTHERN CHALLENGE
  1st in 2 year old class with Dornoch Astound 4640.
  2nd in 5 year old class with Dornoch 4138.
- 2016 INTERNATIONAL DAIRY WEEK;
  Absolutely thrilled that Dornoch Astound 4640 came 2nd in 2 year old in milk class.
  Selected to participate in GINFO and Improving Herds programs.

**BULLS USED LAST YEAR:**

- Tbone, Matt, Valentino, Brax, Vanahlem, Kyler, Galaxies Celebrity, Barnabus, Irwin, Matrix, Maui, Lemonhead, Eclipses and Valson.

**FOOTBALL TEAM:**

- Geelong.

6 PEOPLE YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH:

- Hamish Blake - Andy Lee - Asher Keddie - Morgan Freeman - Malcolm Turnbull - Michelle Payne

**New members always welcome**

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Leading dairy farmer joins prestigious honour board

FROM being led along the path as a child by calves keen to get a feed, to leading Victoria’s dairy industry, Kerry Callow has seen dairy from inside and out. And despite a few bumps along the way, this Legendairy farmer from south-west Victoria remains committed to the industry.

A former United Dairyfarmers of Victoria (UDV) president and the latest inductee to the WestVic Dairy honour board, Kerry was raised on her parents’ soldier settler farm near Macarthur.

“The only shift I’ve made is bedrooms,” she jokes.

She recalls being a tiny child dragged along by the calves and being amazed at how her father grew pastures up to the top of her gumboots. Today Kerry has a more worldly view of dairy.

Her parents, Ted and Nance Nunn, were always involved in their community and the industry and Kerry naturally felt the need to follow in their inspirational footsteps.

“I think it’s just part of farming to understand what happens beyond your farm gate, and not just in your local area,” she says.

Kerry’s first brush with the industry was when her father co-opted her as the Macarthur Artificial Breeders Cooperative secretary.

She joined the UDV when she turned 18 – her father was chairman at that time - and 40 years later remains a dedicated member.

Kerry was elected UDV president in 2010 and held the position for more than two years. She cites as a highlight, her work with former president Chris Griffin to bring the UDV back to financial viability and to focus the policy council on the “nuts and bolts issues”.

She was also involved with setting up DemoDAIRY, the Herd Test Association and WestVic Dairy’s ‘Down the Track’ project.

“I never sought out positions; they tended to evolve,” Kerry said. “Generally I had the support of the farmers I represented; they seem to like to volunteer you for jobs.”

Her habit of “expressing my views” may have encouraged that, and occasionally got her into trouble, but she didn’t mind and encourages others to get behind the UDV and the broader industry.

While understanding farming is more pressured today, Kerry says farmers would benefit and understand more about the organisations if they got more actively involved in the UDV and Dairy Australia programs.

“Dairy Australia runs some brilliant programs that offer great tools to young people coming into the industry, and Legendairy is a direct response to farmers asking Dairy Australia to do more to promote the industry.

“Organisations don’t run on fresh air; they need arms and legs to run them.”

Kerry says her inside involvement has given her valuable insights, although the honour board recognition was a surprise.

“You don’t do this work for recognition; you do it because someone has to do it and I’ve got a lot out of it.

“I’ve seen a side of the industry that most people are unaware of and met a lot of great people. The UDV and Dairy Australia staff who work in the background are fantastic and they all look at it as their industry. They’re as proud of it as any dairy farmer is.”

Kerry remains a committed dairy farmer and enjoys the daily challenge of running her 94-hectare, 160-cow property.

“People say if you don’t like it get out but you’ve got to be able to sell. Farms don’t sell overnight, even in good times.”

One trait all farmers need is resilience and Kerry has plenty of it.

“While the dairy industry has always dipped, it seems to be dipping more frequently in recent years but you’ve got to keep things in perspective and ride through it.

“We’ve got to try to get rid of the speed bumps that happen, but sometimes you just have to keep putting one foot in front of the other.”
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MINX

Stonyrun Aus Tbone Minx
Tbone x Vanahlem x Larfalat

- Minx is one of the highest Genomic Jersey sires in Australia at +288 BPI; he is a New Release A2/A2 ‘Tbone’ son from an ex ‘Vanahlem’ that goes back to Mannix’s cow family in the USA.
- He is an outstanding +324 for the Type Weighted Index, +107 for Type, +108 for Udders and offers an ideal production proof.
- Minx could be a real breed changer and will breed the ideal herd cow with Type, Udders, Production and a great cow family.

BPI +288  TWI +324
TYPE +107  UDDERS +108

BONTINO

Cairnbrae Bontino
Valentino x Tbone x Alf

- Bontino is an A2/A2 ‘Valentino’ son who is the leading and highest Type and Udder bull in the Top 10 BPI Jersey Sires.
- Bontino is backed by Australia’s current leading sire production cow family - the Estelle’s.
- He offers solid production with positive components and will be in high demand for 2016.
- Sexed Ultra and Conventional Semen available.

BPI +271  TWI +322
TYPE +109  UDDERS +111

BROWNLOW

Dalbora Brax 5097 Brownlow
Brax x Tbone x Impuls

- Brownlow is an A2/A2 ‘Brax’ son who hails from generations of VG and VHC cows.
- He is a leading BPI sire who offers a great balance of Type, Milk Production and Health Traits.
- With his pedigree, there is no guessing that he will make great herd cows with the added bonus of his solid production proof and will improve components.

BPI +261  TWI +273
TYPE +105  UDDERS +106

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