

Waverly prepares for Seventh Annual Jersey Sale

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CLEARBROOK, VA — Mention the name Waverly Farm to anyone with even a remote interest in Jerseys and you will strike a chord of recognition. Known as the Robert Stiles Family, the 210 cow herd is owned and managed by four brothers, Ken, Paul, Mike, and Tracy Stiles and has gained national recognition in both the showing and the milk pail.

A quick look at the summary of their herd makes even the seasoned dairy cattle breeder envious. At Waverly Farm 27 cows have records over 20,000 pounds of milk and 18 of these cows are scored Excellent. Also 38 cows have top records over 19,000 pounds of milk or 900 pounds of fat. Another 55 cows have dams or grandams with records over 20,000 pounds of milk.

The December R.H.A. on 200 cows was 13,532 M 4.7 percent 633 F and 506 P. There are 60 cows at Waverly scored Excellent and the appraisal average on 188 cows is 85.7 percent.

Waverly Farm is currently the only Jersey farm housing two National Grand Champions; Sybil Surville Jesse EX-96 was the National Grand Champion in 1976 and 1977 as well as the National Reserve Grand Champion 1978 and 1979, and her great-granddaughter W. F. Justin Lanita EX-94 National Grand Champion 1983, 1985.

With all the apparent pressure of handling such a top herd like theirs, it would seem there would be little time for more ambitious endeavors. But, like most successful people in other fields, the Stiles never miss an opportunity to move forward.

This drive for improvement, promotion, and the desire to work with the best cattle of the breed prompted them to begin the Waverly Invitational Sale series seven years ago. They have also begun housing of the Heifer Project International Herd in the past 18 months.

The Seventh Waverly Invitational Sale takes place on April 21. The sale, held annually at the Frederick County Fairgrounds, Clearbrook, VA, has offered the best of the breed in a sale series who's average has been eclipse only by sales the likes of the All-American Jersey Sale in Louisville, Ky.

Tracy Stiles confirms that the motivation to begin the sales was two-fold. First, they had gone to lots of sales themselves and felt they had the know-how to put together a quality sale. Secondly, it would afford them the opportunity to merchandise a select few of their own cattle. He acknowledges that the sale gives the farm a showcase for publicity.

This publicity has had many pluses for both the Stiles and the consignors to their sales. Many guests visit Waverly Farm while in the area for the sale. In preparation, the entire herd is clipped, feet are trimmed, and spring fix-up is all completed by sale time. Consignors benefit from the sale's proven track record for success.

Tracy stresses that their sale tries to have something for everyone. From previous sales, there have been more than thirty head that developed into Bull Mothers, contract cows, or made Hall of Fame records for their new owners. Because of their success, consignments are also easier to get.

Tracy recalls in the early days, they had to go looking for consignors. Now consignors are coming to them. They still try to see every consignment before accepting it, with selections starting around Christmas.

Another added plus for consignors is the rate of commission charged for the sale. Since the Stiles view this sale as in part a promotion for Waverly Farm, they feel they should charge only enough commission to cover the sale's expenses. Therefore, the commission for each sale has been set after the sale, when all the expenses are totaled.

Concerning the type of cow accepted for the sale, Tracy states, "There's no written criteria for selection. We're looking for a good cow and a cow that will sell well." Mike added, "We feel that part of our success here (at Waverly Farm) is that we've never been afraid to buy a good cow; one that is pleasing to look at, but still profitable to milk. With the dairy economics the way they are today, we feel we need to have this kind. This is the kind we aim to sell in our sales."

Another marketing factor that enters into the Waverly Sale this year and has appeared in several sales in the last 18 months are consignments from the Jersey herd owned by Heifer Project International (HPI). The herd is housed and managed by Waverly Farm.

HPI is a non-profit church related organization based in Perryville, Ark. HPI works with all species of livestock and dairy cattle placing donated animals with needy individuals and communities. HPI has animals placed in all 50 states and in 70 foreign countries.

Eighteen months ago a PA investor Mr. Robert Marsh donated his 75 head Jersey herd to HPI. In that herd are such noted Jersey matriarchs as Forest Glen Quicksilver Dawn, A-Nine Majestic Morgan, W.F. Quicksilver Ashley, Forest Glen

Westerner Lillian, and Maple Row Generator Sherry. There are offspring of Rocky Hill Favorite Deb, the former National Milk Champion, Quicksilvers Claire of Ogston, and Gramhill Q.S. Fran Fair. When seeking a home for such a quality group, HPI asked Waverly Farm to take them in.

The Stiles agreed and moved the 75 head into their own facilities with some moderate expansion in buildings. The HPI herd is fully integrated with the Waverly herd and the Stiles have complete management control. The two herds are tested on separate DHIA reports. Each month HPI receives a copy of their herd's test sheets, breedings, sales, and contracts. The Stiles receive all the milk from the cows, a boarding fee for the young stock, and a percentage of all sales.

The arrangement has mutual benefits for both parties. Waverly

has handled HPI's consignments at several elite sales, the proceeds going to fund HPI projects. Waverly Farm does the contract negotiations for bull calves going to A.I., HPI again receiving the funds. Bull calves that are not sold for A.I. purposes are placed in HPI projects. Presently six baby bull calves are being prepared for export to Bolivia. Recently, embryos from HPI cattle were exported to India.

Tracy agrees that it has been successful financially for the farm but stressed, "We really like getting the opportunity to work with animals of this caliber. We hope this arrangement is a long term thing." HPI has a heifer consigned to this year's Waverly Invitational Sale.

When asked about the outlook for this year's sale, Tracy predicted, "Regardless for the present dairy

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