

Maryland Youth Named National Finalist

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Maryland Correspondent

FULTON, Md. — Mike Iager is one young man that the dairy community is talking about.

The University of Maryland freshman has been selected as a semi-finalist in the Holstein Association's National Distinguished Junior Member Awards competition. "I feel lucky to be in the top twelve," he said. "It was a goal that I set when I went to the Holstein convention."

At 19, Iager typifies what the dairy industry works so diligently to promote. Wholesome, healthy and active in all aspects of his family's fourth generation Maple Lawn Farm, Iager stands head and shoulders above the rest. And, he drinks lots of milk. "I guess that's why I'm so big and tall," he said.

Last year he was awarded with life membership in the Dairy Shrine for "cooperating to bring dignity to the dairy industry."

A few minutes spent with Iager and it becomes evident that dairying "runs in his blood." Even with his busy schedule at the University, and attending nine shows every year, he finds time to

care for 44 cattle of his own. "Over the years, I've owned 71," he said.

"My best so far," is how Iager describes his 3-year-old Holstein, Maple Lawn Sexation Pinky, who is classified EX-91. The computer readout on "Pinky" shows that in her current incomplete lactation, in 290 days, she produced 21,220 pounds of milk and 1064 pounds of fat.

"In' about two years I'd like to ET her," said Iager in explaining his goals for "Pinky." "She has a high percent of butterfat (4.9 percent) and she's got a good pedigree." Iager also hopes to export her sons because of her high butterfat test.

With regard to breeding preferences, Iager said he breeds half of his heifers naturally, and he uses AI for the rest. For type he expressed a preference for Sexation and Warden; for a combination of productivity and type he uses Ned Boy and Chairman. Presently Pinky is "safe to Melvin."

Iager's awards are numerous. It's difficult to say whether there are more little silver cow on top of trophies in the house, or actual cows in the barn lot. Plaques hang

just inches apart on every wall in the Iager home and office. Trophies are lined up like the show string on every available shelf, in the china closets, and ribbons stream from the mantel of the fireplace.

It's obvious that Iager is going places, and he has already been places.

He traveled to Louisville where he placed first in the National Junior Dairy Show, and second in the Open Class. Iager was also the recipient of a High Honorable Mention Junior All-American award. The Maryland 4-H All-Star went to Chicago, record book in hand, and was selected as a regional winner in dairy.

In 1982, as part of the Maryland State judging team, he traveled to Louisville where he was the seventh High Individual. The next year he went to Harrisburg where he was second High Individual and first in the Reasons competition. Iager also went to Madison, Wis., where he placed as seventh High Individual.

The tanbark trail is another area of noted accomplishments for Iager. In 1984 he showed the Supreme Champion Holstein at the Maryland 4-H Fair, and the Reserve Grand Champion at the 1985 Maryland Holstein Show.

He was a Gold Award winner at the Eastern States Exposition in Massachusetts, and an FFA State Star Farmer. And, he has even walked a cow across the stage of the Grand Ol' Opry.

Iager said his favorite activities are showing and classifying. He coaches judging teams, and said that in his record book he tried to convey the impact that 4-H had upon his life. This impact is the reason why he feels compelled to return something to other 4-H'ers. "Most of my coaching comes from my parents," he added.

Charles and Judy Iager have raised their three sons, Mike, Matt, 14, and Mark, 10, with farming as a way of life.

This way of life, including the Holstein cow, is evident in all aspects of their home. The Iagers' house is black and white, and the car bears the license plate "COWS." Within their home is an impressive array of dairy collectibles and paintings which they purchased at National Holstein Conventions. "We try to buy one each year," Judy Iager said.

One painting in particular, "Generations," she singled out as representative of Mike and his father. It depicts a father and son in the barn with a Holstein and her newborn calf.

Starting out at an early age, each son was responsible for some aspect of the Iagers' impressive operation. The younger boys help their mother with the care of the calves. "That's where he got started," said Charles Iager of his oldest son. "Then he got promoted." But, even with his increased responsibilities, Mike is quick to say, "That's the most important job — giving the calves a good start."

Now he milks 175 cows regularly, and is in charge of the show string. Last year he made 25,000 bales of hay and 35,000 bales of straw. On the 1,100 acres in production at Maple Lawn Farm, he planted 200 acres of soybeans, disced 300 acres (three times), and rolled alfalfa haylage. But, that's not where his involvement ends.

His father has entrusted him with management decisions. Mike helped his father weigh the pros and cons of various methods of storing their alfalfa haylage.

They decided to use 100 foot tubes that encase two sets of six rolls of haylage end to end. "We considered putting in a trench," said Mike, "but went with bags."



"My best so far," is how Iager describes his 3-year-old Holstein, Maple Lawn Sexation Pinky. She is classified EX-91 and is working on a plus 22,000 pound record with a 4.9 percent test.



Mike Iager of Fulton, Md., has been named as a semi-finalist in the Holstein Association's National Distinguished Junior Member Awards competition. He poses here with some of the numerous awards he has accumulated in his 4-H and showing career.



One of Iager's responsibilities on the farm is the computerized feeder. He also handles the milking duties, the show string, crop management, and aids his father in other management decisions.



Iager is involved in all phases of the farm operation from milking to field work to preparing their turkeys for market. The Iagers annually market 1,000's of turkeys.

The two agreed that the "sausage tubes" preserve better quality, are easier to handle, and are faster.

The Iagers also use a computerized feeder. For over two years, Mike has been working with his uncle on this project. With the punch of a button he can call up numbers that tell how much feed each cow has eaten, her ration, and whether there are any signs of irregularities within the herd.

As an Agriculture Production major, Iager has been able to pick up many new ideas for use on his home farm. He also keeps on top of the industry through the Brock Report and the Wall Street Journal. Maple Lawn advertisements that appear in the Southeastern and Holstein World were designed by Iager.

Last, but definitely not least, he manages part of the turkey operation that his great-grandfather established when he was Mike's age. A full-scale operation, the Iagers raise thousands of turkeys which are available fresh for Thanksgiving and Christmas and sold throughout the entire year.

The multi-talented Iager said his

major goal is "to win in the national judging contest." Listing his hobbies as dairy judging, dairy bowl, and showing cattle, it sounds as though he is headed for another win.

He's a determined young man who knows cattle and is a fine representative of the dairy community. Despite all the glitter and glamour of the many awards and recognition, Iager's feet seem firmly planted in Maple Lawn soil.

"After I graduate," he said, "I want to come back here and take over Dad's position." And with that came a definite nod of approval from his proud father.

Editors Note: Mike Iager will be traveling to the National Holstein Convention in Wisconsin next week where six of the twelve state junior winners will be selected.

The annual competition recognizes juniors who have distinguished themselves in leadership positions with Holstein organizations. The juniors are selected on the basis of outstanding contributions to the dairy industry and scholastic excellence in preparation of life goals.