

# Windyfield Jerseys Protein Production Is Erie Experience

**VERNON ACHENBACH JR.**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
EDINBORO (Erie Co.) — The Jersey herd of Windyfield Jerseys has been recognized by the state Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) for having the greatest increase in average protein production for 1990.

That fact comes as a double-bonus for the owners.

The Erie County farm family who own Windyfield said that not only were they surprised at the honors for the production, but the information shows that their breeding efforts are paying off.

Arthur and Robert Caccese, run an all-registered Jersey milking herd of about 60 cows on a 150-acre farm in the snowbelt area better known for its history of oil production than milk production.

The state record increase for protein production, among the Jerseys: The Caccese herd showed an average increase of 81 pounds of protein per cow.

But the good news came as a surprise.

The father-son partnership moved from New Jersey two years ago in order to market the solids-dense milk to a cheese manufacturer, and they had been breeding for protein production.

The results of the DHIA record-keeping shows they are not only doing well in terms of producing for their company, but their goal of breeding for protein appears to be paying off.

The end of the year protein aver-

age for 1990 was 488 pounds of protein, which represents about 3.7 percent of the milk.

"I was really surprised," said Betsy Caccese wife and mother to the father-son duo. "We weren't trying to do that, it's something that happened."

"Always knowing that in time we would move (to another farm) and choose a protein market, it (the record) could indirectly indicate the selection of the breeding for the herd," she said.

Changes in feed may also have contributed to the rolling herd increase she said.

"When we lived in New Jersey, we were interested in our protein production and breeding in that direction even though we weren't receiving any payments at that time."

Miceli Cheese Co., in Cleveland, Ohio, is the reason the Cacceses moved.

According to several Jersey breeders, the western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio region is one of the premier areas for Jersey breeders seeking to get some compensation for the high-protein milk produced.

According to Betsy, the November test for the Caccese herd is 13,726 pounds milk, 3.7 percent butterfat at 512 pounds, 3.5 protein.

She said that a change in diet may have helped with the protein production.

"We worked very closely with our seed company salesman and

our extension agent George Wilcox. We upped the total protein in the ration. We fed whole raw soybeans," Betsy said.

Raw soybean are not the norm. The norm is roasted and ground soybeans used in combination with other grains or feed additives as top dressing or mixed in with a total mixed ration (TMR).

"The reason for the whole raw soybeans," Betsy said, "we went over our total ration and determined that we needed more rumen degradable protein and determined we didn't need roasted soybeans because we would be getting more bypass protein."

"George Wilcox, went over our feed analysis and determined we needed more rumen degradable protein because of the quality of feeds available at the time, because of poor quality forages."

The Cacceses buy most of their feed.

"We're still essentially buying our own feeds," Betsy said. "We are making our own corn silage and haylage and buyin baled hay and buying feeds."

The farm is in a rolling hills section of Erie County. Golf balls abound.

Their 72-tie-stall barn is no reflection on the par of the local courses, but they don't mind the urban sport and crowd it draws.

There is more to the story than making a move from New Jersey.

The Cacceses have made several significant changes in their lives.

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They are almost as much changed as the scenery and weather they have now in northwestern Pennsylvania compared to their New Jersey quarters.

"In New Jersey we had loose housing and a 12-stall barn and we milked in the 12-stall barn. We only had 30 cows in New Jersey," she said. The heat and humidity of summer seemed to stress the cows. The coolness of their new location seems better, she said.

The Cacceses are almost as much changed — they are not a traditional dairy farm family. They have no background of dairying.

They started with a family cow. "My husband and I are in our early 50s, our son is 30, and we didn't milk cows before this."

"We just decided to get a family cow and fell in love with it, bought a few more, and a few more . . ."

"Neither (Arthur nor Robert) has a dairy background. Although our son majored in dairy science at the University of Delaware, his interest was already geared in dairying," she said.

The move to Erie County is almost a predictable event.

"We started milking them eight years ago and we felt then that the milk market was going to head toward a protein market. It was already showing signs of becoming a protein market," she said adding that in New Jersey they weren't compensated for the extra protein.

Now selling to a cheese manufacturer has changed that.

Also, many dairymen, in all cattle breeds, are working toward protein production. That makes the news even sweeter to the Cacceses — to know the efforts are paying off.

"Naturally everyone hopes to increase production, of course we're breeding for protein, we are selecting for total milk production and protein," she said.

Betsy said that not only are the Cacceses happy with their relatively new vocation, but also with the location.


"Compared to what we were used to in New Jersey, I think there are a lot more dairy farms here and we're very happy to be in an area where a lot of dairying is being done. We have a lot of support services."

"We have excellent feed and nutritionist and very good veterinary services."

The Caccese herd was put on DHIA testing while in New Jersey, under the owner-sampler program. "Thanksgiving Day two years ago, we switched to AM-PM on a timer," Betsy said.

The metamorphic process that has turned the Caccese family into a dairy family isn't about to quickly change them back into a non-dairy family. They are apparently in for the long run.

"It's just the beginning for us," Betsy said. "We hope to be in the business for some time."



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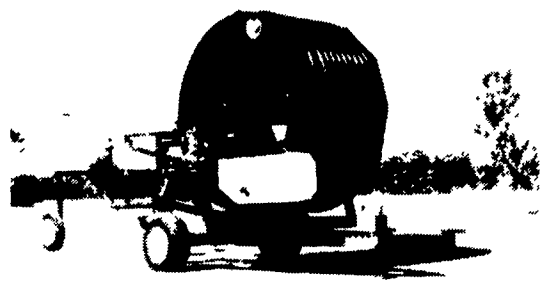


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