

# Fanelli Is AJCC Master Breeder

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — Phil Fanelli, Hilmar, Calif., has been named 1992 Master Breeder by The American Jersey Cattle Club. He will be honored during the organization's 124th annual meeting in Lansing, Mich.

The Master Breeder Award is bestowed annually on a living member of The American Jersey Cattle Club, who, in the opinion of the board of directors, has bred outstanding animals for many years and made a notable contribution to the advancement of the Jersey breed in the United States.

"Phil Fanelli has done more for the Jersey breed than many people realize. He is a truly gifted person who can remember almost every good cow he has ever seen. He is able to remember the strengths, weaknesses, and individual pedigrees of every 'great' cow."

Perhaps this quote by a fellow Jersey breeder sums up the key qualities that make Phil Fanelli the 1992 Master Breeder.

Phil began dairying on his own in 1961. He had received dairy experience while working with Frank Hopkins, a well-known Holstein breeder, and later H.I. "Tom" Sawyer, where he learned about the Jersey breed.

In the beginning, Phil's goal was to breed a herd of cows that would win blue ribbons at the shows and produce enough milk to pay the bills. He learned that while he loved to breed cows that would do well in the show ring, the ones that won the ribbons didn't always pay the bills.

After purchasing a dairy in Hilmar, Calif., in 1971, Phil changed his breeding philosophy. The new breeding goal included breeding cows that would milk and compete in a commercial herd.

His ideal cow would have a wide rear end with wide thurls, and her teats would be longer than the breed average so the milking machine would stay on. He also bred for high rear udders and good feet and legs.

His ideal cow had a lot of dairy character.

Since setting his personal breeding goals, Phil has had a tremend-

ous impact on the Jersey breed in the Western states, and is known to Jersey breeders across the United States.

His own herd of 350 milking cows demonstrates the results of years of good breeding and is under the capable management of his son Victor.

During the 1970s, three bulls from Phil's Jersey Farm were contracted and marketed by Carnation Jersey Genetics. This success kindled Phil's interest in Jerseys and he began doing matings for local Jersey breeders. Those same breeders in the Hilmar area now comment that Phil is a great tour guide, showing their animals to visitors and A.I. representatives.

Phil was the catalyst that made Jerseyland Sires, a successful sire-proving group, a reality. Most people credit Phil with Jerseyland's enviable track record of proving bulls. Members of the group have traveled across the United States seeking top-pedigreed young bulls to prove in members' herds.

Bulls like Highland Magic Duncan, D&E Spirit Lu, and Great Magic were sampled through Jerseyland Sires.

While Phil loves the Jersey breed, he also has great affection for young people. He has been a 4-H leader for 27 years. He is past president of the Merced County 4-H Dairy Replacement Heifer Committee. This program involves 30 dairy heifers and allows 4-H youth who would not otherwise be able to have dairy

projects to raise a calf for 18 months, then sell her as a springing heifer at the county fair.

Phil volunteers time as a room parent for the handicapped and special education classes at the Hilmar school. He also volunteers at King View, a special education continuation school at the county level. In addition, Phil serves as a camp counselor and member of the Special Olympics County Committee.

Phil has served as president of the Merced County DHIA Board and is presently serving on the state DHIA board. He is active in Hilmar Grange and was recently elected president of the Hilmar Chamber of Commerce.

Phil's vigorous pursuit to organize the Jersey breeders in the Hilmar area brought about the reactivation of the Central Valley Jersey Breeders and the California Jersey Cattle Club.

Phil has a lifetime of involvement with the Jersey breed and is responsible, directly and indirectly for thousands of Jersey matings. Recent notice was paid to one of Phil's matings when Midnight Storm-ET, consigned by Fanelli and Eric Silva, topped the 1991 All American Jersey Sale with a bid of \$42,000.

Phil is a tireless worker and driving force for continued progress in the Jersey breed. He continues to challenge Jersey breeders, questioning the progress that is being made, and seeking to breed a better Jersey cow for the benefit of all Jersey breeders.

## Important Things

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award and the DHIA dairy herd protein award for Somerset County. It was presented at the big countywide Ag Day banquet. It marked the first time his and Nancy's registered Holstein herd had topped all the others in the county for production, although they had ranked among the upper ten for six of the last 10 years.

In the week following the fire, milk production fell, but not by much, according to Gary, who said he believed the reason stemmed from the water shortage at the time. But the numbers soon returned and have stayed steady.

So while the honor is appreciated, Gary and Nancy have a simple, basic philosophy. "Our goal in life is to get along and get our bills paid and to make a nice place to raise our family," said Gary.

Nancy said, "We had a computer feeder put in because we were killing ourselves with work." Sure enough, the big silver feeder called "Herbie" — after "Herbie, The Lovebug" of Walt Disney fame — saves the dairy duo hours of work each day. Plus the children do one morning milking each week to give their parents a needed break.

Gary is up by 3:30 a.m., while Nancy joins him at 4 a.m. Later, her parents, Donald and Dorothea Welch, come by and help. This routine allows the Lynch family to enjoy breakfast together before the children leave for school. Evening milking is usually finished by 5:30, so there's time for

school, agricultural, and social activities.

"The cows work for us," said Gary, "not us for them."

Water lines have been replaced, but it took the temporary sacrifice of the big front lawn to lay the new lines. The foundation of the new house is up and framing has begun.

They have planned another "farmhouse," which will be two stories high over the basement. It's important that the new house feels like "home" to everyone, including 17-year-old Mike, who leaves for Penn State in late August. His parents want the entire family to be living in it together a little while before his departure, so it truly will seem like home to him after he leaves.

Meanwhile, life is a different kind of normal. The 310 acres of the farm will be sown with corn and alfalfa along with the other 300 acres they rent. The kids will continue to help with the evening work and be involved with their two 4-H clubs and other interests. Maybe, just maybe, the family can still take its annual vacation. It's something they make happen because they believe that it's important.

"We call back every once-in-awhile to see the home is still here," said Gary. "Other than that, we don't look back."

Andy is 15, Lauren, 13, and Jessie is 11. They attend classes in the Somerset Area School District.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.



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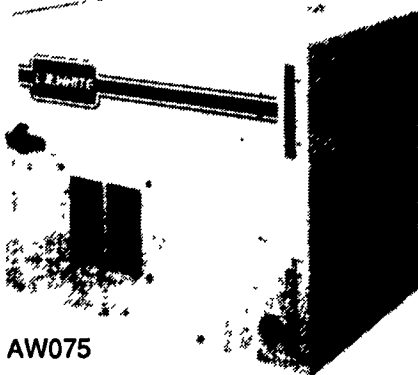
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