

## STRONG START, PERSISTENCY PRODUCE NEW RECORD

She's been a star since the beginning, shooting to the top of the yearling National Class Leader list in 2000 and winning the National Jersey Youth Production Contest for her young owner. Now, not only has the 2002 President's Trophy winner set an all-time record for milk yield, she also becomes the first Jersey cow to complete two consecutive records over 40,000 lbs. milk in AJCA production testing history.

**M**ainstream Berretta Joy, bred and owned by Melissa R. Kortus, Lynden, Wash., is the new U.S. and World Milk Champion. On her third lactation, starting on September 22, 2002 at 4 years, 9 months of age, she produced 44,930 lbs. milk in 365 days on twice-daily milkings.

Based upon Pacific Northwest Federal Order prices, the value of this lactation was \$5,893, for average gross income per day of lactation of \$16.15.



**Mainstream Berretta Joy with Melissa Kortus**

This story starts almost 10 years ago, when Melissa purchased four Jersey heifers from Curt Lagerwey's dairy in neighboring Bellingham. Lagerwey's 285 Silky, a daughter of Lester Venture Peregrine, was one of them. She posed a bit of a problem when it came time to breed her. "Silky" was a funny looking cow," Melissa explains, so she and her mother Jana decided that Mason Boomer Sooner Berretta would be "a good bull to use."

Funny looking or not (she ended up being scored Very Good-89% as a two-year-old), "Silky" would make over 26,700 lbs. milk on her first record. It wasn't long before that "Berretta" calf—who Melissa had named "Joy"—followed in her footsteps. "Joy" calved at 23 months of age, had 84 lbs. for the first test at 27 days fresh, then three tests later peaked at 103 lbs. From there she coasted to a new 305-day National Class Leader record for milk: 27,950 lbs., with component tests of 4.6% fat and 3.5% protein. The 365-day lactation of 31,870 lbs. milk just missed making the historical Top 25 list.

It's been a game of one-upmanship between dam and daughter ever since. Melissa's father, Randy, says that "'Silky' and 'Joy' are number one and number two in the barn, in that order, and they compete with our Holsteins."

There's no high string, or low string in this herd of 75 cows, 20 of them Jersey. "My family does the work here," Kortus notes, "and we can't get a lot bigger because of the environmental issues. So we keep our cows healthier and see the benefits in increased production."

What's the secret to a 26,000-lb. average on their Jerseys, and 31,000 lbs. on their Holsteins? Yes, they use BST and a probiotic, plus a niacin pellet that gives the cows a noticeable boost in early lactation. But, "there's only one secret," Randy Kortus states. "That's to feed them often and feed them good feed."

The peak for this world record was made on the herd's winter ration. It's based on 27 lbs. of corn silage that includes about 10% beet pulp ("The cows love it," Randy says), with 6 lbs. of what he calls the "outside" grain: a mix of cottonseed, beet pulp, distiller's grains and soybean meal. The rest is "really, really good hay": 10 lbs. alfalfa (22% to 24% crude protein), 10 lbs. grass

hay, 2 lbs. oat hay, the .6 lb. niacin pellet and Fastrack probiotic.

In the parlor, cows are fed one pound of grain for every 3 lbs. milk. It's a lot of grain, but it's well buffered and "their rums get adjusted to it." The cows have all the time they need in the parlor.

From April through mid-October, the cows are on supplemented rotational grazing. The grass is a mixture of BG-3 Dutch ryegrass and New Zealand white clover and "there's a lot of it." What keeps the ration consistent is 2 lbs. oat hay, 6 lbs. alfalfa hay, 5 lbs. grass hay, 6 lbs. of the "outside" grain mix, plus the parlor ration.

"Silky", who is now Excellent-90%, and "Joy," scored Very Good-88%, are "the kind of cows that excel for us," Kortus explains. It all starts with the longevity of this cow family. Now eight years old, "Silky" is on schedule to complete her fourth record over 32,000 lbs. milk. Her dam lived to be 10 years old and had records exceeding 20,000 lbs. milk. The fourth dam, also a top producer, calved for the final time at 9 years, 4 months of age.

Plus, they are simply strong, aggressive cows. "'Joy's' three nearest dams average 40 on width and dairy form," Randy points out, and both cows "are never off feed. They start out strong and you would think they would peel off more weight than they do. But they stay in good condition."

That's important to the Kortus Family, because "We aren't after high peaks. We'd just as soon keep them persistent.

"We're prouder that 'Joy' made two records over 40,000 than she made the world record."

### How She Set The New World Record for Milk Production Test Day Summary for Mainstream Berretta Joy 110006107

		Days	Milk Weight	% Fat	Lbs. Fat	% Protein	Lbs. Protein	
Fresh	September 22, 2002							
	October 29	37	126.0	5.5	6.93	3.5	4.41	
	December 2	71	153.5	5.7	8.75	3.2	4.91	
	January 13, 2003	113	146.5	5.3	7.76	3.2	4.69	
	February 18	149	136.5	5.6	7.64	3.4	4.64	
	March 30	189	129.5	5.1	6.60	3.2	4.14	
	Estimated	April 30	220	116.3	5.1	5.93	3.2	3.72
		May 30	250	103.5	3.4	3.52	3.6	3.73
		July 15	296	106.5	5.0	5.33	3.4	3.62
		August 22	334	108.0	3.9	4.21	3.4	3.67
September 28		371	101.0	2.9	2.93	3.4	3.43	
4-3	305	2	38,550	5.2%	2,016	3.4%	1,300	
	365	2	44,930	5.0%	2,267	3.4%	1,516	
					97 DCR			
					5,238C			